National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Tender: Specialist Mental Health Guideline Development Support Unit

1. Introduction

*NICE is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) and the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance and advice on promoting high quality health, public health and social care in England.*

The Centre for Guidelines (CfG) at NICE makes evidence-based recommendations on a wide range of topics, from preventing and managing specific conditions, improving health, and managing medicines in different settings, to providing social care and support to adults and children, and planning broader services and interventions to improve the health of communities.

NICE wishes to commission a Specialist Mental Health Guideline Development Support Unit (SMHGDSU) to support its guidelines programme. The SMHGDSU will act as a credible source of subject matter expertise in mental health guideline development across NICE. The SMHGDSU will work with NICE to support committee decision making by producing evidence reviews, economic evaluations and other evidence-based products.

This is an exciting and challenging opportunity for a high calibre external unit to contribute to the work of NICE and we are inviting tenders for this work.

The contract for this work will commence on the 1st April 2023.

The contract will be for an initial period of 3 years. The agreement shall have an option to be extended for a further two 12 month periods, so that this contract may remain in force for a series of 1 year periods terminating on 31st March 2028.

The budget will be £335,634 per annum for the initial period of three years after which time the budget will be varied according to the work programme requirement.

1. The role of the Specialist Mental Health Guideline Development Support Unit
   1. Objectives

The key objectives of the SMHGDSU are to:

* act as a credible source of subject matter expertise in mental health guideline development across NICE.
* support committee decision-making by producing high-quality evidence reviews, economic evaluations and other evidence-based products, in line with NICE methods and processes
* work with NICE to contribute to the ongoing assessment, refinement and innovation of guideline methodologies and processes to ensure approaches are fit-for-purpose
  1. Specific tasks

The SMHGDSU will work in line with NICE methods and processes for the development of evidence-based guidance. Documents describing the methods and process employed by NICE are available from NICE’s website https://www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg20.

Guidelines have 3 stages:

* Scoping – the scope of the project is determined and the committee recruited.
* Development – the evidence is reviewed and the committee drafts the recommendation.
* Consultation and validation – stakeholders provide comments on the draft guideline and the committee finalises it for publication.

The subject matter of individual guidelines will determine the specific tasks undertaken by the SMHGDSU. Working with internal developer technical teams, the following activities will be required:

**Scoping**

* identifying what the guideline will and will not cover, and the key areas and draft review questions to be addressed.
* attending and participating in up to three Scoping Group meetings per guideline
* recruiting a topic advisor with relevant specialist experience and committee members to form a guideline committee

**Development**

* Providing training and support to committee members to enable them to interpret the findings from the effectiveness and economic evidence and understand the processes NICE uses to develop recommendations
* developing draft review protocols for each review question addressed by a guideline, obtaining input on the required content from the committee
* amending draft review protocols to resolve queries raised by the NICE project team during quality assurance
* producing evidence reviews, in line with agreed protocols, to inform the development of guideline recommendations (see chapter 4 <https://www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg20/chapter/developing-review-questions-and-planning-the-evidence-review>, and chapter 6, <https://www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg20/chapter/reviewing-research-evidence> of The manual)
* producing economic analysis and associated reports, in line with agreed protocols, to inform the development of guideline recommendations (see chapter 7, <https://www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg20/chapter/incorporating-economic-evaluation> of The Manual).
* presenting the evidence reviews and economic analyses at committee meetings and responding to queries raised by committee members
* Transparent reporting of guideline committee’s decision making and interpretation of evidence (see chapter 9 of The Manual, <https://www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg20/chapter/writing-the-guideline>).
* attending and contributing fully to progress and monitoring meetings with the NICE quality assurance team throughout the development of each guideline.
* participating in weekly developer technical team meetings to monitor progress against deadlines and discuss technical issues arising from the work to produce evidence reviews and economic analyses.
* Amending evidence reviews and economic analyses after pre-consultation review by the NICE quality assurance team.

**Consultation and validation**

* Responding to stakeholder consultation comments on the draft guideline, including making relevant changes to evidence reports and economic analyses (see chapter 10 of the Manual, <https://www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg20/chapter/the-validation-process-for-draft-guidelines-and-dealing-with-stakeholder-comments>).

In line with the NICE 5-year strategy (<https://www.nice.org.uk/about/who-we-are/corporate-publications/the-nice-strategy-2021-to-2026>), NICE is exploring different approaches to guideline development and how it maintains and updates its existing portfolio of guidelines. NICE is committed to providing dynamic, living guideline recommendations that are up to date and which integrate the latest evidence, practice and technologies in a useful and usable format. Developing guidelines within suites (comprising multiple guidelines in a broad topic area) is a new approach for NICE.

The SMHGDSU will be required to use their subject matter expertise in mental health guideline development to provide support in establishing a mental health topic suite and maintaining the recommendations within that suite. The SMHGDSU will also be required to work with NICE to contribute to the ongoing assessment, refinement and innovation of guideline methodologies and processes to ensure approaches are fit-for-purpose. This will require business processes and methods to evolve over the period of the contract to reflect a new approach to ensure guidelines are useful and usable. There will also be a role to engage with other programmes at NICE on mental health topics to ensure alignment across all of NICE’s mental health outputs.

1. Skills required

Delivery of this service will require a customer-focused approach. The SMHGDSU will need personnel from a range of disciplines with a high degree of technical expertise. Some of the attributes NICE requires of the SMHGDSU are as follows:

* Subject matter expertise in mental health guideline development
* A multidisciplinary team or network of personnel, preferably with an academic affiliation, with proven expertise in methods of evidence selection, appraisal, synthesis and reporting, systematic reviewing, complex analysis (e.g. network meta-analysis) and health economic modelling and analysis. The team should be skilled at assessing, analysing and interpreting alternative data sources including qualitative studies, mixed methods evidence and ‘real-world evidence’.
* Experience of using evidence and modelling techniques to support decision-making, preferably in the context of the UK healthcare system.
* A thorough understanding of the current methods and processes used to develop NICE guidelines.
* A demonstrated ability to deliver high quality outputs to agreed timescales and specifications.
* Track record in delivering peer-reviewed publications in mental health guideline development
* Excellent communication skills, including presenting and writing skills.
* A good understanding of, and sensitivity to, the environment within which NICE operates.
* Experience working with confidential information.
* Familiarity with and commitment to working within the legislative environment that NICE is subject to (such as Freedom of Information and Data Protection).
* Experience of engaging with mental heath professionals and charities to develop products to support user needs.

1. Your proposals

Please provide answers to the numbered questions below.

* 1. Establishing the SMHGDSU
     1. Your proposed staffing structure of the Unit to meet the objectives, specific tasks and skills described above. Please include, the number and type of staff involved, their expertise, publication history and estimated time commitment per person
     2. Provide 2 examples of how you have effectively provided subject matter expertise in mental health as part of guideline development
     3. How you would deliver this service, to tight deadlines, in a collaborative way with the internal developers
     4. Your process for handling and storing confidential information (provide us with your policy for dealing with confidential information).
     5. Please describe your company’s Social Value Commitment to include:
* Fighting climate change - Effective stewardship of the environment
* Equal opportunity - Reduce the disability employment gap. Tackle workforce inequality
* Wellbeing - Improve health and wellbeing Improve community cohesion
* And any other social value commitment your company is undertaking
  1. Methodological rigour

The Supplier of the SMHGDSU shall ensure that their technical staff have a high degree of technical expertise in designing and undertaking evidence and economic reviews. Please address the following points:

* + 1. How will you ensure your technical staff have the necessary skills to appraise, analyse, synthesise, interpret and present different types of data. Expertise is required in critical appraisal, systematic reviewing, evidence synthesis, qualitative and quantitative analyses (e.g. thematic analyses, meta-analyses, network meta-analyses, mixed methods synthesis and primary data analyses from real world evidence sources) and economic analyses (including economic modelling)?
    2. Include details of your links/networks with any organisations that you would use as a flexible resource to ensure efficient working, and your process for engaging with them.
  1. Approaches to guideline development
     1. Provide a detailed description of how you would determine the most appropriate approaches for the evidence reviews; including how you would decide to use more complex methods such as statistical modelling, network meta-analysis, or mixed methods synthesis. Include a rationale for when each of these approaches might be used.
     2. Provide a detailed description of how you would determine the most appropriate approaches for economic analysis. Please describe how you will source/access non-clinical data and combine this with clinical data, (if applicable), to adopt the non-NHS/Personal and Social Services (PSS) reference case for economic modelling?
     3. Describe how you would incorporate real world evidence in guidelines focussed on mental health.

1. Project costs

Please provide a breakdown of the estimated budget necessary to deliver the Lot 1 service (excluding VAT). This should also show the estimated time commitment of core team members. Please complete the costing tables in the format provided below. Failure to complete in format provided may result in your offer being rejected. Where possible, bidders should indicate the maximum number of papers they could review within the available timeframe for this piece of work given their available staff resources.

1. **Resource Costs**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Staff/Resource Description | No. of Days per Staff/ Resource | Day Rate per Staff/Resource  (£) | Total Cost (£) |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

1. **Non-Pay Costs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Non-Pay Costs Description (must include supply of full text articles, Interlibrary loans and database costs): | Total Cost (£) |
|  |  |
|  |  |

1. **Total Costs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total Project Cost  ex VAT (£) |  |

Travel and Subsistence is to be included in the resource costs above.

1. *Policies and Financial Statements:*

As required by Public Sector regulations and in line with best practice, please provide one copy of each of your organisations policies relating to the following:

* Health and Safety;
* Environmental;
* Equal Opportunities and Diversity in the Work Place.

NICE recognises that some SMEs (Small, Medium Enterprises) (less than 50 people for a Small Enterprise and less than 250 for a Medium Enterprise) may not have formal policies available but still operate their businesses in a manner that is conducive to the above. If you are an SME and do not have formal policies in place, please submit with your response a written statement on how your company operates in light of the above three areas of legislation and best practice***.***

In addition, please provide the following:

* The last 3 years of audited accounts for your organisation. In the case of an SME where audited accounts cannot be provided, please provide 3 years balance sheets and a statement that you are an SME and exempt for audited accounts;
* A declaration (if applicable) of all current projects with clients or partners that your department/group/organisation is currently working with which could be seen as being detrimental or ethically opposed to the health aims promoted by NICE.

1. Instructions to tender

**Please be aware of the following important points when completing and submitting your tender:**

* All offers must be written in English;
* All offers must be submitted in accordance with the documentation provided herein. This must not be amended in any way.
* Interested parties are required to **Express an Interest (EoI)** no later than **UK local time 17:00hrs 13th December 2022.** Bidders who submit a proposal and have not sent and expressed an interest by the above time shall not be considered. An expression of Interest is to be submitted as an email to [barney.wilkinson@nice.org.uk](mailto:barney.wilkinson@nice.org.uk) containing the contact details of the individual who is leading your offer.
* **All offers must be submitted electronically, by email to:**

[**contract.bids@nice.org.uk**](mailto:contract.bids@nice.org.uk) **no later than 14:00 on 16th December2022**

* The offer email should be titled Guidelines SMHGDSU and [your company name]
* All offers must be accompanied by the forms requiring signatures. These are
  + The Form of Offer
  + The Redaction Requests form
  + Competing interests form
* Please also include your
  + Health and Safety Policy
  + Environmental Policy including any Carbon Reduction plans/ Reporting
  + Equal Opportunities and Diversity in the Work Place Policy
  + Your Accounts
  + If applicable, Your Organisation’s Modern Slavery statement
* Failure to comply with the requirements specification may result in your bid being rejected.

Before offers are submitted, those wishing to tender may have specific questions and queries regarding NICE processes or methods or the invitation to tender specification. This includes any desired changes to the Terms and Conditions of the sample contract – sample copies of the contracts have been attached for your consideration.

Under our procurement arrangements NICE has to ensure that all applicants receive equal treatment, and we will therefore share all information requests and responses with all applicants.

Consequently all questions and queries regarding the invitation to tender document, NICE processes and methods and the sample contract must be submitted by email to Barney Wilkinson, Associate Director Procurement at [**barney.wilkinson@nice.org.uk**](mailto:barney.wilkinson@nice.org.uk)  by no later than **5pm on 9th December 2022**.

The questions and answers will be collated and distributed by email to all potential bidders throughout the tender period with the final set being issued by 1**3th December 2022** Please note that there will be no telephone or informal or other kind of discussion between potential bidders and NICE staff after this document is dispatched.

Following assessment of tenders, a shortlist of bidders may be invited to an interview to further clarify aspects of their proposal with the CfG technical staff. If this is required, the interviews will take place on 9th or 10**th January 2023.** All bidders are requested to keep this date free at this stage.

The Bidder must be explicit and comprehensive in their proposals as this will be the single source of information on which their response will be evaluated.

The Bidder is advised neither to make any assumptions about their past or current Bidder relationships with NICE nor to assume that such prior business relationships will be considered in the evaluation procedure.

NICE shall have no liability for any cost or expense whatsoever that the potential supplier incurs as a result of participating in this procurement.

1. Modern Slavery

If your organisation (whole organisation including parent, group, or subsidiary) has a turnover of £36 million pounds or greater then please provide a Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement: this should set out the steps you have taken to ensure there is no modern slavery in your own organisation/business and that of your supply chain. If your organisation has taken no steps to ensure there is no modern slavery in your own organisation, then your statement should say so. Please note: a parent org/ group statement is acceptable; this is compliance with the Modern Slavery Act

**Procurement Timetable**

The estimated timetable for the remainder of this procurement is as follows, please note NICE reserve the right to amend and adjust this timetable at its discretion

The timetable for the tendering process is:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Date** |
| Issue of Tender | 09/11/2022 |
| Deadline for Expression of Interest | 13/12/2022 |
| Deadline for tender questions | 09/12/2022 |
| Final issue of responses to questions | 13/12/2022 |
| Tender submission deadline | 16/12/2022 at 14:00pm |
| Tender evaluation | 16/12/2022 – 03/01/2023 |
| Notify shortlisted Suppliers of interview  (if required) | 04/01/2023 |
| Interviews | 9/01/23 OR 10/01/23 |
| Winning Supplier Notice and Unsuccessful Suppliers Debriefed | 11/01/2023 |
| Alcatel Period (10 days) | 12/01/2023 – 24/01/2023 |
| Contract Award | 24/01/2023 |
| Contract Commences | 01/04/2023 |

***\*Please be aware this timetable maybe subject to change***

1. Selection criteria

Tenders will be assessed on the basis of

(i) the financial stability and company policies (which they will either pass or fail) and (ii) assessment of the project specification. Criteria for each are shown in the tables below:

* 1. Company policies and stability

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Company Policies | Pass/Fail |
| Financial Stability | Pass/Fail |

* 1. Project specification

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Criterion** | **Weighting** |
| Establishing the SMHGDSU | Staffing structure | 5 |
|  | Providing subject matter expertise | 10 |
|  | Delivering the service | 6 |
|  | Handling/storing confidential information | 4 |
|  | Social Value Commitment | 10 |
| Methodological rigour | Skills of technical staff | 5 |
|  | Links/networks with other organisation | 5 |
| Approaches to guideline development | Approaches to evidence reviews | 10 |
|  | Approaches to economic analysis | 10 |
|  | Incorporating real world evidence | 5 |
| Project cost & value for money |  | 30 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

* 1. Criteria and Scoring Guide

Each evaluator will independently evaluate each tender submitted and use the following guide to score each criteria, the scores of all evaluators per criteria are then averaged and the criteria weighting is then applied to give an adjusted score.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Score | Guide |
| -5 | The point is omitted |
| 0 | Not explained / repeat of specification |
| 1 | The point is not acceptable |
| 2 | The point is possibly acceptable |
| 3 | The point is acceptable |
| 4 | The point is well made and acceptable |
| 5 | Exceeds expectations / excellent |

1. Non-compliance

NICE expressly reserves the right to reject any proposal that:

* Does not follow the instruction to tender guidance;
* Is an incomplete proposal, where answers to any questions are not provided, or a reasonable explanation is not provided of why any answer to any question has been omitted;
* Refusal to adhere to or significant unacceptable changes made to the Terms and Conditions of Contract.