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**Tender for the admission to the Open Framework for The** **Provision of Post-Adoption Therapy Services for Adopt Thames Valley**

I-0003

Open Framework

Provider Entry Guide

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# The System

* 1. This Entry Guide takes providers through what an Open Framework is and sets out what providers need to do to offer post-adoption therapy services within Oxfordshire through the Open Framework.
  2. For clarity, the Open Framework is not a full DPS as defined under the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 but is a modified version. This is because Social Services are not subject to the full rigour of the procurement procedures set out in the Regulations.
  3. The overall system is made up of 2 elements:

1. Oxfordshire County Council will use the web-based Pro-Contract (Due North) system to manage the Open Framework for the application and admission process for providers wishing to join the Post-Adoption Therapy Services Open Framework.

(b) Call-Offs from the Open Framework will be undertaken via the Council's eBrokerage solution as and when required during the Open Framework Agreement Period.

# What is an Open Framework?

* 1. An Open Framework is a fully electronic process used by public sector bodies to award contracts for works or services. The use of an Open Framework to award such contracts ensures that the end-to-end procurement process is competitive, fair and transparent. Providers must meet the minimum required selection criteria for entry onto the Open Framework and maintain the requisite criteria throughout the Open Framework Agreement Period. There are no other restrictions on who can or cannot join the Open Framework and providers may apply to join at any time during the lifetime of the Open Framework Agreement Period as entry remains open throughout this period other than as indicated at 4.1 c below.
  2. The first tranche of appointment of providers on to the Open Framework will take place during November 2022, with the first call-off of contracts commencing 20th January 2023. After the initial tranche of appointments, subsequent applicants who submit an application for entry to the Open Framework will be notified of the outcome of their applications within the timescales set out in the Invitation To Tender (ITT) documents.

# How an Open Framework works

* 1. Applicants who wish to join the Open Framework must apply via the South East Business Portal (SEBP) online and complete the application and admission process. If their application is approved by the Council, they will be notified that their application has been successful.
  2. Successful providers will then have their details uploaded onto the eBrokerage system and receive notification of tender opportunities (work packages) that may arise and can then apply and respond to any of these in this online system.

# How Suppliers can join the Open Framework

* 1. It is a simple 3 step process to join the Open Framework consisting Registration, Application and Admission:

### Registration

Suppliers must first register on the South East Business Portal (SEBP) online at <https://www.businessportal.southeastiep.gov.uk>

### Application

* + - * The Application process consists of a series of questions which require your response.
      * To be accepted onto the Open Framework, the applicant must meet the Council’s required selection criteria.
      * During the Application process, applicants will be asked a series of mandatory questions that need to be answered.
      * The Invitation to Tender (ITT), Pricing Schedule, Form of Tender, documents will be available via the South East Business Portal.
      * Applicants will complete each of these documents as instructed in the ITT.
      * Applicants who are appointed to the Open Framework will be required to enter into an Open Framework Agreement before they can be eligible to respond to Call-Off Contracts under the Open Framework.
      * The Open Framework Agreement is published on the South East Business Portal. The Open Framework Agreement incorporates the Open Framework Particulars and the Open Framework Conditions of Contract (including the Schedules 1 – 7 (inclusive) comprising the Specification, Finance, Monitoring, Call-Off Contract Award Procedure, Form of Call-Off Contract, Information Governance and Safeguarding Schedules.
      * No unauthorised amendment to the Open Framework Agreement is permitted. Any provider making an unauthorised amendment to the Open Framework Agreement may be disqualified from the Open Framework procurement process.
      * To facilitate completion of the Open Framework Agreement, providers are asked, as part of the application process, to:

1. enter the relevant details on the Open Framework Agreement as directed by the explanatory footnotes in the spaces provided.
2. execute the Open Framework Agreement as a Deed, in the appropriate manner required; and
3. attach the executed Open Framework Agreement with the application on the South East Business Portal
4. and send the hard copy version to FAO Assunta Autuori, Woodley Community Centre, Hurricane Way, Reading. RG5 4UX
5. at the same time as submission of their Application.
   * + - Once an application has been approved, the Open Framework Agreement will then be sealed by the Council, be dated and become a legally binding agreement between the Council and the provider in respect of the operation of the Open Framework and the provision of the Services by the provider to the Council.
       - For the avoidance of doubt, acceptance of the Open Framework Agreement shall not guarantee acceptance onto the Open Framework, which shall be subject to successful completion of an application and approval by the Council.

### Admission

* + - * Once completed, Applications will be checked, evaluated and validated
      * Applicants will receive a notification confirming whether or not their Application to join the Open Framework has been successful.
      * If an application is unsuccessful, applicants may re-apply for entry onto the Open Framework at any time during the Open Framework Agreement period (unless the Open Framework has been closed for any reason). Applicants will be notified of the outcome within the timescales set out in the ITT documents.
      * As mentioned above, the Council will execute and complete Open Framework Agreements with all providers who are appointed to the Open Framework. Providers will not be eligible to respond to any call offs from the Open Framework prior to completion of the Open Framework Agreement. The Open Framework Agreement, including the full terms and conditions, is available via the system.
      * Applicants who are appointed to the Open Framework will also be required to complete a data collection spreadsheet which will be provided at the point of successful application to the Open Framework. The data will be used to create organisation and service records on the eBrokerage system.
      * The Council reserves the right to periodically close applications to the Open Framework and reopen the Open Framework. Applications that have been made to the Open Framework before the closing date will be processed.
      * The Council will maintain an Opportunity Notice on the South East Business Portal at all times while the Open Framework is open to new applications.

# Service Categories

* 1. The Open Framework consists of 2 categories:

Category 1 – Psychotherapy

Category 2 - Creative Therapies

* 1. During the application and admission stage applicants may register an interest in any or all of the categories listed and should indicate which therapies are being applied for.
  2. It is the responsibility of successful applicants joining the Open Framework to maintain their organisation and service records on the system to ensure up-to-date information is available to the Council for the call-off of contract process.

# Call-off Arrangements

* 1. The process for calling-off from the Open Framework is set out in Schedule 4 of the Open Framework Agreement.

# Suspensions and Termination

* 1. The Council reserves the right to suspend or terminate providers from the Open Framework for a Default under the Open Framework Agreement. Default includes, but is not limited to a Safeguarding embargo or a failure on the providers’ part to meet the selection criteria.
  2. Full details regarding the circumstances in which Council may suspend or terminate a provider’s appointment to the Open Framework are set out in the Open Framework Agreement (see Open Framework Conditions).

# Next Steps

* 1. Providers can only join the Open Framework by:
     1. Completing the Registration, Application and Admission process on the South East Business Portal (SEBP)
     2. Agreeing to use the council's e-Brokerage solution to receive and to respond to tender opportunities (work packages)
     3. Entering into the Open Framework Agreement with Oxfordshire County Council; and
     4. Approval of the application by the Council.