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Planning

National Witness Service Grant Procurement - Early Market Engagement

Ministry of Justice

F01: Prior information notice

Prior information only

Notice identifier: 2024/S 000-016201

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-0469c2

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Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

Ministry of Justice

102 Petty France

London

SW1H 9AJ

Email

lucinda.carty@justice.gov.uk

Telephone

+44 02033343555

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UK - United Kingdom

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice>

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

Public order and safety

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

National Witness Service Grant Procurement - Early Market Engagement

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 79111000 - Legal advisory services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

is in the early stage of development and judging interest from potential suppliers.

Contract summary

Industry

Legal advisory services - 79111000

Location of contract

Any region

Procurement reference

tender_436828/1358538

Published date

22 May 2024

Closing date

7 June 2024

Contract is suitable for SMEs?

Yes

Contract is suitable for VCSEs?

No

Description

Open early engagement

This means that the design of this grant is currently active, it is in the early stages of development and is seeking feedback on the design. It is also judging interest from potential applicants. Please note that providing feedback as part of this early engagement exercise does not constitute a formal application for this grant. In addition, this early engagement notice does not guarantee that the competition will go ahead.

The current grant for the delivery of the National Witness Service is due to end on 31st March 2026. The MoJ are designing a new grant to allow continuation of the service once the current grant funding period concludes. The MoJ is seeking early engagement with interested applicants; the purpose of this engagement is to seek feedback on the current design, and to assess the level of interest the grant will attract from potential applicants.

The MoJ wishes to flag that both individual applications as well as applications through consortia (two or more organisations coming together to apply for this grant) are welcomed.

The MoJ therefore invites interested organisations to complete a short questionnaire. This questionnaire will cover some elements of the design of the grant, including potential grant period duration, and seek feedback on potential barriers organisations may have to applying so that these can be factored in to grant design.

Some key information about the current activities undertaken is set out below.

- The Witness Service (WS) has been operating in all criminal courts since 2003. It has been delivered in its current form by Citizens Advice since 2015.
- The WS provides independent emotional and practical support to both prosecution and defence witnesses involved in criminal cases, to enable them to give their best evidence. This can be in the court room, at a remote link site or other court approved locations.
- The current WS has approximately 1500 volunteers, and 240 paid staff (FTE approx. 200). Approx. 80,000 individuals were supported during 2023/24. These people may have been supported more than once.

- The current delivery of the WS offers different levels of support depending on witnesses' needs. Support is available to all prosecution and defence witnesses as well as bereaved family members (irrespective of whether they are giving evidence) and to friends and family of a witness when their presence is material to the ability of the witness to present evidence.

Further information and how to provide feedback can be found in the additional attachments. Deadline for Response is 7th June 2024.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79111000 - Legal advisory services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Activities include:

- o Accepting referrals into the service for support ahead of the trial from CJS partners such as Witness Care Units and from the defence as well as self-referrals from witnesses themselves.
- o Receiving and processing victim and witness information from the CPS who will transfer the List of Witnesses attending Court (LWAC).
- o Providing emotional and practical support to every witness who wishes to receive it.
- o Providing advice and information to witnesses about their rights and the process of giving evidence.
- o Helping answer any questions the witness has about the trial (including questions about special measures).
- o Meeting witnesses on the day of the trial, acting as a supportive presence.

- o Ensuring witnesses are kept informed through the day of any delays and relaying important information.
 - o Offering pre-court visits (for example, a tour of the court room) helping witnesses to familiarise themselves with the court building and calm anxieties ahead of the day of giving evidence.
 - o If requested by the witness and approved by the court, accompanying the witness when giving evidence to provide emotional support only. This can be in the court room, at a remote link site or other court-approved locations.
 - o Additional outreach support ahead of the trial may be offered to vulnerable or intimidated witnesses where Witness Service volunteers will reach out to witnesses ahead of the trial, either by phone or through in-person visits, to help them prepare for their day in court, answer questions and provide reassurance and emotional support.
- Currently, the WS is guided and informed by The Witness Charter and The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (Victims' Code):
 - The Witness Charter, published by the MoJ in 2013, sets out standards of care for witnesses to a crime or incident in England and Wales. The Witness Charter applies to all witnesses of a crime and to character witnesses, but not expert witnesses.
 - The Victims' Code sets out the minimum standards that must be provided to victims of crime by organisations in England & Wales.
 - Responsibility for pre-trial and outreach support for witnesses who reside in London was devolved on a pilot basis to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) from April 2019, under the London Justice Devolution Memorandum of Understanding, with the National Witness Service continuing to provide the on-the-day support to all witnesses in London on the day of the trial.

The current value of the existing grant is circa £12 million pa. The total award value/thresholds are subject to confirmation of final requirements/term and will be included as part of the WS Grant competition notice when published. "

The MoJ would greatly value engagement on the design of the grant through the completion of a short questionnaire, available through Jaggaer, where a supplier must have a registered

account: <https://ministryofjusticecommercial.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.html>

The ITT Code is: ITT_8710 - National Witness Service ME

There will be a form within the Attachments section with the questions in for you to complete. Please download and submit your response through to the Authority by Message. No further steps will be required at this stage.

The deadline for this is the 7th June 2024. Any problems with setting up an account or registering, please contact our Commercial Lead Lucinda Carty:

Lucinda.carty@justice.gov.uk

II.2.14) Additional information

Questionnaire:

Please limit your answers to 300 words per question.

1. Please provide the name of your organisation, your name, your position in the organisation, and your contact details including your email address

2. What is your organisation's level of interest and ambition in terms of applying for the grant to deliver the -National Witness Service from April 2026? Please rank between 1 and 5

II.3) Estimated date of publication of contract notice

22 May 2024

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: Yes