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Contract

## **Flexible Benefit Provision**

NORTHERN GAS NETWORKS LIMITED

F06: Contract award notice – utilities

Notice identifier: 2022/S 000-011666

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-02a9f1

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### **Section I: Contracting entity**

#### **I.1) Name and addresses**

NORTHERN GAS NETWORKS LIMITED

1100 Century Way Thorpe Park

LEEDS

LS158TU

#### **Contact**

Rebecca Rowley

#### **Email**

[rrowley@northerngas.co.uk](mailto:rrowley@northerngas.co.uk)

#### **Telephone**

+44 7935077342

#### **Country**

United Kingdom

**Region code**

UKE42 - Leeds

**Internet address(es)**

Main address

[www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk](http://www.northerngasnetworks.co.uk)

**I.6) Main activity**

Production, transport and distribution of gas and heat

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## Section II: Object

### II.1) Scope of the procurement

#### II.1.1) Title

Flexible Benefit Provision

#### II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 79414000 - Human resources management consultancy services

#### II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

#### II.1.4) Short description

NGN currently offer benefits via an online portal called iBenefit, our colleagues reward and benefit scheme offering choices in benefits and savings. This delivers a mixture of voluntary benefits and additional offers which the company is able to provide to all of its colleagues. NGN have been running the current scheme for 6 years and have added new benefits and offers each year/when available.

- Number of colleagues - 1400
- Workforce: predominately operational/field-based engineers; support and corporate functions office/homebased
- Number of payrolls: 1 per month
- Benefit year runs April to March
- Annual enrolment is a 3 week window mid-February to early March; benefits selected during the main election window need to be effective on 1st April each year. Annual enrolment is our colleague's opportunity to make the most of our exclusively negotiated deals and offers. Benefits can also be made from National Insurance and/or tax savings when payments are made through monthly salary.
- Most benefits are 'anytime', so are available throughout the year and can be selected each month. Exceptions, which are only available at main election window are highlighted in the table below \*
- Voluntary benefits: Mixture of Gross pay (Salary Sacrifice- either tax and NI, Tax only,

NI only) or Net Pay deductions - see above

#### **II.1.6) Information about lots**

This contract is divided into lots: No

#### **II.1.7) Total value of the procurement (excluding VAT)**

Value excluding VAT: £368,509.50

### **II.2) Description**

#### **II.2.3) Place of performance**

NUTS codes

- UKE - Yorkshire and the Humber

#### **II.2.4) Description of the procurement**

A new contract has been awarded following a tender event for 3 years with 3 x 1 year extension provisions.

NGN's Requirement

- Provide a complete end to end Flexible benefit provision under the 'iBenefit' name including branding, design, transition, project delivery, platform, communications/engagement, brokerage, consultancy, help desk and ongoing administration assistance.
- Provide a fully flexible on-line platform/portal for NGN colleagues - we need to be able to transfer our own benefits NGN are currently contractually committed to and NGN offers alongside your own pool of benefits which you can offer.
- Provide the procurement/brokerage and placement of benefits with individual providers on behalf of NGN
- Provision of full benefit administration required, i.e. supplier to organise/administer benefit selections with the benefit providers directly
- Source and provide a discounts/cashback module to sit alongside the benefit provision which will offer discounts and deals for shopping, travel, leisure etc
- To provide a helpline, telephone and on-line support service for NGN colleagues to be delivered consistently by exceptional levels of customer service

- Provide a service which colleagues can access via different methods e.g. on-line, tablet, phone
- Provide Flexible/Voluntary Benefits and offers in a way which is relevant and personal to every colleague wherever they work in our business
- Deliver a rolling enrolment and selection proposition throughout the year rather than once yearly election window (where benefits will allow)
- Provision of branding and design to be used across all areas of the scheme including portal, devises, engagement, communications etc
- Deliver a robust aspirational communication/engagement strategy for launch and ongoing throughout the year to meet the needs of a predominantly field based and remote work force; with a smaller group working from both home and office based. This should be in the form of both electronic and paper content e.g. will include production and delivery of brochures, z cards emails and more to all colleagues ahead of launch plus on-going engagement, communicating /marketing.
- Provide Management Information on usage, traffic through the site, payroll reports etc
- Provide regular updates and progression of the scheme throughout the year with NGN HR and recommendations for future development of the scheme via ongoing consultancy and support
- Ability to review provision of colleague's benefits/offers and update throughout the contract should new initiatives be identified as desirable by supplier and NGN
- Provision of ongoing consultancy throughout the duration of the contract.
- To provide a solution compatible with and enable to interface with NGN payroll system (SAP)
- To be able to show compliance with relevant legislation when handling NGN colleague data e.g. Data Protection Act 2018 and to meet Inland Revenue rules
- All benefits are required to be compliant in line with HMRC rules and guidelines.
- Suppliers must be able to demonstrate that their data flow provision is secure when sharing confidential information.

## Brokerage

We require you provide a fully compliant brokerage service using your expert knowledge

of the benefits market to source the most appropriate benefits and provide recommendations tailored to meet our needs. This will include all due diligence as well as an understanding of our scheme, colleagues, business needs to provide of a cost-effective solution. We expect you to handle the end to end process of procurement, contractual arrangements, administration of these benefits.

### Voluntary flexible benefit provision

Provision of voluntary flexible benefits which are not funded by NGN (with exceptions - see above) which colleagues can choose according to their needs and where appropriate make Tax/NI savings or through salary sacrifice or via net pay arrangements.

### Benefit Overview

- We will be looking for innovative ideas from the supplier throughout the life of the contract and we urge suggestions of new benefits/offers, ideas and schemes as they are crucial to ensuring we are offering the very best benefits on the market to every NGN colleague at cost effective rates. The emphasis will be on supporting colleagues and their families by offering benefits and services which promote and enhance health and wellbeing (physical, mental and financial), leisure and lifestyle. Services need to be developed to suit our colleagues needs, helping to enjoy the present and safeguard the future.
- We call for as many benefits as possible to be 'any time' not just available during the main election window February to April. All other offers should be available 24/7.
- We currently have in place a life event option, this enables colleagues to add additional benefits outside the selection window either as a new starter or have a life changing event e.g. getting married, moving to a new house, going through a divorce, having a baby or a death of a dependant. We consider this to be a great help and advantage for NGN colleagues and as such we would prefer to keep this in place.
- The supplier is required to review our benefit provision and identify which benefits/additional benefits we should have in place and make recommendations on suitable providers should be through their brokerage service. This enables NGN to take advantage of the supplier's expertise in benefit procurement without the need to procure the benefits ourselves.
- Provision of ongoing consultancy throughout the duration of the contract is required.
- All benefits are required to be compliant in line with HMRC rules and guidelines.

NGN need to be able to transfer our own benefits/services we are currently contractually committed to alongside your own pool of benefits.

## Portal

- NGN require to keep the 'iBenefit' name, the successful candidate will need to be able to provide an online portal for NGN and design, brand, build and implement the function to have availability on all devices including mobile phones, laptops and tablets.
- All benefits and offers need to be hosted on the portal. Additionally, we need to be able to transfer our own benefits and offers which NGN are currently contractually committed to, alongside your own pool of benefits which you can offer onto the portal
- A discounts/cashback module is also is also required on the portal
- It is essential that the portal is designed to be the right solution for our colleagues and enable them to see and operate a user-friendly portal as it does currently.
- An effective communication/engagement strategy needs to be established catering for both an on-line and off-line workforce with different levels of understanding and interest in technology to ensure they can access and use the portal effectively
- We want to ensure all colleagues do as little as possible to set up any of their benefits, this includes the payment process, e.g. not having to put in place their own direct debit payment plans. We believe this should be a responsibility of the successful supplier to run and manage this process through the portal and for payments of all benefits to be deducted through NGN payroll
- Our current process is as follows; sign in to the iBenefit site through any device (computer, mobile or tablet), visit the webpage, view benefits available, submit benefit by the closing date; explore other offers and schemes available in iBenefit by viewing different icons and linking to other providers websites where appropriate (e.g. Salary Finance)

## IT, Data protection and Data transfer

Data protection is an important factor and it is essential that this is considered. Suppliers must be able to demonstrate that their data flow provision is secure when sharing confidential information. Data will be loaded into both Success Factors and SAP system. This is acceptable via either of the 2 channels below

1 - The Supplier provides NGN with the data to load into Success Factors

2 - The supplier's portal integrates directly with Success Factors and SAP as a Bi-lateral interface, but NGN payroll would require a way to check the data ahead of it going into Success Factors if this method was used

Branding: We want to deliver and give the iBenefit branding a refresh for launch and each year; we would prefer the same design feel as our current branding in place as it is suitable and fit for purpose to the NGN culture. NGN own the 'iBenefit' brand and we do not want to change this name. Branding should be consistent across the whole scheme (portal, devises engagement and communications)

Communication and engagement: We require the designs refreshed for launch and updating on an annual basis to deliver a robust aspirational communication /engagement strategy to provide us with both electronic and hard copy content e.g. z cards, emails, brochures leaflets and more which you feel necessary. NGN will provide some visuals for the designs and we require the successful candidate to be able to create the content to meet the needs of a predominantly field based and remote work force; with a smaller group working from both home and office based.

#### Helpdesk

Provision of help and support is required to offer guidance on both portal, benefits and services to be able to answer colleagues' queries. A helpdesk function is required to provide this support from Monday to Friday, ensuring both phone and online support is being provided to all NGN colleagues within this time. We would also require including the ability to submit online queries anytime to be responded to within 48 hours.

#### Account Management

To ensure the management of the contract is being run at its best ability, we would require the following continuous improvement actions to be put in place: Management Information & Dashboard Reports - Monthly reporting delivered to view as an online dashboard

#### **II.2.11) Information about options**

Options: No

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## **Section IV. Procedure**

### **IV.1) Description**

#### **IV.1.1) Type of procedure**

Negotiated procedure with prior call for competition

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

### **IV.2) Administrative information**

#### **IV.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure**

Notice number: [2021/S 000-008832](#)

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## **Section V. Award of contract**

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

### **V.2) Award of contract**

#### **V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract**

4 May 2022

#### **V.2.2) Information about tenders**

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

#### **V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor**

Benefex Limited

Southampton

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UKJ32 - Southampton

The contractor is an SME

Yes

#### **V.2.4) Information on value of contract/lot (excluding VAT)**

Total value of the contract/lot: £368,509.50

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## **Section VI. Complementary information**

### **VI.4) Procedures for review**

#### **VI.4.1) Review body**

Northern Gas Networks

Leeds

Country

United Kingdom