 

**Invitation to Tender for:**

**THE PROVISION OF A DOMESTIC VOID ENERGY MANAGEMENT SERVICE (including the installation of SMART Meters)**

**Contract Reference: C-012538**

**ITT Schedule 1 – Specification**

**Client: Newcastle City Council and Your Homes Newcastle**

**Nominated Representative: Your Homes Newcastle Limited**

**Background, Specification and Scope of Works**

**1. Introduction:**

Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) was established in 2004 to manage homes on behalf of Newcastle City Council (NCC). As an Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO), YHN is owned and controlled by NCC but operates at arms-length, with its own business plan, governance structure, workforce, operational procedures and premises.

YHN currently manages almost 27,500 general needs properties: approximately 26,700 on behalf of NCC, and almost 800 which are owned by Leazes Homes. YHN also manage approximately 1,500 leasehold properties on behalf of NCC.

As well as being one of the largest ALMOs in the country, YHN are one of the most diverse in terms of the range of services we deliver. YHN currently employ over 950 staff.

Our Vision: We want to be ‘First for Housing’

Our Purpose: Making Living Easier

Our Statement of Purpose: Delivering great services, enabling people to thrive in great communities, supporting a great city.

Our Strategic Objectives:

* Revolutionary services that support successful living
* Amazing places where people are proud to live
* Strong business, fit for today and ready for tomorrow

Our Values:

* Ready – Together we are prepared for anything
* Amazing – Exceed expectations
* Revolutionary – Have courage to be bold
* Energetic – Make every day count

Further information about YHN can be found at our website [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk)

The Clients (YHN and NCC) require the provision of a Newcastle upon Tyne citywide ‘domestic void energy management service’.

Each year YHN manages approximately 1,800 void properties, with each subject to various checks, remedial works, and cleaning to ensure its suitability for the next customer. It is vital utilities supply is not interrupted and, that any historic debt does not preclude a new customer from accessing gas and electricity or prevent YHN from carrying out compliance checks at the start of customers tenancies.

**2. Background**

There are currently a range of utility supply issues from when a customer vacates a property to when a new customer signs up to the tenancy.

**2.1 Accrual of standing charges and outstanding debt**

Most energy suppliers apply a daily “Standing Charge” regardless of how much energy is used. During the void period YHN is responsible for this charge, which for a single property is usually a minor sum, but across 1,800 voids annually this can amount considerably. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in some instances rather than covering standing charges only, YHN is paying off previous customers debt when the property is re-let.

**2.2 Missing pre-payment keys/cards and outstanding debt**

Lost or unavailable meter keys/cards impacts on YHN’s ability to carry out void repairs in a timely manner resulting in accrued costs from both unpaid energy debt left by previous tenants and delayed repairs. New customers are unable to access energy supply at the start of their tenancy, which also prevents YHN from carrying out compliance checks. An increasing number of properties have prepayment meters and in a number of cases, the incoming customer has not been able to use electricity or gas because meter keys/cards are missing.

**2.3 Unavailable meter readings and outstanding debt**

Most issues are caused by the lack of final meter readings, due to customers and/or YHN Officers not being able to easily access meters, or find them broken or missing. Specifically, in the case of prepayment meters, outstanding debt can mean that where meters can be topped up, a large amount of this is used as debt repayment. When a new customer moves into the property, they may find themselves topping up a meter but losing a significant amount of credit, as a repayment on the old tenant’s debt. It is unclear when an account is set up in a new customers’ name if they receive back any credit lost to old debt.

**3. Specification and Requirements**

NCC supported by YHN would like to procure a void energy service, which meets the requirements outlines below aligned to each of three stages in the evaluation process in ITT Schedule 8.

**Stage 1 Real Living Wage:** NCC as an accredited living wage employer, require clients to have a ‘Real Living Wage Policy’ as evidence they pay real living wages (www.livingwage.org.uk) to staff associated in delivering this contract.

**Stage 2 Cloud Portal Solution:** In addition to portal requirements under theme 4 in the service provision requirements table below, NCC require any online portal to be provided as part of the contract to meet compatibility and data security standards. These will be evaluated on completion of the ‘Supplier Questionnaire for Cloud Solutions’ in ITT schedule 5**.**

**Stage 3 Service Requirements:** NCC require a contract that meets the service provision requirements in the table below. These will be evaluated on completion of the ‘Quality Questionnaire’ in ITT schedule 6.

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| **Theme** | **Ref** | **Service Requirements** |
| **1. Void energy management service and supply takeover process** | 1.1 | Notifies existing supplier/s of occupier change to NCC or Leazes Homes void properties to ensure takeover of electric and gas supply including properties with different suppliers for gas and electric.  **Note:** YHN is responsible for the energy supply in various types of void properties including;   * empty properties requiring repairs before letting to new tenant * empty properties scheduled for demolition * decant properties occupied by temporarily housed customers * scheme properties occupied by customers requiring investment works e.g. new gas connections, Northern Gas Network new installation system in area |
| 1.2 | Provides YHN ability to withdrawn/cancel energy switch/takeover in event customer decides to withdraw termination notice with no impact on the Customer’s current supply |
| 1.3 | Provides a dedicated Contact Officer for staff to contact ‘24/7’ using dedicated number and email address |
| 1.4 | Provides a dedicated Account Manager for contract and service arrangements |
| 1.5 | Sets clear targets and timeframes for energy switch process |
| **2. Energy meter management and SMART meter installation** | 2.1 | Where electric key and/or gas card meters are present in a void and either a SMART meter can’t be installed or installed in time for repair work to start, provides;   * Processes for YHN to request electricity RTI/Reset codes and new keys and/or gas cards to be delivered the property * Gas cards to change the meter to energy providers’ settings and clears all debt * Electricity RTI codes programmed onto blank keys with all debt clear * YHN ability to access energy supply to carry out works and provide meter readings as soon as possible from day of void |
| 2.2 | Where required and possible, install SMART meters following required standards (SMETS2 compliant, BSC codes, DCC of practice), with provision for;   * Meters to be interchangeable between credit and pre-paid * Take meter reading at point of install * Install includes integrated double pole isolator switches |
| 2.3 | Removal of energy meters and end to energy supply in voids identified in our demolition programme |
| 2.4 | Resolves any faulty, missing, tampered with and/or unsafe energy supply; with urgent meter replacement free of charge. In decant and scheme void properties occupied by customers; resolve within 24hr for high-risk and 48 hrs for others |
| 2.5 | Process to arrange property access will be via a key safe or fob entry with no requirement for YHN staff onsite, unless in the event of an access issue or pre-arranged access arrangement |
| 2.6 | Sets clear targets and timeframes for keys/cards, SMART meter installations and meter replacements/issue resolution |
| **3. Void Energy**  **Financial Management**  **and Financial Benefits** | 3.1 | Ensures any historic and/or energy debt left by vacating tenants is effectively managed and cleared |
| 3.2 | Offers credit at start of void on meters to cover any initial consumption charges |
| 3.3 | Offers of free ‘standing’ charges during void period |
| 3.4 | Sets clear consumption charges during void period with any charges incurred between start void date and re-let date the responsibility of YHN to pay |
| 3.5 | Provides option to top up card and/or keys where unable to install SMART meter |
| 3.6 | Offers consolidated billing and invoicing of all Leazes and all NCC void managed properties for processing via YHN Payments finance team |
| **4. Online Portal** | 4.1 | Provides a secure online portal for data sharing and tracking the progress of energy switch and meter installations, which is accessible via desktop, laptop, or mobile with clarity around user number restrictions |
| 4.2 | Provides ability to input dates relating to notice of and termination dates, void end and re-let dates, new tenant data, and meter readings where necessary throughout the void journey |
| 4.3 | Creates log-ins for each identified YHN user and provides operational training and guidance manual |
| 4.4 | Provides on-going help desk and technical support |
| 4.5 | Provides data transfer of all property stock including all existing voids via bulk upload and then void by void if needed (e.g. new builds not in original upload) with a property finder/checker to ensure details are correct and align to YHN property records |
| 4.6 | Provides autocomplete Meter Point Administration Number (MPAN) and Meter Point Reference Number (MPRN) from postcode and house number property details |
| 4.7 | Provides reporting capabilities and options e.g.:   * Void numbers and switch turnaround times * SMART meter installations * Tickets raised and answered |
| **5. Customer care and customer service** | 5.1 | Provides customer welcome packs and energy supply arrangements with new tenants once the property is no longer void and supports tenants to register power with access to account information and energy tariff details for PAYG, DD or paper-based billing |
| 5.2 | Provides impartial energy price comparisons and options of either changing tariff or migrating supply to another supplier at no cost or penalty to the customer or YHN |
| 5.3 | Provides resolution to any supply issues experienced by customers from the day they get keys to property |
| 5.4 | Provides any discounted rates and schemes for new tenants e.g. warm homes |
| 5.5 | Has clear customer care, satisfaction and complaints policies |
| **6. Social values and added value** | 6.1 | Provisions to make the [North of Tyne Good Work Pledge](https://www.northoftyne-ca.gov.uk/projects/good-work-pledge/) to tackle poor employment and create good work |
| 6.2 | Demonstrates how you do or will work with the [www.skillshubnewcastle.co.uk](http://www.skillshubnewcastle.co.uk) in promoting employment, apprenticeships and placements as part of this Contract |
| 6.3 | Contributes to NCC’s [Net Zero Action Plan](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/our-city/climate-change-newcastle/net-zero-newcastle-2030-action-plan) and aims for sustainable procurement (see page p.81) |
| 6.4 | Contributes to any of the areas listed in the [Social Value Outcomes & Measures Framework 2020 document](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/default/files/business/C&P%20Plan%20Drafts%20202021/SV%20Outcomes%20Framework%20July%202020%20-%20Contract.pdf) and [NCC’s Social Value Commitments](https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/business-and-commerce/business-commerce/doing-business/social-value-commitment) to maximise better outcomes for Newcastle residents;   * Think, Buy, Support Newcastle (Employment; Investment; Training) * Community Focused (Safer & Healthier Communities) * Ethical Leadership (Improved Ethical Quality Standards; etc) * Green and Sustainable (Regulation & Quality Standard Compliance; Waste Reduction; Environmental Action; etc) |
| 6.5 | Contributes to reporting on mandatory annual Core Social Value Activity Indicators:   * Environmental Policy that applies to Newcastle activity * % of employees completed environmental training * No. of employees on contract using car share/public transport/cycle to work scheme * No. of Newcastle residents employed on this contract * Total amount supply chain spends in Newcastle on this contract * No. of accredited training opportunities on the contract completed/will be supported to completion by the organisation * No. of voluntary staff hours donated to support community activity in Newcastle on this contract * North of Tyne Good Work Pledge * Details of workforce representation * % of employees on more than 0 hours contracts |
| 6.6 | Anything else contractors to be offered, which may be of value to YHN and/or our customers during your void property energy management service, but at no additional cost to YHN/NCC. |
| **7. Health and Safety** | 7.1 | The Contractor must ensure all staff carrying out work on this contract are aware of and comply with, the Health & Safety (H&S) at Work Act and associated regulations. Post-tender, risk assessments must be carried out and any site-specific mitigation or control measures must be submitted and agreed with NCC and YHN prior to the commencement of the service. |
| 7.2 | Provisions for YHN to share with contractor any relevant H&S information, relating to each of NCC’s sites, so they can take into account any issues when developing risk assessments and procedures |
| 7.3 | Contractor personnel must carry identification cards (photographic if possible) whilst operating on contracts |
| 7.4 | Provisions for YHN to supply any Personal Risk Indicator (PRI) control measures and bespoke access arrangements to meet customer specific support needs |
|  | 7.5 | Contractor employees and any sub-contractor staff must have  CCN1 (core domestic gas safety) and MET1 (gas safety training)  certification as a minimum requirement |
|  | 7.6 | The contractor must demonstrate compliance with the Electricity  at Work Act 1989 as well as holding National Electricity Registration Scheme (NERS) accreditation |

**Note: Price is not forming any part of the evaluation for this requirement. The evaluation is totally based around your Quality criteria responses against the questions raised in the ITT Schedule 6 document (Quality Questionnaire). As such, it is expected that any successful Provider will not charge for these services.**

**4. Contract Period**

This Contract will be established for an initial period of 24-months (2-years) but, with an option to extend for a further, additional period of 2 x 12-months, taking the full Contract term to a maximum of 4 years. The Contract is intended to start in January 2024 or as otherwise agreed.

The Contract will be awarded to the Energy Provider who best demonstrates their ability to meet the exact requirements of the specification, as detailed in this document.