



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Invitation to Tender

Instructions to Potential Suppliers

**Employment Support Allowance
Work Related Activity Group
Intensive Support
Proof of Concept**

Contract Reference Number 20182

July 2017

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1. General Information

- 1.1 Please note that, unless otherwise indicated, references to the "Authority" or to "DWP" throughout these documents mean the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions acting as part of the Crown through his/her representatives in the Department for Work and Pensions. References to "Potential Supplier" mean any person or organisation responding or, where the context requires, potentially responding to this Invitation to Tender (ITT).
- 1.2 These instructions, together with the specification and all other information and documents to which they refer, are designed to ensure that all tenders are given equal and fair consideration. It is important, therefore, that you provide all the information required in the format and order specified.
- 1.3 Please read these instructions carefully because non-compliance may result in disqualification of your tender. You must ensure you have read the full invitation to tender package including the specification, background information and terms and conditions.

2. Administration of the Procurement Process

- 2.1 The Authority is administering the procurement process electronically via the [DWP eProcurement Solution \(ePS\) Portal](#). No hard copy documents will be issued during the competition and all communications with the Authority (including final submission of tenders) will be conducted via the DWP eProcurement Portal.
- 2.2 To ensure all communications relating to this procurement are received the Potential Supplier must ensure that the point of contact it nominates in the DWP eProcurement Solution portal is up to date. The portal is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year unless notified otherwise by the DWP eProcurement Solution portal.
- 2.3 Support available to help you to understand and use the system includes:
 - Freephone helpdesk (0800 368 4850), available Mon-Fri 8am to 6pm (UK time in English language only)
 - Helpdesk via email: help@bravosolution.co.uk
 - Help guides.
- 2.4 Potential Suppliers must ensure that their DWP eProcurement Solution registration directly relates to the part of the supplier organisation that submits the tender (some larger suppliers may have several subsidiaries so registration needs to apply to that part of organisation responsible for this particular requirement).
- 2.5 Where a consortium/Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) is formed to submit a tender, the lead supplier is responsible for coordinating all the required information. See [specific guidance](#) and read the questions carefully.

- 2.6 Should you have any queries with accessing the portal, please contact DWP eProcurement Solution's dedicated supplier helpdesk by calling 0800 368 4850 or by emailing: help@bravosolution.co.uk.

Inputting Information

- 2.7 Use the online 'Help for Suppliers' function. The content is designed to explain the ePS Portal in business terms, allowing you to quickly understand the features and benefits of the software. Help for Suppliers content is presented by software module, and divided into process activities such as PQQs, ITTs and Auctions - just like the software itself.
- 2.8 Save progress regularly. For security reasons access to the portal will 'time out' if inactive (i.e. if you do not click 'save') for ~15 minutes. Failure to save regularly risks losing your work - this is part of strict government requirements to maintain security and tender integrity and cannot be changed. Note that typing does not mean you are active on the portal.
- 2.9 Please ensure that 'pop ups' are not blocked on your browser. Should you be inactive for ~15 minutes, the portal will notify you through a 'pop up'. It is vital that you are able to see this in order to click the 'Refresh' link in this 'pop up' so you are not disconnected from the portal and lose any unsaved information.
- 2.10 Do not leave your response until the last minutes/hours before the deadline. If you experience connection problems you may miss the deadline. Late tenders cannot be accepted. Always upload generic information early to avoid last minute time pressure.
- 2.11 Please submit your response when completed. Failure to do this will result in your bid not being visible to the buyer. The 'submit response' button is at the top centre of the screen.
- 2.12 If the Buyer makes any changes to the settings and questions area of a live/running tender, Potential Suppliers must re-publish their response - this is to ensure that changes are brought to your attention - you may receive a message prompt from the Buyer - generally this will not mean re-entering information.
- 2.13 Whilst the portal allows for large individual attachment sizes (max 50mb at a time), we recommend that you keep attachments to a manageable size to ensure ease & speed of access. Only attach documents that the Buyer has requested and make sure that you attach them in the correct area.
- 2.14 If you have any software queries refer to 'Help for Suppliers' in the first instance, if you still have an issue email or telephone the BravoSolution helpdesk with a tender reference, a clear description of the problem and your contact details (ensure that you leave plenty of time for issues to be resolved prior to any deadlines).

- 2.15 Do not use the 'Back' or 'Forward' buttons on your browser, you could potentially lose your work. Please use the links on the eTendering portal to navigate through the tenders.
- 2.16 To understand icons, use your mouse to 'hover' over the icon and view the 'ToolTip'. Please note that text responses are deliberately capped at 2000 characters (~350 words). If the Authority requires a longer response they will add an additional text box or an 'Attachment' question. Also note that Numeric fields will not accept text, spaces, symbols etc. Note the red asterisk indicates a mandatory field - this must be completed in order to submit your response to the buyer.
- 2.17 If you are delegating your response please ensure that your colleagues are aware of this information and are IT literate.
- 2.18 Please treat your eTendering portal logins securely - if you believe that you have lost your password - please log onto the website and click onto "Forgotten your password?" and follow the instructions.
- 2.19 The Qualification Envelope (supplier selection and exclusion questions) holds information provided when the Potential Supplier registered on the DWP eProcurement Solution. The answers provided in that profile will automatically be used to pre-populate some parts of the qualification envelope. Potential Suppliers may update these answers and the new information will be saved against the organisation profile.
- 2.20 Please allow sufficient time to submit the response. We recommend allowing time for a final check to be undertaken prior to the submission deadline. It will not be possible to upload any further information after the submission deadline. IT problems within Potential Suppliers' systems will not be considered reasonable grounds for late submission.
- 2.21 Where a question requires the upload of a document then that document must be completed in the format specified within the question. Files submitted in any other format will not be accepted. All acronyms and abbreviations, if used, must be fully explained.
- 2.22 Within the DWP eProcurement Portal Potential Suppliers are able to submit, modify and resubmit responses at any time prior to the submission deadline. Responses cannot be modified by Potential Suppliers after the submission deadline. Potential Suppliers must ensure they have only submitted a single response through the DWP eProcurement Portal.

3. Tender Submission Process

Background

- 3.1 The DWP eProcurement Portal relies on the completion of 3 envelopes which will contain all of the information the Authority requires to enable

full evaluation to take place. All information should be uploaded as per instructions into the relevant envelopes on the DWP eProcurement Portal.

- Qualification Envelope – Is used for gathering information to qualify Potential Suppliers for further evaluation
- Technical Envelope – Is used for gathering information to allow for full evaluation of the technical side of the proposal
- Commercial Envelope – Is used to gather the Pricing Proposal

Tender Completion

- 3.2 The information or text contained within the ITT (including its Annexes) and your response, any variation of them and any formal interchange of correspondence or information will be incorporated into any subsequent contract/framework agreement that the Authority may enter into as a result of this ITT.
- 3.3 Responses must not exceed the pre-set margins and space allocation. In some cases the Authority may put a word limit on your response to some or all questions. These limits are provided in the Invitation to Tender document and any response in excess of these allocations will be disregarded and will not be taken into account.
- 3.4 Answer all questions using the templates provided, presenting them in the same sequence and using the same references. Please ensure all answers are self contained with no cross-referencing. Only information entered into the appropriate answer boxes (which may be extended as necessary but should not exceed any applicable word limit/page count) or in additional documents supplied as requested will be taken into consideration for the purposes of evaluating the tender.
- 3.5 Therefore, bullets, tables, graphs and charts in support of your responses are all permitted. Responses must be presented using Arial font size 12 (English Language and black typeface) this includes instances where information may be tabulated as part of the response. The only exception permitted is for illustrative screen shots, graphs and charts, which should be presented within the allocated page limit for the question they are relevant to and must not be embedded separately as this information will be disregarded.
- 3.6 Tenders should be completed using standard software e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel or PDF. **Files submitted in Microsoft Project format and PDF will not be accepted.**
- 3.7 All acronyms and abbreviations, if used, must be fully explained.

Procurement Timetable

- 3.8 Set out below is the proposed procurement timetable. This is intended as a **guide** and, whilst the Authority does not intend to depart significantly

from it, there may be occasions, especially around obtaining Ministerial Approval, where the timetable will be subject to minor change.

Activity	Date
Publication of the ITT to all Potential Suppliers	12 July 2017
Deadline for submissions of Tender Questions (Q&A) - online/electronic Q&A facility	20 July 2017
Deadline for publication of Q&A to Potential Suppliers	25 July 2017
Deadline for return of tenders	10.00am on 4 August 2017
Bid Compliance checks and Evaluation of Tenders, recommendations and approvals completed	18 August 2017
Intention to Award notification issued to successful and unsuccessful tenderers	25 August 2017
Standstill period and offer of debrief to both successful and unsuccessful tenderers	26 August to 8 September 2017
Sign contract	11 September 2017
Go Live	25 September 2017

Action to take where requirement has been divided into Lots

3.9 Not used.

3.10 Not used.

3.11 Not used.

Deadline for Submission of Tenders

3.12 All tenders must be received by the Authority by the tender submission deadline which is shown in the procurement timetable.

3.13 To ensure that all Potential Suppliers are treated fairly tenders received after the tender submission deadline will usually be rejected by the Authority. The decision whether to reject a tender received after the tender submission deadline is made entirely at the Authority's discretion.

3.14 A Potential Supplier may withdraw from this procurement by choosing not to submit a tender by the tender submission deadline. It would be useful to the department if you can advise us in advance that you will not be submitting a proposal and if possible the reasons behind your decision.

Additional Materials, Documents and Attachments

3.15 No additional documentation should be submitted with a tender unless specifically requested by the Authority

- 3.16 Information that forms part of general company literature or promotional brochures will not form part of the evaluation process and should not be submitted.
- 3.17 The tender should not contain any inserted, pasted or embedded pictures or documents (image files, Adobe Acrobat documents or other Word documents) unless specifically requested by the Authority
- 3.18 Any additional documents requested by the Authority must be clearly referenced within the body of the tender using a unique, un-ambiguous and relevant file name. They must be saved using MS Word (in Web Page, filtered format only), MS Excel, MS Power Point, Adobe Acrobat or jpeg formats. No other file formats should be used.

4. Conditions Applying to this Tender

Open Procedure

- 4.1 The Authority is managing this procurement in accordance with its general obligations under the EU Law. As this requirement is being procured under the Light Touch Regime the procurement is not subject to the full Public Contract Regulations (2015).
- 4.2 It is the Authority's intention that this procurement exercise will comply with the overriding EU Procurement Directive principles for open and transparent competition to ensure value for money.

Authority's Terms and Conditions

- 4.3 Potential Suppliers are not permitted to submit their own terms and conditions. Material amendments to the Authority's terms and conditions will not be considered.

Costs and Expenses

- 4.4 Potential Suppliers are not entitled to claim from the Authority any costs or expenses which may be incurred in preparing and/or submitting a tender.
- 4.5 This applies whether or not the supplier or any other organisation is successful and also applies to any additional cost a Potential Supplier may incur if the Authority modifies or amends its requirements or if the Authority cancels this procurement for whatever reason.

Confidentiality

- 4.6 All information supplied by the Authority to Potential Suppliers must be treated in confidence (unless already in the public domain) and must not be disclosed to third parties other than as is necessary for the purposes of preparing a response and for obtaining sureties or quotations for the purpose of submitting this tender. All information supplied by you to the Authority will similarly be treated in confidence except:

- I. For the disclosure of such information with regard to the outcome of the procurement process as may be required to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union in accordance with EU Directives or elsewhere in accordance with the requirements of UK government policy on the disclosure of information relating to government contracts
- II. That as part of the debriefing process we will inform any eliminated tenderer, who has made an admissible tender, of the characteristics and relative advantages of the successful tender(s), as well as, where appropriate, the qualitative evaluation score(s) achieved by and name(s) of the successful tenderer(s)
- III. In pursuance of the Authority's statutory obligations under the [Freedom of Information Act](#) 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations or the UK Government's requirements on transparency. Even where it is indicated that information supplied is commercially sensitive the Authority may be required to disclose it. Material marked 'confidential' or similar does not mean the Authority accepts any duty of confidence
- IV. References may be sought from banks, existing or past clients, or other referees submitted by the tenderer. The Authority confirms that it will keep confidential any information obtained from referees other than to Crown Commercial Service and/or contracting authorities defined in the Public Contracts Regulations.

4.7 The Authority is subject to general control and reporting within Government and reports to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

4.8 For the purposes mentioned above, the Authority may disclose within Government any of the Potential Supplier's documentation/information (including any that the Potential Supplier considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive, such as specific bid information) submitted by the Potential Supplier to the Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government

Contract Period

4.9 The contract will be for the period 25 September 2017 to 30 March 2018 unless terminated by the Authority in accordance with the terms of the contract. Subject to satisfactory performance and with the agreement of both parties the contract may be extended up to a maximum of three (3) months.

Potential Supplier Visits (where appropriate)

4.10 Not applicable.

Amendments to the Tender Process or Tender Documents by the Authority

- 4.11 The Authority reserves the right to vary the tender process and/or amend the tender documents (including this ITT Instructions to Potential Suppliers document) at any time prior to the deadline for receipt of tenders. Any such amendment will be numbered, dated and issued by the Authority via the DWP eProcurement Portal. Where amendments are significant, the Authority may at its discretion extend the deadline for receipt of tenders.
- 4.12 The Authority reserves the right to discontinue this tendering process at any time and not to award a contract.

Potential Supplier Clarification (Q&A)

- 4.13 Potential Suppliers have the opportunity to raise questions about the ITT and request clarification about the requirement. All questions raised must be submitted via the [DWP eProcurement Solution Portal](#).
- 4.14 The Q&A log will be published on the DWP eProcurement Portal and will be updated regularly. It will be the responsibility of the Potential Supplier to monitor the portal for the latest activity.
- 4.15 The last date for the submission of questions along with the date of the publication of the final Q&A log on the DWP eProcurement Portal is shown in the [procurement timetable](#).
- 4.16 The final date for questions and answers and dissemination allows sufficient time for Potential Suppliers to impact this information before finalising their tenders for submission.
- 4.17 If a question is deemed by a Potential Supplier to be commercially confidential, then they should indicate that they believe this is the case. The Authority will consider this and if in agreement, will exercise due discretion in handling the question and limiting the circulation of the answer(s) to your organisation.
- 4.18 Questions not deemed to be commercially confidential will be considered by the Authority to be of significance to all Potential Suppliers. All questions and answers will be made anonymous and made available to all Potential Suppliers via the [DWP eProcurement Solution Portal](#). If the Authority intends to follow this course of action it will inform you before sharing the question and response.

Acceptance and Return of Tenders

- 4.19 By issuing the ITT the Authority is not bound in any way and does not have to accept any tender.
- 4.20 The tender, comprising the information set out in the ITT must be completed and submitted in its entirety to the DWP eProcurement Portal by the stipulated deadline.

- 4.21 Tenders will undergo an initial compliance check to ensure that all information requested has been received. Tenders will be rejected if the complete information requested is not included as part of the tender documentation.

Period for which Tenders shall Remain Valid

- 4.22 Tenders shall remain valid and capable of acceptance for 180 days from the closing date for receipt of tenders.

Electronic Auctions

- 4.23 Not applicable.

Variant Proposals

- 4.24 Variant proposals will not be accepted unless otherwise stated in the Contract Notice.

- 4.25 Not applicable.

- 4.26 Not applicable.

Providing Services under a Framework Agreement

- 4.27 Not applicable.

- 4.28 Not applicable.

- 4.29 Not applicable.

- 4.30 Not applicable.

Welsh Language

- 4.31 Not applicable

5. Supplier Selection and Exclusion – The Qualification Envelope

Principles

- 5.1 The supplier selection and exclusion questions assess the suitability of a Potential Supplier to deliver the authority's requirement. If you are successful at this stage of the procurement process, your bid will be evaluated in the subsequent award stage of the process.
- 5.2 Potential Suppliers should note that, in accordance with Regulation 57 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Authority may take account of information in the public domain in addition to information provided in the bid. The Authority will contact the Potential Supplier to clarify such information.

Verification of Information Provided

- 5.3 Whilst reserving the right to request information at any time throughout the procurement process, the authority will allow Potential Suppliers to self-certify whether there are any mandatory / discretionary grounds for excluding their organisation.

When requesting evidence that the Potential Supplier can meet the specified requirements (such as the questions relating to Technical and Professional Ability) the authority will await the final tender evaluation decision and seek evidence from the winning Supplier only.

Supplier Information

- 5.4 This section is used to gather the necessary details to understand the nature of the organisation and legal entity participating in the procurement exercise. This section is not scored.

Bidding Model

- 5.5 This section is used to gather information to allow the Authority to understand the nature of the Potential Supplier's proposed supply chain. The Authority requires additional information where the tender relies on a consortium and/or sub-contractors. This section is not scored but the Authority must be satisfied that the proposed bidding model will allow the requirement to be met successfully otherwise the bid will be rejected.

Sub-contractors

- 5.6 Where the Potential Supplier proposes to use one or more sub-contractors to deliver some or all of the contract requirements full details must be provided, including members of the supply chain, the percentage of work being delivered by each sub-contractor and the key contract deliverables each sub-contractor will be responsible for.
- 5.7 The authority recognises that arrangements in relation to sub-contracting may be subject to future change, and may not be finalised until a later date. However, Potential Suppliers should be aware that where information provided to the authority indicates that sub-contractors are to play a significant role in delivering key contract requirements, any changes to those sub-contracting arrangements may affect the ability of the Potential Supplier to meet the requirement. Potential Suppliers should therefore notify the authority immediately of any change in the proposed sub-contractor arrangements. The authority reserves the right to deselect the Potential Supplier prior to any award of contract, based on an assessment of the updated information.
- 5.8 A Potential Supplier's tender must clearly identify in response to any question, when it is relying on a sub-contractor, the name of the particular sub-contractor and explain the sub-contractor's capability and experience as the context of the question requires.
- 5.9 The Authority does not require all sub-contractors be disclosed. It only requires a Potential Supplier to disclose those sub-contractors who

directly contribute to the Potential Supplier's ability to meet its obligations under the contract (or framework agreement (including under any call-off Contract, if applicable). There is no need to specify those sub-contractors providing general services to the Potential Supplier (such as window cleaners, lawyers, desktop software providers etc) that indirectly enable the Potential Supplier to perform the contract. For example if the Authority requires a Potential Supplier to hold a particular licence – then the Potential Supplier may indicate that 'XYZ Co' holds the licence and indicate that services covered by the scope of this licence will only be performed by its sub-contractor 'XYZ Co'.

Consortia arrangements

- 5.10 All members of the consortium will be required to provide the information required in **all** sections of the selection and exclusion questions. The consortium lead completes the questions on the eProcurement Portal with regard to their own organisation. They are responsible for coordinating and submitting one Annex C – Supplier Selection for Consortium Members for each member of the consortium and one Annex D – Consortium Arrangements.
- 5.11 Where you are proposing to create a separate legal entity, such as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), you should provide details of the actual or proposed percentage shareholding of the constituent members within the new legal entity in a separate Appendix.
- 5.12 The authority recognises that arrangements in relation to consortia may be subject to future change. Potential Suppliers should therefore respond on the basis of the arrangements as currently envisaged. Potential Suppliers are reminded that the authority must be immediately notified of any changes, or proposed changes, in relation to the bidding model so that a further assessment can be carried out by applying the selection criteria to the new information provided. The authority reserves the right to deselect the Potential Supplier prior to any award of contract, based on an assessment of the updated information.
- 5.13 Not used.

Contact Details

- 5.14 You must provide full details of a contact for the Authority to use in relation to this procurement. The contact should be able to answer questions regarding the bid and act on behalf of the Potential Supplier. This section is not scored.

Licensing and Registration

- 5.15 The Authority requires you to indicate if licensing and registration is required for your business and, if so, whether your organisation holds the required licensing and registration. This section is not scored but the Authority must be satisfied that Potential Supplier has the required

licenses and registration to meet the requirement otherwise the bid will be rejected.

Grounds for Mandatory Exclusion

- 5.16 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This section is used to establish whether there is any reason that the Potential Supplier should not be allowed to continue to participate in the procurement. If you answer 'yes' to one of these questions, indicating that your organisation meets one of the grounds for mandatory exclusion, you will not be allowed to participate further in the procurement unless you can demonstrate adequate ['self-cleaning'](#).

Non-payment of Taxes

- 5.17 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This is an additional ground for mandatory exclusion. If you answer 'yes' to this question you will not be allowed to participate further in the procurement unless you can demonstrate adequate ['self-cleaning'](#).

Grounds for Discretionary Exclusion – Part 1

- 5.18 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. The Authority can choose to exclude a Potential Supplier who answers 'yes' to one of these questions. You may not be allowed to participate further in the procurement unless you can demonstrate adequate ['self-cleaning'](#).

Conflicts of Interest

- 5.19 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This is an additional ground for discretionary exclusion. You must identify any potential conflict of interest and provide full details on Annex B including how the conflict of interest might be effectively remedied. If the Authority considers the integrity of the competition is compromised by a conflict of interest you will not be allowed to participate further. The Authority will contact you to discuss further where a potential conflict of interest is identified.

Self-Cleaning

- 5.20 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This section allows Potential Suppliers to provide further information where they have answered 'yes' to any of the grounds for mandatory rejection, including non-payment of taxes, or grounds for discretionary rejection.
- 5.21 Potential Suppliers should use Annex E to explain in detail how they have addressed issue (identified by a 'yes' answer). The Authority will consider whether the 'self-cleaning' adequately addresses the risk to reliability exposed by the 'yes' answer.

Grounds for Discretionary Exclusion – Part 2

- 5.22 Not used.

Economic and Financial Standing

- 5.23 A financial risk assessment based on the information provided (e.g. company accounts) will result in a Red, Amber or Green rating. Potential Suppliers assessed as a Red risk may be eliminated from the competition.
- 5.24 Details of the basis for the evaluation of Potential Suppliers' financial information is provided at **Appendix 1**.

Technical and Professional Ability

- 5.26 Not used.
- 5.27 Not used.
- 5.28 Not used.
- 5.29 Not used.

Technical and Professional Ability – Past Performance Certificates

- 5.30 Not used.
- 5.31 Not used.
- 5.32 Not used.

Insurance

- 5.33 This section allows you to self-certify that you have or will have adequate insurance as required by the Authority for the delivery of the contract. You will not be allowed to participate further in the procurement unless you can meet the insurance requirements.

Compliance with Equality Legislation

- 5.34 This section covers the Potential Supplier's history of compliance with equality legislation. The Authority can choose to exclude a Potential Supplier who has been found to have acted in a discriminatory way in the past 3 years. The Potential Supplier has the opportunity to provide details of mitigating factors. The Authority will consider whether the mitigation adequately addresses the risk exposed by the 'yes' answer.

Environmental Management

- 5.35 This section covers the Potential Supplier's history of compliance with environmental legislation. The Authority can choose to exclude a Potential Supplier who has been found to have breached environmental legislation in the past 3 years. The Potential Supplier has the opportunity to provide details of mitigating factors. The Authority will consider whether the mitigation adequately addresses the risk exposed by the 'yes' answer.

Health and Safety

- 5.36 This section allows the Potential Suppliers to self-certify that they have an adequate health and safety policy. UK employers with less than five

employees are not required by law to have a health and safety policy and will not be excluded for this reason.

- 5.37 Where the Potential Supplier has received enforcement/remedial orders from a health and safety body/authority in the past 3 years, this section allows them to provide details of remedial action.
- 5.38 The Authority can choose to exclude a Potential Supplier who has received an enforcement/remedial order in relation to health and safety in the past 3 years. The Potential Supplier has the opportunity to provide details of mitigating factors. The Authority will consider whether the mitigation adequately addresses the risk exposed by the 'yes' answer.

Confirmation and Declaration

- 5.39 The final section of Supplier Selection and Exclusion – the Qualification Envelope, is a declaration against the information provided. This must be completed by a person with authority to act on behalf of the Potential Supplier. This section also serves as a checkpoint for Potential Suppliers to confirm that they have provided all the information, including additional Annexes, required so far.

6. Tender Evaluation – The Technical Envelope

Principles

- 6.1 The tender evaluation questions assess the Potential Supplier's proposal to deliver the authority's requirement. This information enables the Authority to carry out a qualitative evaluation of the tender.
- 6.2 The information provided in the tender proposal will be evaluated against the pre-determined Award Criteria as stated in the Invitation to Tender.
- 6.3 The DWP ePS Portal asks Potential Suppliers to submit responses which directly correspond with the Award Criteria. The overarching Award Criteria will be made up of sub-criteria by which the Award Criteria will be evaluated.

Qualitative Scoring Methodology

- 6.4 The responses to the ITT will then be scored against the [criteria and weightings](#) using scoring scale set out here.

Score	Description
6	Thorough and detailed evidence provided which <u>fully satisfies</u> the requirements
4	Evidence provided <u>satisfies most</u> of the requirements with minor gaps in coverage or detail

2	Evidence provided <u>does not satisfy significant parts</u> of the requirement
0	Evidence provided <u>fails to satisfy</u> the stated requirement

Draft Security Plan

- 6.5 Cabinet Office has introduced mandatory requirements relating to data handling, security and information assurance in government contracts. Information must be protected, together with systems, equipment and processes which support its use. Our contractors must provide an appropriate level of security.
- 6.6 Potential Suppliers (whether for a contract or place on a framework) are required to submit a Draft Security Plan detailing how you will comply with the DWP Security Policy for Contractors, which includes compliance with ISO/IEC27001 and Cyber Essentials Scheme. A copy of this document can be found on '[Gov UK - Other DWP procurement and policy documents](#)' and full guidance is provided in the relevant document and in Schedule 6 of the DWP Standard Terms and Conditions. A full Security Plan will be due 20 days after contract award.
- 6.7 Not applicable.

Off-shoring (including Landed Resources)

- 6.8 In accordance with the DWP Offshoring Policy, prior written consent from DWP must be sought where Potential Suppliers (and/or their sub-contractors) are proposing to host or access Departmental systems, services or official information outside of the United Kingdom, or to bring foreign nationals to the United Kingdom to provide services in delivery of the Contract.
- 6.9 Potential Suppliers must be aware of this and must submit an application for approval together with their tender. Where DWP gives consent, the Potential Supplier shall comply with any reasonable instructions notified to it by DWP in relation to the Authority Data in question. More information can be found in the document A Guide to DWP Offshoring Policy which can be found on '[Gov UK - Other DWP procurement and policy documents](#)'.

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE)

- 6.10 Your attention is drawn to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). It is the Authority's view that

TUPE is unlikely to be applicable if this ITT results in a Contract being placed. Nevertheless, it is your responsibility to consider whether or not TUPE applies in the individual circumstances of your tender, particularly if you are proposing to submit an innovative tender.

- 6.11 If you have a contrary view to that of the Authority on the applicability of TUPE, it would be helpful if you would advise the Authority using Annex G, giving the reasons no later than 1 week prior to the tender return date.

Qualitative Questions for Service Delivery

- 6.12 The information provided in the tender proposal will be evaluated against the pre-determined Award Criteria as stated in the Invitation to Tender. Questions in the Qualification Envelope will be assessed as indicated in relation to each question. In most cases this will be confirmation that the questions are yes/no or meet pass/fail requirements. The Service Delivery Proposal uploaded to the Technical Envelope will be given a weight of 70% of the award, whilst the Commercial Envelope pricing proposal will constitute 30%.

Criteria Number	Criteria	Weighting	Maximum Score Available
2.4.1	<p>Please provide a detailed / structured account and breakdown of your proposed content and method of delivering the provision (together with supporting rationale for your approach), as detailed in the specification. Your response should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposed arrangements for handling claimant referrals to the provision from JCP, including claimant speed of access and engaging with JCP Work Coaches; • details of the process you will follow (i.e. the content and method of your proposed delivery) in order to efficiently and successfully deliver the provision requirements outlined in the Specification document. • an outline of your organisation’s existing partner relationships and how you will build 	x4	24

	<p>upon these to ensure an appropriate range of support and opportunities are available to claimants;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of your plans to manage the performance of the provision, including how you will monitor/measure effectiveness to achieve the required performance outcomes as detailed within the Specification; • an outline description of the systems your organisation will use to administer the provision effectively (e.g. keep accurate and auditable records on customers, outcomes, claims etc) and to gather / analyse / act upon customer feedback. <p>Insert your response in the pre-set, shaded space of the following pages. Your response MUST be limited to 4 sides of A4 (Arial 12 font only)</p>		
2.4.2	<p>Please provide details of the premises from which you propose to deliver the provision. Your response should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full address details, including postcode, together with supporting rationale for choosing these premises, i.e. why do you consider them suitable; • details of facilities available at your proposed delivery premises; • if you intend to use existing premises for this provision, please explain how this would fit with their current use. Alternatively, where new premises are proposed, please give an indication of timescales 	x 2	12

	<p>required to secure these premises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you intend to secure new premises, please provide an indication of timescales required to secure these premises ahead of the Go Live date as well as any contingency arrangements you would put in place to ensure timely delivery of the provision; • Describe contingency plans for dealing with fluctuating customer numbers, indicating maximum and minimum volumes that can be handled without an adverse effect on your premises proposal. <p>Insert your response in the pre-set, shaded space of the following pages. Your response MUST be limited to 2 side of A4. (Arial 12 font only)</p>		
2.4.3	<p>Please provide details of your staffing resource, including that of any sub-contractors you propose to employ, in order to deliver and manage all elements of the provision. Your response should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff numbers, together with supporting rationale for your proposals; • an outline of the roles and responsibilities for all staff involved (including delivery and management); • information about the qualifications and / or experience 	x 2	12

	<p>of the staff who will be involved in both the delivery and the management of the proposed provision, together with an explanation of why you believe these to be appropriate in the context of this provision;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an indication of how your proposals fit within your organisation's overall management structure. <p>Insert your response in the pre-set, shaded space of the following pages. Your response MUST be limited to 1 side of A4 . (Arial 12 font only)</p>		
2.4.4	<p>Please provide a detailed example which demonstrates your organisation's experience of successfully delivering this type of provision (or similar) and / or your experience of working with the customer group described in the provision specification.</p> <p>If your organisation has no previous experience of this type of provision or the customer group you should provide details of any steps / research you have undertaken in order to gain a sufficient understanding and working knowledge.</p> <p>Insert your response in the pre-set, shaded space of the following pages. Your response MUST be limited to 1 side of A4. (Arial 12 font only)</p>	x 2	12
2.4.5	<p>Please provide details of your links within and / or working knowledge / experience of the Essex area (and specifically that listed in the Specification).</p> <p>Your response should include:</p>	x 1	6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JCP; • other local organisations / partnerships. <p>If your organisation has no previous experience of working within the area, you should provide details of any steps / research you have undertaken in order to gain sufficient understanding and working knowledge.</p> <p>Insert your response in the pre-set, shaded space of the following pages. Your response MUST be limited to 1 side of A4. (Arial 12 font only)</p>		
	Total		66

Freedom of Information Act

6.13 The Authority is committed to open government and to meeting its legal responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All information submitted to the Authority may need to be disclosed by the Authority in response to a request under the Act. If you consider that any of the information included in your tender is commercially sensitive, please identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm may result from disclosure if a request is received, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity.

6.14 You should be aware that even where you have indicated that information is commercially sensitive, the Authority may be required to disclose it under the terms of the Act if a request is received. Please note that the receipt of material marked 'confidential' or equivalent by the Authority should not be taken to mean that the Authority accepts any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking. If a request is received, the Authority may also be required to disclose details to unsuccessful tenderers.

Proposed amendments to Contract Documents

6.15 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This section allows you to propose minor amendments to the terms and conditions. Material amendments will not be considered.

Confirmation and Declaration

6.16 The final section of Tender Evaluation – The Technical Envelope, is a declaration against the information provided. This must be completed by

a person with authority to act on behalf of the Potential Supplier. This section also serves as a checkpoint for Potential Suppliers to confirm that they have provided all the information, including additional Annexes, required so far.

7. Pricing Proposal – The Commercial Envelope

- 7.1 This envelope is where the Pricing Proposal should be uploaded. This information should be uploaded as follows.
- 7.2 Your pricing proposal is required at Annex S of the Commercial Envelope. See the specification for further details of the payment model, including the maximum

Price Evaluation Methodology

- 7.3 The lowest total price will be awarded 30 marks and each other price proposal will be awarded a score based on the percentage deviation from the lowest price.

8. Baseline Security Standard

- 8.1 Where contractors staff are to be given access to Authority's assets (defined as premises, systems, information or data) the attention of Potential Suppliers is drawn to their contractual obligation. Full details of the actions required to comply with the above procedures, can be found in the guidance document 'HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard – A Guide for DWP Contractors'. A PDF version of this document can be viewed on gov.uk.
- 8.2 Contractors' staff working in Northern Ireland will be required to be cleared via the Access NI procedures, more information can be obtained at www.dojni.gov.uk/accessni. A copy of this document in Microsoft Word format can be provided on request. Please note that Potential Suppliers are expected to meet any costs this may involve.

9. Merlin Standard

Not applicable.

10. Tender Clarification

- 10.1 DWP may need to clarify details of your tender and in those instances DWP will send any questions using the DWP eProcurement Portal to the named person (by email) that is registered on the system, who should arrange for a reply to be provided by the stipulated deadline.
- 10.2 DWP may seek independent financial and market advice to validate information declared, or to assist in the evaluation.

11. Potential Supplier Presentations

Not applicable.

12. eAuction Process

Not applicable.

13. Contract Award

Parent Company Guarantee (PCG)

- 13.1 If your company has a parent company and should you be deemed successful in tendering for this contract, then DWP will require a signed Parent Company Guarantee (PCG) to be in place prior to any contract(s) being signed.
- 13.2 The PCG is not be negotiable however there may be exceptional circumstances where the wording needs to be amended or an equivalent deed of guarantee supplied. These may include Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs), consortia and organisations that have parent companies based abroad.
- 13.3 If the parent company is a charity, the Authority would need to understand whether there is anything in the provisions of the charity's constitution that prevents them from being able to offer a PCG. In these circumstances the Authority may require an alternative guarantor.

Ranking Tenders – Recommendation for Contract Award

- 13.4 The tender process has been designed to ensure that tenders are evaluated fairly to ascertain the most economically advantageous tender and once the qualitative and financial aspects have been evaluated the Authority will produce a ranked merit list based on this tender process.
- 13.5 The Potential Supplier(s), who obtains the highest overall score from the evaluation process, taking into account the Award Criteria weightings, will be recommended for contract award. In the event of two or more Potential Suppliers achieving the same score after evaluation of the bids, a tie-breaker will be applied, which will involve additional weighting being awarded to certain questions in the ITT response. See **Appendix 2** for more information.
- 13.6 Before any contract can be entered into the Authority is mandated to seek and obtain Independent Approval, Ministerial Approval and possibly Crown Representative Approval.

14. Independent Approval

- 14.1 The results of the Qualitative and Price Evaluation Process (resultant rankings along with the marks awarded) will be independently checked and verified by individual(s) not previously involved in the procurement process.
- 14.2 Not applicable.

15. Ministerial Approval

Not required.

16. Crown Representative Approval

Not required.

17. Mandatory Standstill Period

17.1 The standstill period is a 10 day pause between contract award decision and the formal award of the contract. It applies to all procurements covered by the full scope of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The period allows unsuccessful tenderers to obtain more information on the award of the contract.

18. Publication of Contract Award on Contracts Finder

18.1 Irrespective of whether or not publication of a Contract Award Notice in OJEU is required, details of all contracts awarded with a value greater than £10,000 will be published on the Contracts Finder website. Details will be published after 20 days following the end of the standstill period.

19. Post Contract Award

Contract Documentation

19.1 The Authority will be responsible for producing a final contract document and issuing to the successful supplier.

Sustainable Development

Not applicable as contract will be for less than twelve (12) months.

Life Chances

Not applicable as contract will be for less than twelve (12) months.

20. Use of SMEs in the Contractor's Supply Chain

20.1 The Authority recognises the important role small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have in helping to deliver economic growth and prosperity. SMEs are defined as enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro. The Authority is committed to supporting the government's target of 25% of government spending with third party suppliers to go to SMEs through either direct spend or indirectly through the supply chain where it is relevant to the contractual requirement to do so and provides value for money.

20.2 In support of the government's commitment on SMEs, the Authority is putting in place processes to promote greater engagement with SMEs. The Authority encourages its suppliers to make their sub-contracting

opportunities accessible to smaller companies and implement SME-friendly policies in their supply-chains.

20.3 The Contractor is encouraged to:

- Open opportunities for SMEs in supply chains by splitting requirements into smaller elements to make them more attractive to the SME market whilst bringing innovation, flexibility and value for money
- Advertise any sub-contracting opportunities where appropriate and economical to do so, for example by using Contracts Finder or informing local networks/partners
- Where possible pay SMEs earlier than the contractual requirement of 30 days from receipt of valid invoice
- Work with SMEs throughout the life of the contract to develop innovative and cost effective solutions delivered through the supply chain.

20.4 Regular contract review meetings should be used to enable both parties to explore continued and increased use of SMEs where appropriate throughout the life of the contract. Additional information may be requested by the Authority on the volume of business undertaken throughout the supply chain with SMEs.

Expenditure with SMEs

20.5 The Authority is required to provide regular reports on the level of procurement spend with SMEs to the Cabinet Office. To measure and accurately report on this, the Contractor and where applicable, its sub-contractors shall identify the volume of indirect expenditure the Authority undertakes with SMEs and the Authority shall ask for this information from time to time and on behalf of the Cabinet Office.

21. DWP Complaints Procedure

21.1 The Authority has published a [Commercial Complaints Process](#) for use during competitive procurement.

Appendix 1

Financial Viability Risk Assessment

- 1.1 The aim of the evaluation is to ensure Potential Suppliers who proceed have sufficient resources to successfully deliver the contract with a minimal risk of failure. The assessment will consist of an evaluation of the accounts and other financial and organisational data that the prospective Potential Supplier makes available to DWP.
- 1.2 Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) will be assessed using the same approach as other companies, except each member of the SPV will have their contribution to the key metrics apportioned based on their equity holding in the organisation (or proposed equity holding if the SPV has not yet been formed).
- 1.3 In order to comply with the accounting standard, IAS 24 Related Party Disclosures, Potential Suppliers are required to ensure that their financial statements contain the disclosures necessary to draw attention to the possibility that its financial position, and profit or loss, may have been affected by the existence of related parties and by transactions and outstanding balances with such parties.
- 1.4 Where the Potential Supplier has a Parent Company, then the Parent Company accounts should also be supplied. See paragraphs 13.1 to 13.3.
- 1.5 In order for a like for like evaluation on Potential Suppliers based abroad, the Authority will require that all financial accounts are converted and supplied in GB sterling, stating the exchange rate used and the justification for this exchange rate.
- 1.6 The analysis of the accounts will consider the size of the business, its age and which sector of industry it is trading in, as well as focusing on appropriate ratio analysis and organisational growth. The financial appraisals will be conducted by suitably qualified and experienced staff to ensure an accurate, consistent and professional approach.
- 1.7 Individual Potential Supplier responses will be assessed on the following three areas:
 - Organisational Stability;
 - Financial Stability; and
 - Growth Management;
- 1.8 If the assessment of any of the above areas produces a RAG rating of **RED** the result will be potential elimination from the procurement. A Potential Supplier that has a negative balance sheet (technically insolvent) will be given a RAG rating of **RED**. Further investigation and

clarification will be required by DWP to fully understand the issues causing the red rating.

- 1.9 As part of such investigation and clarification DWP may require the Potential Supplier to provide supplementary information relating to the matters specified. If, following such clarification, DWP is satisfied that there are clear and robust mitigating circumstances, which provide satisfactory assurance that there is minimal risk of contract failure as demonstrated by the clarification and/or supplementary information provided then DWP reserves the right not to eliminate the Supplier from the procurement process, and to amend the RAG rating from RED to **AMBER**.
- 1.10 If a Potential Supplier identifies that their organisation will be rated RED, but believe there to be mitigating circumstances, then they should submit an explanation and supporting evidence of the mitigating circumstances with their annual accounts.
- 1.11 If any Potential Suppliers score a mixture of **AMBER** and **GREEN** in the criteria listed in **Annex 2**, the greater number of **AMBER/GREEN** takes priority. If a Potential Supplier has an equal number of **AMBER/GREEN** the Potential Supplier will be deemed **AMBER**. An **AMBER** rating does not exclude an organisation from progressing in the competition.
- 1.12 For a Potential Supplier which achieves an **AMBER** rating it may be necessary, before contracting with them, for the Potential Supplier to supply additional evidence that they can manage the level of growth, from an organisational, financial and delivery perspective. **Annex 1** provides the RAG criteria and related action across all areas of the assessment.

Organisational Stability

- 1.13 This section focuses on the overall stability of the Potential Supplier based on set criteria. Using the data supplied in the financial statements, an assessment will be completed to determine the stability of the Potential Supplier. If the assessment raises major concerns about the Potential Supplier please see the qualification table at **Annex 2** for more information this will result in the Potential Supplier being given a **RED** rating which will result in the potential elimination from the process.
- 1.14 Potential Suppliers who do not fall into the above rating category will receive a **GREEN** rating.

Growth Management

- 1.15 This section provides an initial assessment of a Potential Supplier's ability to manage the contract. Please see **Annex 3** for details that will be used in the assessment at this stage.

1.16 Turnover growth analysis will focus on the contract limit, and a Potential Supplier's ability to manage a single contract.

1.17 This analysis will be used to identify how the Potential Supplier is likely to achieve the following:

- **Financial Strength** - can the Potential Supplier cope financially with the size of contract or asset requirement; and
- **Capacity** - does the Potential Supplier have the resource to carry out the work.

1.18 DWP will assess each Potential Supplier's ability to carry out and complete the contract, and will calculate a Potential Supplier threshold initially based on 75% of their turnover. Organisational / group / SPV structures will also be taken into account, where appropriate, as part of this financial threshold calculation. It is anticipated that this financial threshold must be equal to or higher than the annual contract value to progress.

1.19 Failure to meet the threshold will not mean automatic elimination from the competition, but further assurances will be sought by DWP regarding the Potential Supplier's ability to grow and cope with the requirements of the contract. Failure to provide these assurances will result in elimination from the competition.

1.20 If the Potential Supplier progresses through to future stages of the procurement exercise, a Growth Capacity model may be used to explore financial and non financial elements to further measure growth potential. This will be dependant on contract size. The non financial elements will include, but not be limited to:

- Strategic Management;
- Supply Chain Management;
- Infrastructure;
- People and Skills; and
- Policies and Procedures.

Financial Stability

1.21 This section involves completing a ratio analysis of the financial information contained in the Potential Supplier's financial statements and will inform the outcome of this part of the assessment.

1.22 Two ratios will be analysed: the Acid Test ratio (1) and the Debt ratio (2). Please see **Annex 4** for details of the scoring and weighting criteria that will be attributed to this assessment.

1.23 When analysing a Potential Supplier's Liabilities, DWP will exclude any amounts in relation to Provisions for Pensions Liabilities

Outcome

1.24 The overall outcome of the analysis is intended to produce a field of Potential Suppliers considered viable to undertake and conduct the contract.

ANNEX 1
Qualifying Criteria

The following table defines the RAG assessment and related action.

Criteria	Outcome
RED - Potential Elimination	Potential Supplier exits the exercise subject to paragraph 1.8 of Annex 1 refers.
AMBER - Tentative Progression	Potential Supplier progresses to next stage, but analysis continues and a dialogue commences between DWP and the organisation. The possibility of elimination at a later date does exist, but is not definite.
GREEN - Progression	Potential Supplier progresses to next stage

ANNEX 2

Elimination and Progression Criteria

The following table shows the elimination/progression criteria for the assessment:

Measure	Criteria	Action	RAG Rating
ORG STABILITY	Negative Balance Sheet (technically insolvent)	Elimination from the process subject to paragraph 1.8 of Annex 1 refers	Red
	The organisation is actually Insolvent, or is in the process of being declared insolvent.	Elimination from the process	Red
	The organisation has been wound up or is in the process of being wound up.	Elimination from the process	Red
	The organisation is in administration or is in the process of being put into administration.	Elimination from the process	Red
FINANCIAL STABILITY	Ratio Analysis AMBER = 2 to 6 points	Tentative Progression or Progression depending upon outcome of analysis. Progression	Amber
	GREEN = 7 to 10 points		Green
GROWTH MANAGMENT	Growth Management - Under minimum contract value	Elimination from the process subject to paragraph 10.19 above	Red
	Growth Management - Over minimum contract value	Progression	Green

ANNEX 3

Turnover Growth Methodology

The table below shows the scoring and weighting mechanism for Turnover Growth (paragraphs 1.15 to 1.20 of Annex 1 refers).

Criteria	Score
Turnover Growth	<p>Greater than 75% = Red</p> <p>Less than 75%> = Green</p>

ANNEX 4

Financial Stability and Growth Management Scoring Methodology

The financial tests performed during the evaluation process are as follows (paragraphs 1.21 to 1.23 of Annex 1 refers):

Criteria	Score
Acid Test Ratio	>1.1 = 5 >0.8 <1.1 = 3 <0.8 = 1
Debt Ratio	<0.5 = 5 >0.5 <1.0 = 3 >1.0 = 1

- i) All Potential Suppliers will be given an **Amber** or **Green** risk rating based on this assessment. **Green** and **Amber** risk rated Potential Suppliers will be deemed as having passed the analysis for this competition.
- ii) For those Potential Suppliers achieving an **Amber** rating Finance may seek further clarification and reassurance that any potential risks can be fully mitigated.
- iii) Potential Suppliers scoring between 2 and 6 marks in total are given an **Amber** rating; Potential Suppliers scoring above 6 marks in total are given a **Green** rating.
- iv) When analysing a bidding organisation's liabilities, Finance will exclude any amounts in relation to provisions for Pensions Liabilities.

Appendix 2

Tie Breaker

1. This will only be applied where two or more winning Potential Suppliers have achieved the same score in the evaluation of the bids. In these circumstances, the tie breaker will involve additional weighting being awarded to certain questions in the ITT response.
2. Where a tiebreaker is required, it will be applied to the scores of all Potential Suppliers with winning equal; scores. Note that the use of one tie breaker may not be sufficient to clearly identify the winner. So in the event that the first tie breaker does not produce a result which differentiates the Potential Suppliers who have the same score, a second tie breaker will be used.
3. The application of the tie breaker will be as follows.

Step 1 –

10% of the total weighted score for **question 2.4.1 of the ItT response** (Delivery Proposal), will be added to the Final Score.

Step 2 –

10% of the total weighted score for **question 2.4.3 of the ItT response** (Human Resources), will be added to the score from Step 1.

Step 3 –

10% of the total weighted score for **question 2.4.4 of the ItT response**, (Previous Experience), will be added to the score from Step 2.

4. If when applying the tie breaker, a clear result is identified (i.e. the tie breaker score differentiates the Potential Suppliers who have the same score from the initial evaluation of bids), the process will be terminated at that step. If a winner is identified at any step, they will be appointed as a Preferred Supplier.

