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Planning

Single Service Centre (SSC) - New contract with effect from Nov 2026

UK Health Security Agency

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-023785

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-051a65 ([view related notices](#))

Published 21 May 2025, 12:10pm

Scope

Reference

C362902

Description

Short Description: The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), an Executive Agent of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is the nation's expert health security agency. UKHSA is advertising the upcoming opportunity to deliver a Single Service Centre, a contact centre that will deliver components of the UK's health family public communication operations. This shall include handling calls, digital messaging systems and data processing activities. The opportunity will require the delivery of business-as-usual activities, but will require successful suppliers to be capable of scaling operations to respond to health emergencies, if they materialise. UKHSA wishes to receive feedback on our proposed delivery model. Background The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), an Executive Agent of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is the nation's expert health security agency. Its remit is to provide the UK with a permanent standing capacity to prepare for, prevent and respond to health security hazards. Threats to health

security are on the rise across the world. Increased global movement and environmental change serve to amplify the health security challenges the UK and other countries are likely to face. UKHSA must adapt its ways of working to adequately respond to these evolving threats. The Single Service Centre (SSC) was born from the Test and Trace service, which provided citizen communication capability for pandemic management, with the ability to deploy significant resources in short timescales. The strategic intention behind SSC is also to enable a commercial vehicle through which any health family contact centre service could be onboarded. It offers the opportunity to improve efficiency savings to the taxpayer in the delivery of business-as-usual activities, whilst providing the capacity and capability to scale a contact service in response to a health threat or emergency. In a pandemic, UKHSA must provide a service that communicates with the public on a person-to-person level, at a significant scale. Communication needs to be bilateral, citizens must be able to contact us for advice, order tests, or request therapeutics, such as Antivirals, and UKHSA will need to reach individuals for contact tracing or provide guidance. UKHSA must have the capability to scale this service quickly to reach the maximum number of people within a matter of days. UKHSA has two contracts with contact centre suppliers, which shall expire in Autumn 2026. UKHSA intends to reprocure both contracts to maintain a dual supplier operational model. The SSC provides UKHSA, through its Business As Usual service, an essential baseline model from which to scale resources quickly, ensuring the ability to ramp resources to 2,000 agents within 14 days, through its dual supplier model. During the COVID-19 pandemic, at its peak, the service deployed over 27,000 contact centre operatives through an outsourced supply chain, taking 325,000 calls per week / 65,000 calls per day. The SSC will need to ensure that BAU operations are maintained with the additional health emergency-related services being delivered at pace by multiskilled agents. The Single Service Centre is a critical contract ensuring that UKHSA can meet its requirements for:

- 24/7 365 days Out of Hours Service for Regional Health Protection teams, inbound calls, email, SMS
- Incident response services, enquiry lines for regional or national outbreaks of infectious diseases, inbound & outbound calls, email, SMS
- Back-office processing of data to improve surveillance outcomes, including electronic notification of infectious diseases (eNOIDS), improving test kit return rates, data input
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities – diverse portfolio of service lines across multiple channels improving the health of children and families, inbound calls, SMS, webchat, email
- Components the National Pandemic Flu Service (NPFS) – a dormant telephone and online self-assessment service enabling citizens to determine eligibility for therapeutics, during an influenza related pandemic without consultation with a General Practice doctor.
- Surge Response Service – a maximum scale service which is pathogen agnostic (i.e. responding to known or unknown infectious biological sources), only launched in response to a pandemic at a scale similar to that of COVID-19

Please note that the requirements and activities awarded under the contract(s) are subject to change; the list of activities is provided as an indicative scope of the function of the Single Service Centre.

Procurement Process: This opportunity will be advertised under the new Procurement Act 2023 regulations. UKHSA is keen to receive feedback from all suppliers with expertise in this market to support our goal to provide an effective and value for money service to the

taxpayer. UKHSA's proposed delivery model is to award this opportunity to two suppliers as, in the event of a pandemic, UKHSA must be capable of scaling a service in response to an infectious outbreak. UKHSA has identified a dual supplier model as the best option to ensure rapid and effective scalability. An estimated £39m (incl VAT) shall be spent through the contract(s) under business-as-usual circumstances. This is likely to be split across UKHSA specific work, and wider health family requirements. UKHSA is seeking information from the market to understand the feasibility of our proposed dual supplier delivery model. We are looking for feedback from potential suppliers on their capability to surge from day-to-day activities to scaled operations. Should a health emergency occur on a similar scale to COVID-19, UKHSA has estimated that the value of the work would increase substantially from £39m for the business as usual activities to an estimated £350m (incl VAT). The feedback from the linked survey shall inform UKHSA whether further supplier engagement is required. The contract term will consist of a transition period of up to 3 months, with an operational service of approximately 3 years with two optional one-year extensions. Participating suppliers should register on the UKHSA eTendering Portal. UKHSA shall receive the responses from the linked webform separately, however, all other communications from suppliers must be sent through the eTendering Portal. <https://atamis-1928.my.site.com/s/Welcome> Additionally, following the commencement of the Procurement Act 2023, all suppliers must join the Central Digital Platform. The anticipated onboarding process shall begin from late January 2025. Please see the communications for the new platform below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-act-2023-short-guides/central-digital-platform-factsheet-html>

Total value (estimated)

- £294,930,000 excluding VAT
- £353,910,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 16 October 2026 to 15 October 2029
- Possible extension to 30 September 2031
- 4 years, 11 months, 16 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 79512000 - Call centre

Engagement

Engagement deadline

30 May 2025

Engagement process description

As described in the preliminary engagement notice, UKHSA is seeking suppliers who are interested in bidding for the Single Service Centre opportunity, which will support UKHSA and the NHS to deliver advice, signpost services, and collect data from the public. We request that suppliers indicate their interest in the upcoming opportunity to ensure that UKHSA can understand the likelihood of success of the procurement in terms of attracting suppliers. <https://forms.office.com/e/7yf32fF4wP>

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

30 September 2025

Contracting authority

UK Health Security Agency

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PBMQ-7576-DVGW

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Region: UKI42 - Tower Hamlets

Organisation type: Public authority - central government