

# Education, Work and Skills FPS

Application Instructions and Guidance

April 2022

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The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the application process to the GMCA Education, Work and Skills Flexible Procurement System.

## FPS Description

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Details** |
| Initial OJEU Notice: | 4th September 2020 / Reference: 2020/S 175-423970 |
| Chest reference: | DN497325 |
| Procuring Officers: | Framework Manager: Emily Taylor |
| Period of the FPS: | 10 years from commencement. |
| Value over 10 years: | The total value of the contracts that are estimated to be awarded under this FPS is up to: £1 billion |
| Flexible Procurement System (FPS) | GMCA is prepared to receive applications to be included on the Flexible Procurement System (FPS) relating to the provision of education, work and skills.This shall be a single FPS that all named purchasing bodies shall have access to and may utilise in whole, or in part throughout its duration.Please note, suppliers not on the FPS will not be able to bid as a lead provider for education, work and skills further competitions that are competed through the FPS.The scope and ambition of the FPS is detailed in the Descriptive Document.Call-off contracts entered into under the FPS agreement shall commence on the call-off commencement date and shall expire no later than the date specified in the call-off contract. |
| Re-opening of the FPS | It is anticipated that the FPS will open at least once a year from this re-opening onwards. Following this re-opening, it is expected that the next application window will open in winter 22/23. |
| Requirement Matrix | The FPS will not be split into lots but rather suppliers are invited to complete 04 - The Requirements Matrix.Suppliers are invited to complete as much of 04 - The Requirements Matrix as they can demonstrate they can supply.  |
| Queries | Any queries must be submitted via the Chest portal ([www.the-chest.org.uk](http://www.the-chest.org.uk)), via the messages area, no later than the date specified in the timetable. Messages sent any other way or past the clarification deadline will not be answered.Other than the person or persons identified above, no purchasing body, GMCA employee, council employee or elected member of the council has the authority to give any information or make any representation (express or implied) in relation to this application process or any other matter relating to the FPS.Please note that GMCA’s responses to any queries or clarification requests may, at GMCA’s discretion, be circulated to all suppliers. |
| Submission instructions: | Applications must be sent via the e-tendering tool “The Chest” <https://www.the-chest.org.uk> no later than the date specified in the timetable.Please note that applications submitted via the portal are recognised as being legally binding. Therefore, an electronic signature or scanned version will sufficeLate submissions will not be accepted under any circumstances. |
| Launch Event and Application Workshop | GMCA will be holding an information event on Wednesday the 20th of April, places can be booked through the following link: [Education, Work & Skills Flexible Procurement System: Information Event Tickets, Wed 20 Apr 2022 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/education-work-skills-flexible-procurement-system-information-event-tickets-304064704717)We will also be holding an application workshop on Wednesday the 27th of April, places can be booked through the following link: [Education, Work & Skills Flexible Procurement System: Application Workshop Tickets, Wed 27 Apr 2022 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/education-work-skills-flexible-procurement-system-application-workshop-tickets-304090531967)It is strongly advised that all bidders attend these sessions. However, the recordings of each event will be made available on request. |

## Documentation

**The full suite of documents published with this opportunity are as follows:**

01 - FPS Descriptive Document

02 - Application Instructions and Guidance (this document)

03 - SSQ Response Document

04 - The Requirements Matrix

05.1 - Response Document – Characteristics

05.2 - Response Document – Interventions

05.3 - Response Document – Sector Specialisms

06 - FPS Terms and Conditions

Applicants are advised to read the FPS Descriptive Document and the Application Instructions and Guidance document (this document) to understand if this project is for them before taking the time to complete the application.

**New Applicants should ensure they return ALL of the following documents as part of their submission.**

* SSQ Response Document
* The Requirements Matrix
* The Requirements Matrix Response Document (For each criterion – Characteristic, Sector and / Occupational Specialism and Intervention)
* Supporting documentation as requested in the application documents

Applicants should read through the Application Instructions and Guidance document (this document) to understand how to complete the above documents, as not every section in each document is mandatory.

**Re-applicants (those that have applied previously and failed)** need only return the sections from the documentation above that they were previously unsuccessful for.

**Additional applications (those that are already accepted on to the FPS and are looking to increase the range of requirements they are considered for)** need only return the sections from 04 - The Requirements Matrix and the relevant 05 – Response Documents that they would like to be considered for but are not already approved for.

**All returning applicants must also ensure they sign and date any declarations in the 03 – SSQ Response document with your new submission.**

## Re-opening Timetable

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Date / Time** |
| Application window reopens | 14th April 2022 |
| Information event | 20th April 2022 – 11am to 12:30pm |
| Application workshop  | 27th April 2022 – 10am to 11:30am |
| Clarification deadline | 26th May 2022 – 12pm |
| Submission deadline | 6th June 2022 – 12pm |
| Notification of result | w/c 8th August 2022 |
| Framework agreement issued | w/c 22nd August 2022 |

## Minimum Standards

To join the FPS, applicants are required to pass all sections included in 03 – SSQ Response document. More detail on each of these sections is provided in the Application Instructions and Guidance document.

All sections of the requirements matrix are optional. However, the requirements matrix is used by purchasing bodies to filter a list of providers based on what they are approved to deliver, who will be invited to bid at further competition.

Applicants should apply for the requirements matrix section most appropriate to their organisation’s experience and capability. A response is not expected from applicants for every requirements matrix section, where it is not relevant to the bidding organisation.

Acceptance on to the FPS is **not** a guarantee of work.

## Completing the SSQ

### Scoring Principles

Applicants are required to complete every section within 03 – SSQ Response Document.

Should an applicant fail on any mandatory question, their whole application shall be rejected.

Information on what constitutes as a pass or fail for each section can be found in the guidance below.

### Guidance for Completing the SSQ Response

**Sections 1 – 3 – Potential Supplier Information and Exclusion Grounds**

The SSQ is a self-declaration, made by you (the potential supplier), that you do not meet any of the grounds for exclusion. If there are grounds for exclusion, there is an opportunity to explain the background and any measures you have taken to rectify the situation (GMCA call this self-cleaning).

Completion of Section 2 Mandatory Exclusion Part 1 and 2 provides a formal statement that the organisation making the declaration has not breached any of the exclusion grounds.

Consequently, GMCA requires all the organisations that you will rely on to meet the selection criteria to provide a completed Part 1 and Part 2. For example, these could be parent companies, affiliates, associates, or essential sub-contractors, if they are relied upon to meet the selection criteria.

This means that where you are joining in a group of organisations, including joint ventures and partnerships, each organisation in that group must complete one of these self-declarations. Sub-contractors that you rely on to meet the selection criteria must also complete a self-declaration (although sub-contractors that are not relied upon do not need to complete the self-declaration).

**Section 4 - Economic and Financial Standing**

The information provided in response to Section 4 will be used by GMCA to assess the Economic & Financial Standing of Applicants. An applicant that is unable to provide trading accounts for the previous 3 years shall provide evidence to support that it has bank accounts and shall provide a balance sheet and income statement to enable GMCA to access its Economic & Financial Standing. Applicants should state why they are not able to provide the information requested. In addition, GMCA will obtain a Dun and Bradstreet and a Company Watch Credit Reports for the applicant.

GMCA will rate applicants’ red, amber, and green depending on the Dun and Bradstreet, and Company Watch Credit Reports and / or their submitted financial information. Those rated red or amber will be subject to additional financial due diligence.

GMCA may also, at its discretion, undertake further financial due diligence where required in the professional opinion of its financial evaluator.

The Dun and Bradstreet, and Company Watch Credit Reports, where available, together with the information provided by the applicant in response to the Economic and Financial Standing Section, will be used by GMCA to undertake detailed financial due diligence. If a Dun and Bradstreet or Company Watch Credit Reports are not available, then GMCA will use other financial information provided by the applicant to assess their economic and financial standing.

Where GMCA concludes that there is insufficient information to assess the applicant’s economic and financial standing, or the information available leads to GMCA to conclude that the information provided is not acceptable, the applicant may be asked to provide further information. Where the information provided leads to an assessment that the applicant’s economic and financial standing is unacceptable, the applicant will fail this section.

The minimum annual turnover GMCA expects to see for the FPS would be no less than 2 times the highest contract value for which they are applying for. For example, if you are applying for the contract value of £3m to £5m GMCA would expect you to have a minimum annual turnover of £6m.

**Parent Company Guarantee and Indemnity**

Where the applicant has indicated in their response to Section 4 of the SSQ that their immediate or ultimate parent or holding company (as applicable) is prepared to guarantee their performance of the services under the contract, then GMCA requires applicants to submit three years full unabbreviated audited accounts for the ultimate parent or holding company to enable GMCA to establish their financial standing.

The ultimate parent or holding company must indicate they are willing to form a Deed of Guarantee and Indemnity should the applicant be successful at further competition stage.

**Section 5 – Technical and Professional Ability**

The information provided in response to Section 5 will be used by GMCA to assess the technical and professional ability of applicants. Applicants will not be scored in this section but are required to complete it.

Relevant experience and contract examples provided in Section 5.1 of the 03 – SSQ Response Document should relate to the examples you give in Section 6.

The contract value of the examples you provide should be consistent with the contract value you are applying for in the Requirements Matrix (the contract value tab).

Where you have delivered only part of a contract, for example as a subcontractor, you should provide the overall contract value and the value of your contribution to the contract.

**Scoring Methodology**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring criteria for section 6 and 7** |  |
| **Assessment** | **Interpretation** |
| Unacceptable / Serious Reservations | Does not meet the requirement and / or the evaluator has serious reservation of the supplier’s relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource and quality measures required to provide the supplies, with little or no evidence to support the response ORNo response | Fail |
| Acceptable  | Satisfies the requirement. Demonstration by the supplier of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource and quality measures required to provide the supplies, with evidence to support the response | Pass |

**Section 6 – Selection Questions**

The answers provided in your response will be evaluated as follows:

**6.1 Supplier Suitability**

There are three scored questions in this section, answers provided will be evaluated in line with the scoring methodology above.

An overview of the themes of each question can be seen below, but more detail on what each response should include can be found in section 6.1 of the 03 – SSQ Response Document. We encourage all applicants to read each of these questions carefully, as they each ask for different levels of evidence and examples.

6.1.1 Demonstrate a clear understanding of the priorities for the education, skills and employment landscape in Greater Manchester.

6.1.2 Track record in delivering high quality education, work and / or skills provision.

6.1.3 Demonstrate that they have robust performance management and reporting structures in place pertinent to your organisation

**6.2 Requirements Matrix Evaluation**

Please see the section below on completing the requirements matrix.

Applicants are required to tick the box in 03 – SSQ Response Document confirming that they have completed and uploaded 04 - The Requirements Matrix and relevant 05 – Response Documents.

**Section 7 – Social Value**

Applicants are asked to confirm they will support GMCA’s ambitions to deliver Social Value and are also required to confirm that they are willing to use the [Social Value Portal](https://socialvalueportal.com/the-portal/bid-submission/) at further competition stage. A response of yes is required for both of these sections.

As part of this section, applicants are also asked to provide two examples to describe how their organisation has demonstrated a commitment to social value in current and/or previous delivery (question 7.3)

The response provided to question 7.3 will be evaluated in line with the scoring methodology as set out above.

**Section 8 - Modern Slavery and Responsible Procurement**

As part of Local Government, GMCA recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking.  In addition to GMCA’s responsibility as an employer, it also acknowledges its duty to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking as introduced by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. GMCA is absolutely committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in its corporate activities and to ensuring that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking. GMCA requires that all direct suppliers, service providers and contractors to GMCA are absolutely committed themselves to preventing slavery within their own activities and through their supply chain which includes manufacturers, and producers.

The answers provided in your response to this section will be evaluated on the basis of pass/exclude. Applicants who self-certify that they do not meet the requirements of this section will be excluded. The provision of insufficient or false information and/or any responses that leads GMCA, acting reasonably, to conclude (considering the risk that the relevant answer concerns the applicant’s ability to properly perform the contract) that it would be inappropriate to select the applicant on this occasion, will result in exclusion.

**Section 9 – Insurance**

Applicants are requested to self-certify that they have in place or will be willing to obtain the required minimum insurance levels required to be accepted onto this FPS.

Applicants should note that these are the minimum requirements to obtain a place on the FPS. GMCA and purchasing bodies reserve the right to increase the insurance levels required at the point of further competition depending on the associated risk and contract value.

**Section 10 - Information Governance**

Applicants must self-certify their adherence to relevant data protection legislation (including GDPR) and their commitment to meeting independently certified standards of information governance controls and assurance around the proper processing, management, sharing and storage of personal data.

You must complete the box which states:

“Please indicate in which policy / procedure document this is laid out and where requested the page and section”

Applicants will fail if they do not complete all of section 10.1.

Section 10.2 should be completed by all applicants but is for information only purposes.

**Section 11 – Health and Safety**

Applicants with more than five employees are required to self-certify that they have a health and safety policy, signed and dated, and updated regularly.

A response of ‘no’ to question (a) without satisfactory explanation will result in the applicant failing this section.

A response of ‘yes’ to question (b) without satisfactory explanation will result in the applicant failing this section.

Applicants are required to provide evidence to GMCA of any remedial action or changes to procedures they have made to prevent future breaches implemented as a result of any enforcement or remedial orders. GMCA shall, at its absolute discretion, consider whether any such remedial action is satisfactory.

A response of ‘no’ to question (c), without satisfactory explanation, where the applicant has indicated in Section 1 that it proposes to use sub-contractors for the delivery of any part of the services described in the 03 – SSQ Response Document, will result in the applicant failing this section.

A response of ‘yes’ to question (d) without evidence will result in the applicant failing this section.

A response of ‘yes’ is required for questions (e) to (m). A ‘no’ response, will result in the applicants failing this section.

**Sections 12 – Safeguarding**

Applicants are asked to respond yes or no to each statement in this section.

This section will be assessed on a pass/fail basis. A response of ‘yes’ for any question (a) to (j) without satisfactory explanation will result in the applicant failing this section, other than where the question is marked for information only.

**Sections 13 – Contract Performance and Management**

Applicants are asked to respond yes or no to each statement in this section.

This section will be assessed on a pass/fail basis. A response of ‘no’ will result in the applicant failing this section.

**Sections 14 – Environment**

Applicants are asked to respond yes or no to each statement in this section.

This section will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

A response of ‘yes’ for question (a) without satisfactory explanation will result in the applicant failing this section.

A response of ‘no’ to question (b) will result in the applicant failing this section.

**Section 15 – Legislation**

Applicants are asked to confirm that they understand and comply with each of the legislation/codes in this section.

This section will be assessed on a pass/fail basis. A response of ‘no’ to any question A to G of them will result in the applicant failing this section.

**Section 16 – Freedom of Information**

This section is for information only. It must be completed by applicants.

**Section 17 – Declarations**

This section must be completed by all applicants, new and returning. Failure to complete this section will result in your application failing.

Before completing this section, all applicants should read 06 - FPS Terms and Conditions to review the framework agreement terms and conditions and the embedded draft call-off terms and conditions.

## Completing the Requirements Matrix

The Requirements Matrix is a tool that GMCA have developed as an effective way to identify suppliers with relevant knowledge and experience who can meet their education, work and skills commissioning requirements.

The Requirements Matrix is divided into 5 criteria (see below) and applicants are invited to review the descriptions against each criterion and sub-criteria before completing the Requirements Matrix.

The five criteria are listed below

1. Location of Supply and Applicant Specialism
2. Contract Value
3. Characteristic Group
4. Interventions
5. Sector and / or Occupational Specialisms

All applicants need to complete the Requirements Matrix. However, they are not expected to tick every sub-criteria, and should focus on the areas where they have relevant experience in delivering services which meet the descriptions against each criterion and sub-criteria.

### Applicant Instructions

**Location of Supply and Applicant Specialism**

**Location of Supply**

Applicants should tick **all** the areas they currently supply and **all** the areas they are willing to supply.

There are no evaluation criteria for this section. You will be accepted on what you tick.

Purchasing bodies may choose to focus on suppliers who can deliver in their geographical area or immediate neighbour.

Additional questions may be asked regarding location of supply at further competition stage.

Please complete this in 04 - The Requirements Matrix.

**Applicant Specialism**

Please tick on the requirements matrix if you are a Skills or Employment Services provider, or both

This information is not evaluated and is for information purposes only.

Please complete this in 04 - The Requirements Matrix.

**Contract Value**

Applicants are asked to indicate **ALL** of the contract values up to the highest they wish to be on the FPS for. Please ensure you tick your maximum contract value and all values below. Please complete this in 04 - The Requirements Matrix.

Applicants’ financial standing and ability to contract for the indicated value will be evaluated as part of GMCA’s financial due diligence as described in this document.

Applicants should note GMCA require an annual turnover of twice the lower contract value in the highest band you have indicated you would like to be approved for.

**Characteristics**

Applicants should tick the Requirements Matrix to show each ‘individual characteristic’ they wish to apply for.

Applicants must complete the 05.1 Response Document - Characteristics with their response / evidence to support their application.

Characteristics is split in to 3 sections:

**6.2a – Employment Status**

**6.2b – Demographic Considerations**

**6.2c – Personal Circumstances**

Details of the questions and what your response should include are detailed in the response document. But every response should include details of **specific, targeted programmes** with both **qualitative and quantitative** evidence of **impact and success.**

The maximum word count is **150 words** for each individual section

**Interventions**

Applicants should tick the Requirements Matrix to show each ‘Intervention activity’ they wish to apply for.

Applicants must complete the 05.2 Response Document - Interventions with their response / evidence to support their application.

Interventions is split in to 3 sections:

**6.2a – Supporting young people and adults to transition in to further learning or work**

**6.2b – Supporting individuals currently in work**

**6.2c – Supporting employers**

Details of the questions and what your response should include are detailed in the response document. But every response should include **specific examples** of delivery with **quantitative and qualitative data** that demonstrates **scale and impact**.

The maximum word count is **150 words** for each individual section.

**Sector and / or Occupational Specialisms**

Applicants should tick the Requirements Matrix to show each ‘Sector and / or Occupational Specialism’ they wish to apply for.

Applicants must complete the 05.3 Response Document – Sector Specialisms with their response / evidence to support their application.

Sector and / or occupational specialisms is split in to 4 sections:

**6.2a – Accredited Occupation**

**6.2b – Non Accredited / Non Regulated / Bespoke / CPD – Occupation**

**6.2c – Accredited Life Skills**

**6.2d – Non Accredited / Non Regulated / Bespoke / CPD - Life Skills**

Details of the questions and what your response should include are detailed in the response document. But the responses to accredited questions should include relevant **internal quality evidence**, **learner volumes** per qualification level, most recently **published achievement rates** and examples of **evidence which reflect programmes** of delivery.

Responses to non-accredited questions should include **evidence** of track record **designing and delivering** non-accredited training.

The maximum word count is **250 words** for each individual section.

## Next Steps

Applicants will be notified via the Chest of the outcome of their application, GMCA expects to communicate decisions regarding applications as indicated in the timetable.

Each applicant will receive a Letter of Result, in which details of whether or not an organisation’s application was successful and an Appendix 1 document which will provide details of which sections an application was successful on and feedback on unsuccessful sections.

Successful suppliers will then be issued with Framework Agreements, that will need to be signed and returned via the Chest.

## Filtering the Requirements Matrix

Where an applicant is successful, GMCA will put all the information into one master requirements matrix for the purpose of filtering their requirements.

Commissioners will filter on a sliding scale of what is important for their individual commission. For some commissioners, interventions might be the most important aspect of the project, and they will filter on this first. Other commissioners’ priorities may be a particular sector and / or occupational specialism and they will filter on this first.

Commissioners can use as many or as few filters as they wish. They may, for example, filter on all suppliers for the characteristic group ‘employment status’, or they may filter on ‘economically inactive’ only within the characteristic group ‘employment status’.

Where the matrix identifies fewer than 5 suppliers capable of delivering the service required, the commissioner will reassess the criteria and expand their priority categories until a minimum 5 suppliers are selected.

Commissioners may also filter across all 5 criteria and thereby reducing the number of potential suppliers to invite.

Where a commissioner requires more than one sub-criterion, they may filter on both requirements separately, clearing the search each time.

For example, if in characteristics they want providers who specialise in services for adults over 50+ or people from ethnic minority groups they will follow this process. This will prevent inadvertently deselecting providers who can’t offer one or the other and can only offer both.

If, however a commissioner wants a provider who can offer support to adults over 50 and people from ethnic minority groups then they will select both sub-criteria at the same time so that they only select suppliers who specialise in both.

Once a filtered list of providers has been obtained, a further competition will be launched via the Chest.

## Further Competitions

Following the establishment of the FPS, the call-off contracts for individual requirements will be awarded by further competition unless clause 6.5 of the FPS Terms and Conditions is used.

The further competition maybe in the form of any of the following procurement routes and full details of award and scoring criteria will be provided at the further competition stage.

* Further competition to all FPS suppliers
* Further competition inviting selected suppliers using the Requirements Matrix as described in the application documentation
* Competitive dialogue inviting all or selected suppliers to

Under Section 74 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 the purchasing body shall determine the procedures it will follow in connection with the further competition and subsequent award of contract. At all times it will adhere to the principles of awarding contracts as contained in section 76 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

As part of the further competition process suppliers may be expected to comply with the purchasing body’s policies, including but not limited to the following, should they be awarded a contract at further competition under this FPS agreement:

* Health and Safety
* Equality and Diversity
* Whistleblowing

The purchasing body shall issue a contract particulars document (Schedule 1, of the Call-Off Terms and Conditions) to all relevant suppliers, this must be completed and signed and returned to the purchasing body.

The following scoring methodology is indicated. However, purchasing bodies may wish to apply their own scoring methodology in evaluating further competitions, and this shall be acceptable and in compliance with the rules of the FPS.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Score** |
| **Disqualified –** No response, or irrelevant response that does not meet any requirements. | 0 |
| **Poor / Unacceptable** – Limited information provided, or response is inadequate (i.e. doesn’t demonstrate bidders’ solution is able to meet the requirements) or only partially addresses the requirements. Significantly deficient. | 1 |
| **Acceptable** - An acceptable response submitted in terms of the level of detail, accuracy and relevance, (i.e. demonstrated bidders’ solution meets the requirements). | 2 |
| **Comprehensive** – As with Acceptable, however, bidders’ solution is demonstrated to be comprehensive with a high degree of detail and relevance, | 3 |
| **Exceeded Expectations-** The bidder has gone over and above the requirements and has provided additional value | 4 |

Once a score has been allocated, it shall be multiplied by the relevant weighting in accordance with the below calculation:

(Score x weighting) / maximum score = weighted score

Once suppliers have been informed of the outcome of the further competition, the purchasing body shall issue a contract to the successful supplier. The Supplier shall respond to the purchasing body within the period specified by the customer in the contract particulars.

The contract will come into force when the contract particulars are signed by both parties. If the contract is not signed, the contract will come into force when the supplier is instructed in writing by the purchasing body to commence providing the services.

The supplier should note the purchasing body is not liable to pay for services undertaken by the supplier without a written, signed contract or written authorisation to commence the contract under the call-off terms and conditions.

Any resulting call-off contract will consist of the following documents:

* Call-off conditions of contract
* Contract particulars
* The specification
* The supplier’s response
* FPS terms and conditions (which includes)
* FPS service specification
* SSQ response document (including the requirements matrix and requirements matrix response document/s)

The operator will be required to sign the contract particulars document in order for a legally binding contract to exist between the purchasing body and the supplier. Only upon signature by both parties of the contract particulars document or receipt of an order number shall a legally binding contract be created.

The call-off contract will be subject to English law and the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

## Top Tips for Applications

The following might seem obvious but it’s worth considering the following when submitting your application.

* Read all the documents published with the invitation to application.
* Make a list of all the documents you are required to complete and return and be aware of what additional documents (e.g., internal policies) you will need to return as part of your application.
* Be clear on the internal resource you will need to assist with completing your application (e.g., finance, legal and IT).
* Attend the information and application workshop events.
* Be sure to read the clarification responses that will be published on the Chest throughout the application window.
* Submit clarifications through the Chest, try to submit multiple questions at once to ensure a quicker response.
* Read the question and be sure you understand exactly what it is asking of you.
* If the question says ‘your response should include’ make sure you include what is requested. If the same information is requested in more than one place, be sure to include it in all places.
* Please be aware the evaluation panel will be split for this process and evaluators will not have access to all documents submitted so will therefore only be able to evaluate questions on their own merit.
* Consider the layout of your response, for example, separating your response to address each bullet makes it much easier to evaluate and also ensure you have captured everything in your response.
* The word count is an indication of the detail the commissioners are looking for and should be utilised to its full extent.
* Don’t go over the word count, anything over the maximum will not be evaluated. Please note embedded documents or illustrations with text will be included within the word count, unless otherwise specified.
* When using acronyms please ensure it’s defined the first time it’s used.
* Avoid generic statements which aren’t substantiated. Where requested, use brief practical examples to back up the statements, providing quantitative and qualitative evidence.
* Don’t provide published data back to us without context. Use the data to tell us how the information has influenced your organisation or the services you provide.
* Make sure responses reflect your unique organisational characteristics and are not written generically in a way that could apply to any organisation.
* Ensure your response is clear and concise, limit the level of detail needed and don’t use up your word count with irrelevant detail not asked for in the question.
* Be sure to proofread your application and ensure the version uploaded is the final version with not tracked changes.
* Ensure you leave yourself plenty of time to complete and upload your application. Late applications will not be accepted.