

Case for Direct Award – Sustainability of the AI-powered Signposting Tool

Health Education England's (HEE) Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) programme has a vision that patients and public in England benefit from a health and care workforce educated using the most effective evidence informed technology and techniques.

As part of this remit, TEL has been exploring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as a means to provide personalised digital literacy learning recommendations. This work has been conducted by Filtered on behalf of the TEL programme over the past 12 months following a competitive tender.

In February 2020, a full tender process was undertaken by HEE to commission an AI powered signposting tool. The tender exercise attracted submissions, however, Filtered were the only suitable supplier in the market that met the HEE specification.

One of the key requirements was a ready-made solution that we could start using immediately and none of the suppliers could offer this without significant development. After reviewing the current market, we still believe Filtered are the only suitable supplier as there are no other suppliers with a ready-made AI engine, that supports presenting the recommendations via an API, that can perform the learning matching.

This continuation project links closely to the work that Filtered have already delivered to provide personalised digital literacy skills learning recommendations as an adjunct to the HEE digital literacy self-assessment diagnostic tool. It is essential for TEL to maintain the current tool to build on these foundations and processes to support the development and continuous review of the learning.

If the existing supplier cannot continue to provide the current service to HEE, it is believed that the impact on the service will be detrimental for several reasons:

- The recommendation tool would cease to function when the current contract expires.
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has meant there is a need to rapidly upskill NHS staff digital capabilities and the tool has proved to be an important tool to support this.
- The objectives and longer term aims of the project are still being proven so a change of supplier at this stage would impact that.
- There would be an impact on the delivery timescales and cost of the project.
- There would be a negative impact on the wider health and care system as there is an expectation of continued engagement with the current service.

The total value of this contract is £62,300 exclusive of VAT.

Based on the outcomes of the previous procurement exercise, HEE believes Filtered are the only suitable supplier who will be able to provide the required standard, consistency and outputs to meet the urgent deadline of March 2021 when the current contract ends.