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Planning

Support to Claimants - Post Office Horizon redress

Department for Business and Trade

F01: Prior information notice

Prior information only

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-005386

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04e2b7

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Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

Department for Business and Trade

London

Email

solene.ledigabel@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UK - United Kingdom

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-and-trade>

I.3) Communication

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Ministry or any other national or federal authority

I.5) Main activity

General public services

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Support to Claimants - Post Office Horizon redress

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 98000000 - Other community, social and personal services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

The Secretary of State for DBT is the contracting authority responsible for meeting this anticipated requirement. DBT intends to publish the Contract Notice in late Spring/early Summer 2025.

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £4,750,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 80400000 - Adult and other education services
- 80500000 - Training services
- 98000000 - Other community, social and personal services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

The Department for Business and Trade (“DBT”) has a potential requirement for the provision of information and support to claimants to help them produce well-formulated claims in the context of a redress scheme.

The first instance of the services being required would be for the Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS) for redress arising from the Post Office Horizon scandal. There are four main Horizon redress schemes currently in progress and HSS is the one with most claimants. Eligible claimants in the HSS may choose to apply for a £75,000 fixed sum offer or to have their claims fully assessed (in which case, if an award is made, they may receive more or less than the fixed sum). The requirement would be to provide information and support to claimants after they have chosen the full assessment option.

Claimants to the HSS are not entitled to support with legal costs until after an Offer is made to them. The great majority of applications to the scheme are made by postmasters themselves. The Post Office’s external legal advisors put considerable effort into developing the claims with claimants so that they are complete and fully evidenced to ensure that claimants obtain the best possible outcome. This also includes information and support to help them set out the details of their case, and to understand the guidance and principles of the scheme that are set out by Post Office.

Ministers have asked officials to consider the case for DBT taking over the Post Office’s responsibility for delivering individually assessed offers under the HSS. DBT may decide to let a contract for this requirement whether or not delivery transfers to DBT.

DBT would want this requirement to be performed by someone other than the law firm responding to the claim.

The Secretary of State for DBT is the contracting authority responsible for meeting this anticipated requirement. DBT intends to publish the Contract Notice in late Spring/early Summer 2025.

The full specification will be provided with the contract documents but it is expected to incorporate the following requirements:

- To provide a skilled team with knowledge of HSS to generally support the claimant in building their claim, submitting it to the Department, and then support the claimant through the process;
- To describe the heads of loss which could be included within the claim and provide help in completing the application form;
- To work with the claimant to help them to understand how the redressed topic/issue affected them and to then set out the full information relating to their claim;
- To explain the sorts of information or evidence that they may be able to provide to support the claim (bearing in mind that the events leading to the claim may have happened decades ago, and that many of the claimants are now vulnerable); and/or
- To explain the role of expert evidence, such as from a medical specialist or a forensic accountant, to assist claimants to decide whether this should be requested (DBT will arrange and pay for the provision of expert evidence separately whenever this is appropriate).

For clarity, the provider would not be contracted to provide legal advice to claimants. The provider should not therefore provide claimants with advice, for example relating to how much they may be entitled to or whether to apply for the fixed sum offer.

II.2.14) Additional information

It is anticipated the contract will be for a period of 30 months, including any available contract option(s). The requirement has an estimated total value of £4,750,000 ex VAT and this value includes any available contract option(s).

II.3) Estimated date of publication of contract notice

1 April 2025

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No