**Request for Expressions of Interest for Digital Advisors to support the**

**Kent Technology Resilience Voucher Scheme**

**Section 1 - Scope and Context**

Kent County Council is leading on a new EU-funded project called C-Care ([Covid Channel Area Response Exchange](https://www.kent.gov.uk/business/business-loans-and-funding/eu-funding/eu-funded-projects/c-care-covid-channel-area-response-exchange)). The project aims to respond to some of the socio-economic challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. C-Care involves 4 English and 3 French partner organisations who are jointly implementing the project. C-Care will provide support to businesses and individuals at risk of exclusion in the France-Channel England area to aid economic recovery.

As part of this project, the Growth & Communities Division within Kent County Council will run a **‘Technology Resilience’ voucher pilot scheme** to provide support to Kent businesses which have been impacted by the pandemic. The scheme is a non-statutory service and will enable Kent businesses to apply for a ‘voucher’ to implement a digital solution or project to help them with business resilience and economic recovery. In order to enhance the ‘offer’ from the scheme and help voucher applicants to establish which digital or technology interventions could have the biggest impact on their activity, Kent County Council will also appoint some **digital business advisers** to offer advice as part of the scheme.

A detailed Digital Adviser specification, which includes a summary of the C-Care project and its aims and objectives and an overview of the Technology Resilience Voucher Scheme are attached to this request for quotation, to provide the context for the required work.

**Section 2 - Requirement**

Kent County Council is looking to procure the services of **business advisors who specialise in providing digital and technology advice to SMEs**. These advisors will offer expert advice, guidance and recommendations to Kent-based businesses wishing to apply for a Technology Resilience Voucher to help them in targeting activity within their application form to ensure that the vouchers have the maximum impact for the successful applicant SMEs and for the Kent economy in general.

Businesses may be at the very start of their digital journey, knowing that they want to do more with ‘digital’ but not knowing how, the options right for them or where to go for suppliers. Others might have an idea that they want to explore but need convincing of the benefits of using digital technology to do so. Or they may have a clear idea about what they want to do, the digital technology they need to do so but need a critical friend to challenge their ambitions, and to strengthen them.

Advisors will be expected to offer 1-2-1 consultations with Kent businesses (online or in-situ at the company premises), to carry out an **assessment / audit of current levels of digitalisation** among potential applicant SMEs and produce a **short report with recommendations and an action plan** for the SME (to be shared with KCC for project monitoring purposes). The report will not only help the SME to complete their application for the voucher scheme but also provide a series of ‘next steps’ for the SME in making use of digital technologies as part of their development whether their application for a voucher is successful or not. Templates for the digital audits, reports and action plans will be agreed between Kent County Council and the pool of digital advisors prior to any work being undertaken.

***Digital Audit***

Digital Advisors will be required to conduct a digital audit for the SME to determine:

* Which stage of their digital journey the client is at;
* The client’s awareness of and skills in using digital tools;
* The client’s experience in using digital tools;
* The type of support / digital tools / training the client could benefit from and tangible details of the expected benefits of adopting new digital solutions.

Digital Advisors will be expected to elaborate on areas of particular interest or challenge that come up in the audit and develop discussion, introduce ideas and share expertise with the client around which technology / tool / training is necessary or can be beneficial for the client’s technology resilience.

The Digital Audit should result in:

* The client maintaining control and ownership of the activities to ensure their technology resilience.
* The client receiving sufficient support that will motivate them to take the necessary actions to improve their level of technology resilience and make further growth plans.
* A Digital Audit Report to summarise the findings of the audit in terms of the client’s digital needs. The Report will be shared with the client and Kent County Council (solely for the purposes of the C-Care programme).
* A Digital Action Plan, that identifies opportunities for enhancing the client’s technology resilience and options for new technologies, tools and methodologies and make suggestions on the most suitable and beneficial options.

The audit should not contain the following:

* Wider ranging discussions about general business issues and plans outside the scope of enhancing the client’s technology resilience.
* Solutions similar to the ones already in place by the client, or replacement of similar tools.
* Recommendations relating to a specific supplier of Digital Services for the next step of the Scheme.

***Digital Audit Report***

Digital Advisors will be required to prepare and submit to the client and the KCC a Digital Audit Report, to summarise the findings of the Digital Audit.

It is expected that the Advisors will keep notes of the audit meeting and present them later in a formal manner, summarising the discussion points and opportunities and challenges discussed. The Report should be clear and straightforward enough for the client to be able to understand and refer to. It needs to be agreed on by both the client and the advisor and will link directly to the Digital Action Plan.

***Digital Action Plan***

The Digital Action Plan will be developed based on the findings of the Digital Audit and provide a clear link with it.

The Digital Action Plan should include, but not be restricted to, the following:

* A range of digital tools / technologies / training that will benefit the business. The Digital Advisor should demonstrate what the benefits will be and how they will be achieved.
* The steps / measures / actions the business needs to take in order to adopt and benefit from the proposed digital tools / technologies / training.
* The objectives set for the business should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time relevant.
* Guidance on the type of supplier that would be suitable to implement the suggested steps / measures / actions.
* Guidance on the anticipated cost involved in implementing the Digital Advisor’s suggestions.

**Key considerations for potential bidders:**

1. It is anticipated that the advisors would spend around 1.5-3 hours with an SME carrying out a digital technology assessment and a further 2-3 hours to finalise a report, including recommendations and an action plan. The maximum amount of advise is capped at 6 hours per individual business.
2. SMEs would book an appointment with a digital advisor via Kent County Council and it is anticipated that there may be high demand for advisor time prior to and around the launch of the voucher scheme (November 2021 to February 2022) and, depending on how quickly the 300 vouchers are allocated, support from the digital advisors would be ongoing while the scheme is live.
3. Bidders cannot also be part of the separate Technology Resilience Voucher Service Provider Framework as this would lead to a conflict of interest
4. Successful bidders would submit a profile of their specialisms / areas of expertise and successful voucher applicants would select a 1-2-1 with the most relevant advisor to their business and proposed voucher project (as a result, some digital advisors may receive more work than others as part of the project). Indeed, there is no guarantee of work or contracts being placed with each advisor even if selected to join the pre-approved list of digital advisors.
5. Payments would be made to digital advisors on a monthly basis based on the number of assessments carried out / hours worked as part of the C-Care voucher scheme.
6. Tenderer are requested complete the appendix 1 on 18th Oct 2021

**Timeline:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Timing** |
| Requests for quotations circulated | 22 September 2021 |
| Deadline for quotations to be submitted | 18 October 2021 |
| Review of quotations | w/c 18 October 2021 |
| Framework finalised | w/c 27 October 2021 |
| Technology Resilience Voucher Scheme Launch | 1 November 2021 |
| Technology Resilience Voucher Scheme Completion | 30 November 2022 |

**Section Three - Selection Criteria**

**Tender responses:**

In their response to the tender specification, bidders should cover the following points:

1. A summary of the business/consultancy/consultant/adviser, its/her/his expertise in one or more of the topics / technologies covered by the voucher scheme.
2. Details of relevant previous experience in advising small businesses about digital and technology-based activity
3. Details of any sector or industry specialisms
4. An hourly rate that would be applied for work carried out as part of the voucher scheme advice service.
5. Details of any additional costs that might need to be considered e.g. mileage rate / train travel to meet with Kent SMEs

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS EVALUATION

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tender Response Quality & Price | 100% | Each criterion will be marked using the scale 0-4 and the specified weighting applied. The formula to calculate the weighted score will be:  (marks awarded / marks available) x weighting.  **For example,** if the weighting is 20% and the maximum mark is 4, and the mark received is 3, the weighted score would be 12, as below:  (3 / 4) x 20 = 15  NB: For the purposes of this calculation, weighting is expressed as a number not a percentage. |

SCORING METHODOLOGY

Where indicated, responses to quality criteria will be scored in line with the following marking scheme:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Description** |
| 0 – Unacceptable | Nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement. |
| 1 – Poor | Response is partially relevant and poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled. |
| 2 – Acceptable | Response is relevant and acceptable. The response addresses a broad understanding of the requirement but may lack details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas. |
| 3 – Good | Response is relevant and good. The response is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled. |
| 4 – Excellent | Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full. |

Individual evaluators will mark using whole numbers only (i.e., 0, 1, 2, 3, 4) Half numbers (i.e., 0.5, 1.5, 2.5, 3.5) or any other number format will not be used.

Tender responses for quality criteria will be evaluated according to the table set out below.

Tenderers must enter their response to the below evaluation criteria above

### All responses will be evaluated in accordance with the above table and pro-rata to the available points i.e., a satisfactory response to a question scores 2 of the maximum 4 marks.  If the maximum weighting available for the service specific questions response is 20% as in question one below, the score shall be calculated as

### 

### 3 / 4 \* 20%= 15 score

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Appraiser name** | **Company 1** | **Company 2** | **Company 3** |
| Appraiser 1 | 98 | 70 | 82 |
| Appraiser 2 | 94 | 65 | 82 |
| Appraiser 3 | 98 | 70 | 82 |
| Average Appraisal Score | 96.6 | 68.3 | 82 |
| Total Quality Score out of a possible score of 100 | 1 | 3 | 2 |

**APPENDIX 1: TENDER RESPONSE**

# Selection Questionnaire

## Part 1: Potential Supplier Information

## Please answer the following questions in full. Note that every organisation that is being relied on to meet the selection must complete and submit the Part 1 and Part 2 self-declaration.

## Section 1.1: Supplier Information

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Questions** | | | | | **Response** |
| 1.1(a) | Full name of the potential supplier submitting the information (This needs to be the registered company’s name or trading name): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(b) | 1. Registered office address (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1. Registered website address (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(c) | Trading status. | | Trading status: | Choose an item. | |
| If other, please specify: |  | |
| 1.1(d) | Date of registration in country of origin. | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(e) | Company registration number (if applicable). | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(f) | Charity registration number (if applicable). | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(g) | Head office DUNS number (if applicable). | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(h) | Registered VAT number. | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(i) | **(i)** If applicable, is your organisation registered with the appropriate professional or trade register(s) in the member state where it is established? | | | Choose an item. | |
| **(ii)** **If you responded ‘Yes’ to 1.1(i),** please provide the relevant details, including the registration number(s). | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(j) | **(i)** Is it a legal requirement in the state where you are established for you to possess a particular authorisation, or be a member of a particular organisation in order to provide the services specified in this procurement? | | | Choose an item. | |
| **(ii)** **If you responded ‘Yes’ to 1.1(j)(i),** please provide additional details of what is required and confirmation that you have complied with this. | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(k) | Trading name(s) that will be used if successful in this procurement: | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(l) | Relevant classifications (state whether you fall within one of these, and if so which one): | | | | |
| 1. Voluntary Community Social Enterprise (VCSE). | | |  | |
| 1. Sheltered Workshop | | |  | |
| 1. Public service mutual | | |  | |
| 1.1(m) | Are you a Small, Medium or Micro Enterprise (SME)? [[1]](#footnote-1) | | | Choose an item. | |
| 1.1(n) | Details of Persons of Significant Control (PSC), where appropriate.[[2]](#footnote-2) For more information relating to PSC please follow link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-the-people-with-significant-control-requirements-for-companies-and-limited-liability-partnerships> | | | | |
| 1. Name: | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1. Date of Birth: | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1. Nationality: | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1. Country, state or part of the UK where the PSC usually lives: | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1. Service address: | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1. The date he or she became a PSC in relation to the company (for existing companies the 6 April 2016 should be used): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| (vii) Which conditions for being a PSC are met: | Over 25% up to (and including) 50%: | |  | |
| More than 50% and less than 75%: | |  | |
| 75% or more: [[3]](#footnote-3) | |  | |
| N/A: | |  | |
| 1.1(o) | Details of immediate parent company (Please enter N/A if not applicable): | | | | |
| (i) Full name of the immediate parent company: | | | Click here to enter text. | |
|  | (ii) Registered office address (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
|  | (iii) Registration number (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
|  | (iv) Head office DUNS number (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
|  | (v) Head office VAT number (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
| 1.1(p) | Details of ultimate parent company (Please enter N/A if not applicable): | | | | |
|  | (i) Full name of the ultimate parent company: | | | Click here to enter text. | |
|  | (ii) Registered office address (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
|  | (iii) Registration number (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
|  | (iv) Head office DUNS number (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |
|  | (v) Head office VAT number (if applicable): | | | Click here to enter text. | |

Please note: A criminal record check for relevant convictions may be undertaken for the preferred suppliers and the persons of significant in control of them.

## Section 1.3: Contact Details and Declaration

“I declare that to the best of my knowledge the answers submitted, and information contained in this document are correct and accurate.

I declare that, upon request and without delay I will provide the certificates or documentary evidence referred to in this document.

I understand that the information will be used in the selection process to assess my organisation’s suitability to be invited to participate further in this procurement.

I understand that the authority may reject this submission in its entirety if there is a failure to answer all the relevant questions fully, or if false/misleading information or content is provided in any section.

I am aware of the consequences of serious misrepresentation".

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Questions** | | **Response** |
| 1.3(a) | Contact name: | Click here to enter text. |
| 1.3(b) | Name of organisation: | Click here to enter text. |
| 1.3(c) | Role in organisation: | Click here to enter text. |
| 1.3(d) | Phone number: | Click here to enter text. |
| 1.3(e) | E-mail address: | Click here to enter text. |
| 1.3(f) | Postal address: | Click here to enter text. |
| 1.3(g) | Signature (electronic is acceptable): |  |
| 1.3(h) | Date: | Click here to enter text. |

**Part 2: Exclusion Grounds**

Please answer the following questions in full. Note that every organisation that is being relied on to meet the selection must complete and submit the Part 1 and Part 2 self-declaration.

## Section 2: Grounds for Mandatory Exclusion

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | | **Response** |
| 2.1(a) | **Regulations 57(1) and (2)**  The detailed grounds for mandatory exclusion of an organisation are set out on this [web page](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551130/List_of_Mandatory_and_Discretionary_Exclusions.pdf), which should be referred to before completing these questions.  Please indicate if, within the past five years you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation been convicted anywhere in the world of any of the offences within the summary below and listed on the [web page](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551130/List_of_Mandatory_and_Discretionary_Exclusions.pdf). | |
| 1. Participation in a criminal organisation. | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 2.1(b). |
| 1. Corruption. | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 2.1(b). |
| 1. Fraud. | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 2.1(b). |
| 1. Terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 2.1(b). |
| 1. Money laundering or terrorist financing | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 2.1(b). |
| 1. Child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 2.1(b). |
| 2.1(b) | **If you have answered ‘Yes’ to question 2.1(a),** please provide further details:   * Date of conviction, specify which of the grounds listed the conviction was for, and the reasons for conviction; * Identity of who has been convicted; * If the relevant documentation is available electronically please provide the web address, issuing authority, precise reference of the documents. | Click here to enter text. |
| 2.2 | **If you have answered ‘Yes’ to any of the points above** have measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (Self-Cleaning) | Choose an item. |
| 2.3(a) | **Regulation 57(3)**  Has it been established, for your organisation by a judicial or administrative decision having final and binding effect in accordance with the legal provisions of any part of the United Kingdom or the legal provisions of the country in which the organisation is established (if outside the UK), that the organisation is in breach of obligations related to the payment of tax or social security contributions? | Choose an item. |
| 2.3(b) | **If you have answered ‘Yes’ to question 2.3(a),** please provide further details. Please also confirm you have paid, or have entered into a binding arrangement with a view to paying, the outstanding sum including where applicable any accrued interest and/or fines. | Click here to enter text. |

**Please Note:** The authority reserves the right to use its discretion to exclude a potential supplier where it can demonstrate by any appropriate means that the potential supplier is in breach of its obligations relating to the non-payment of taxes or social security contributions.

## Section 3: Grounds for Discretionary Exclusion

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | | **Response** |
| **Regulation 57 (8)**  The detailed grounds for discretionary exclusion of an organisation are set out on this [web page](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551130/List_of_Mandatory_and_Discretionary_Exclusions.pdf), which should be referred to before completing these questions.  Please indicate if, within the past three years, anywhere in the world any of the following situations have applied to you, your organisation or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control in the organisation. | | |
| 3.1(a) | Breach of environmental obligations? | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 3.1 (b) | Breach of social obligations? | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 3.1 (c) | Breach of labour law obligations? | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 3.1(d) | Bankrupt or is the subject of insolvency or winding-up proceedings, where the organisation’s assets are being administered by a liquidator or by the court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under the laws and regulations of any State? | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 3.1(e) | Guilty of grave professional misconduct? | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 3.1(f) | Entered into agreements with other economic operators aimed at distorting competition? | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 3.1(g) | Aware of any conflict of interest within the meaning of regulation 24 due to the participation in the procurement procedure? | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 3.1(h) | Been involved in the preparation of the procurement procedure? | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 3.1(i) | Shown significant or persistent deficiencies in the performance of a substantive requirement under a prior public contract, a prior contract with a contracting entity, or a prior concession contract, which led to early termination of that prior contract, damages or other comparable sanctions? | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 3.1(j) | Please answer the following statements | |
| 1. The organisation is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying the information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of the selection criteria. | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 1. The organisation has withheld such information. | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 1. The organisation is not able to submit supporting documents required under regulation 59 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |
| 1. The organisation has influenced the decision-making process of the contracting authority; or has obtained confidential information that may confer upon the organisation undue advantages in the procurement procedure, or has negligently provided misleading information that may have a material influence on decisions concerning exclusion, selection or award. | Choose an item.  If ‘Yes’ please provide details at 3.2. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 3.2 | If you have answered Yes to any of the above, explain what measures been taken to demonstrate the reliability of the organisation despite the existence of a relevant ground for exclusion? (Self-Cleaning) | Click here to enter text. |

## Section 6: Insurance

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | | **Response** |
| **6.1** | Please self-certify whether you already have, or can commit to obtain, prior to commencement of the contract, the levels of insurance cover indicated below:   * Employer’s (Compulsory) Liability Insurance\* = £5 million; and * Public Liability Insurance = £5 million * Product Liability Insurance = £5 million   \*It is a legal requirement that all companies hold Employer’s (Compulsory) Liability Insurance of £5 million as a minimum. Please note that this requirement is not applicable to Sole Traders. | Choose an item. |

# 2 Technical & Pricing Questionnaires

In submitting a response to the procurement , bidders should submit an offer in the form of a 2 page document which provides information answering the following points which will form the basis of the scoring of tender submissions:

(optional annex anything else)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria :** | **Weighting:** |
| **Value for money:** Could you provide thehourly rate reasonable given the expertise of the bidder? (scored 0-4 – see below) | 20% |
| **Quality of proposal**: How well has the bidder understood and responded to the overall brief? (scored 0-4 – see below) | 20% |
| **Relevance of Expertise:** How relevant is the bidder’s expertise to the planned scheme? (scored 0-4 – see below) | 30% |
| **Previous Experience:** Can the supplier(s) demonstrate a good track record in successfully delivering similar activity previously? (scored 0-4 – see below) | 15% |
| **Timescale**: will the bidder be available to be able to deliver the work in line with the overall implementation timetable? (scored 0-4 – see below) | 15% |

1. See EU definition of SME: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UK companies, Societates European (SEs) and limited liability partnerships (LLPs) will be required to identify and record the people who own or control their company. Companies, SEs and LLPs will need to keep a PSC register, and must file the PSC information with the central public register at Companies House. [See PSC guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-the-people-with-significant-control-requirements-for-companies-and-limited-liability-partnerships). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Central Government contracting authorities should use this information to have the PSC information for the preferred supplier checked before award. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)