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Award

Temporary Staffing Neutral Vendor

Norfolk County Council

UK5: Transparency notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-0551d7 ([view related notices](#))

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Scope

Reference

NCCF43036

Description

A managed service for temporary agency resources utilising the neutral vendor model, has been utilised by the County Council since 2007.

Top 5 required skillsets are:

- Educational psychologist
- Social Worker
- Lawyer
- Project Manager
- Assistant Practitioner

Current spend is just under £400k per month.

Contract 1. Temporary Staffing Neutral Vendor

Supplier

- Magnit Global

Contract value

- £1,400,000 excluding VAT
- £1,680,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Earliest date the contract will be signed

2 July 2025

Contract dates (estimated)

- 3 July 2025 to 12 October 2025
- 3 months, 10 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 79620000 - Supply services of personnel including temporary staff

Contract locations

- UKH15 - Norwich and East Norfolk
- UKH16 - North and West Norfolk
- UKH17 - Breckland and South Norfolk

Other information

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Direct award

Direct award justification

Extreme and unavoidable urgency

Introduction

Norfolk County Council ('NCC') finds itself in a unique position, where it needs to direct award to continue the provision of essential services (a managed service for temporary agency resources) awarded under a framework. It is essentially a "bridging" contract to allow services to be successfully mobilised to a new provider further to the commencement of a new framework award on 13th October 2025

The Direct Award will be for £1,680,000 including VAT. The term of the contract under the Direct Award will be for 3 months and 10 days.

The Direct Award to Magnit is critical in delivering core Council functions. For the reasons further set out in this Transparency Notice, if the contract is not awarded, there will be a failure to deliver statutory obligations including statutory EHC assessments for children and young people.

Background

The existing contract, which expires 2nd July 2025, was procured through a NEPO framework ref NEPO508. The current provider, Magnit, manages services for temporary agency resources. As the Framework was due to expire, then with due regard to the time required, and its obligations under the procurement legislation, NCC carried out an assessment of procurement routes and the decision was taken to undertake a further competition using a multi supplier ESPO framework.

Tenders were not released through the ESPO MSTAR4 framework until 24 October 2024. Unfortunately, only two returns were received by the tender deadline of 25 November and to compound matters both bids were non-compliant having failed to meet mandatory accessibility requirements set by law, and so NCC declared it a failed procurement.

NCC discussed the situation with the failed procurement as a matter of urgency with NEPO. The clear advice from NEPO was that it would be possible to extend the contract under the provisions of the Framework Agreement and extensive work was put in place by NCC with a view to extending the Framework from 2nd July to 13th October 2025.

Unfortunately, on 17th March 2025 NEPO changed their position. They advised NCC that they had identified an unusual framework clause which prevented the award of any further contracts through the NEPO framework. All that NEPO could do was recommend their alternate framework with a different provider, Comensura, which had commenced on 1st May 2025.

NCC has been extensively working with NEPO to assess compliance of their solution and the transition period required. It has been agreed between the parties that the very earliest Comensura can commence their services to NCC is 13 October 2025.

Direct Award and extremis urgency

A Direct Award is therefore essential, to bridge the period between 3rd July 2025 and 13th October 2025.

NCC acted entirely and properly on the advice and guidance from NEPO. Had NEPO provided the correct guidance in the first instance, NCC would have been in a position to award to Comensura from 3rd July 2025, and not October 2025. NCC therefore considers that the resultant delay was wholly beyond NCC's control.

Further, the unique situation and time constraints that have arisen from NEPO's incorrect guidance mean there is simply insufficient time for NCC to undertake a formal procurement to bridge the gap. There is also the question as to whether a formal procurement would even be successful, given the results from the previous failed procurement.

The Direct Award to Magnit is critical in delivering core Council functions. If the contract was not in place the practical implications would be a failure to deliver statutory obligations including statutory EHC assessments for children and young people.

The Council currently has 90 agency workers including social workers, residential care for children, lawyers, educational psychologists. Without these posts in place the Council will be unable to respond quickly as needs arise in situations where planning in advance is not possible, for example covering unplanned staff absences.

Further, during discussions with Comensura, it became clear that their minimum onboarding process is 12 weeks and with staff absences in this time, 14 weeks was agreed. Again, this would be insufficient time for NCC to undertake a procurement to bridge the gap.

In conclusion, for the reasons set out in this transparency notice, NCC intends to Direct Award to Magnit from 3rd July 2025 to 12th October 2025.

Supplier

Magnit Global

- Companies House: 04766716

Booths Park 1

Knutsford

WA16 8GS

United Kingdom

Email: nikki.parry@magnitglobal.com

Region: UKD62 - Cheshire East

Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME): No

Voluntary, community or social enterprise (VCSE): No

Contract 1. Temporary Staffing Neutral Vendor

Contracting authority

Norfolk County Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PDYH-3246-XWTR

County Hall, Martineau Lane

Norwich

NR1 2DH

United Kingdom

Email: sourcingteam@norfolk.gov.uk

Region: UKH15 - Norwich and East Norfolk

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government