

<u>Service Specification – Legal Services Framework</u>

Weston College Group are inviting tenders for the following services:

Contract Name: Weston College Group Legal Services Framework

Service Description	Term of
	contract
The successful provider will be required to deliver a comprehensive range of legal	
services across the following defined Lots, ensuring expert advice, representation,	3 years
and support tailored to the specific needs of each service area as outlined below:	+ 1 year
Lot 1 – HR Matters	
Lot 2 – General / Education	
Lot 3 – Contract Management	
Lot 4 – Property and Land	
Estimated contract value up to circa.£110k.	

Timeframe for tender process:

Process stage:	Proposed dates:
Specification Published	12/06/2025
Expression of Interest and Clarification period	12/06/2025 - 01/07/2025
Tender submission deadline	11/07/2025
Evaluation period	14/07/2025 – 25/07/2025
Provisional scores & Invitations to Presentations issued.	25/07/2025
Presentations	28/07/2025
Formal feedback issued and successful supplier notified.	01/08/2025
10-Day stand still period	04/08/2025-15/08/2025
Contract Award Notification	18/08/2025
Contract Mobilisation	18/08/2025 - 01/09/2025
Contract commencement date	01/09/2025

^{*}Note: These dates are subject to change.



Specification

1. Organisation Overview

Weston College Group is a college of further and higher education providing education and vocational training to nearly 30,000 learners across the country. The college puts the learner first and is entrepreneurial in its approach and innovative in its thinking. The college is ambitious and aspirational and is responsive to the needs of students, staff, businesses, and the community.

The contract will commence on 01/09/2025 for a term of 3 years + 1 year.

The successful contractor will be required to provide legal services that meet the requirements of the specification from the contract commencement, across the following Lots:

- Lot 1 HR Matters
- Lot 2 General / Education
- Lot 3 Contract Management
- Lot 4 Property and Land

We invite bidders to submit comprehensive proposals that outline their services under based on a rate card pricing model basis that provides transparent, itemised hourly or daily rates, allowing the college to effectively plan and manage legal expenditure while ensuring flexibility in service provision.

The Contractor may, from time to time, be requested to carry out additional works or services that fall outside the scope of this Specification. Any such ad-hoc services must be pre-approved, with associated costs agreed in advance. The Contractor will be required to obtain a valid purchase order (PO) prior to commencing the work, as invoices submitted without an authorised PO will not be processed for payment.

The tender seeks to appoint a Contractor whose expertise, initiative, and innovative approach will be integral to the delivery of high-quality legal services across the four Lots. The appointed provider will be expected to demonstrate a strong track record in legal service delivery within the education sector, offering proactive and solution-focused support that upholds the highest standards of professional advice and responsiveness. The successful Contractor should also bring forward proposals that reflect a commitment to innovation, continuous improvement, and the adoption of environmentally responsible practices.

In line with Weston College's sustainability objectives, bidders are encouraged to outline how their service delivery model and organisational operations will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and supporting the College's environmental policies throughout the contract term.

Tender submissions are invited for one, multiple, or all of the four legal service Lots. Bidders may submit proposals for individual Lots or a combination thereof; however, each Lot will be evaluated independently. The successful Contractor(s) must hold all relevant professional qualifications, regulatory approvals, and statutory certifications required to provide legal services within the UK education sector at the time of tender submission, ensuring they are fully authorised and compliant to operate on behalf of the Weston College Group.



Weston College is committed to securing a legal services partner that can demonstrate not only professional excellence but also a clear commitment to delivering added value, social value, and meaningful opportunities for learners. As part of this tender, the College encourages bidders to outline how they will contribute to the wider college community such as offering pro bono support, contributing to staff or student development through workshops or guest lectures, creating work experience or mentoring opportunities, supporting community initiatives, and aligning with the College's social impact and inclusion goals. Proposals that clearly reflect how the supplier's work will go beyond the core contract to positively impact learners, staff, and the local community will be viewed favourably.

Full details in relation to Weston College may be obtained by visiting: https://www.weston.ac.uk/



2. Requirements by Lot:

Lot 1 - HR Matters

Employment Law Advice: Interpreting and applying employment legislation, particularly in relation to education-sector-specific regulations.

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures: Advising on process, documentation, and risk mitigation when dealing with staff misconduct or complaints.

Contracts of Employment and Policy Review: Drafting and reviewing employment contracts, staff handbooks, and HR policies to ensure legal compliance and alignment with best practice.

TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings – Protection of Employment): Managing legal aspects of staff transfers during service changes, mergers, or outsourcing arrangements.

Redundancy and Restructuring: Advising on consultation processes, selection criteria, and legal risks associated with workforce changes.

Discrimination and Equality Issues: Supporting investigations or defending claims related to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Employment Tribunals: Representation and case preparation for tribunal proceedings, including early conciliation and litigation support.

Safeguarding and DBS Issues: Advising on legal obligations regarding safeguarding, including dealing with disclosures and referrals to regulatory bodies.

Ill Health and Capability Matters: Providing advice on managing long-term sickness, occupational health referrals, and reasonable adjustments under disability legislation.

Whistleblowing: Supporting the college in managing whistleblowing disclosures and ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and internal policies.

Lot 2 - General / Education

Governance and Regulatory Compliance: Advising on statutory duties, charitable governance, and compliance with the regulatory frameworks set by Ofsted, OfS, and the ESFA.

Student Discipline and Appeals: Providing legal guidance on managing complex student disciplinary matters, exclusions, and academic appeals in line with institutional policies and legal obligations.

Safeguarding and Prevent Duty: Advising on legal responsibilities relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, including compliance with the Prevent Duty and referral protocols.

Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection (GDPR): Supporting the College with complex FOI requests, subject access requests (SARs), and data breach responses.



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND): Offering legal advice on the College's duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments and EHCPs.

Complaints and Litigation Risk: Assisting in the management of complex complaints and potential legal claims from students, parents, or third parties.

Policy Development and Review: Reviewing and advising on academic, safeguarding, equality, and other institutional policies to ensure compliance with the law.

Judicial Review and Legal Challenges: Defending or managing legal proceedings against the College related to its decisions, especially in academic or funding-related matters.

Funding and Contractual Compliance: Interpreting education funding agreements, ensuring compliance with grant conditions and managing legal risks related to public funds.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI): Advising on legal compliance with equality duties in the delivery of education, access, and engagement with students and the community.

Lot 3 - Contract Management

Contract Drafting and Review: Ensuring contracts are clear, legally sound, and align with the College policies and regulatory requirements.

Negotiation Assistance: Providing guidance during contract negotiations to protect the college's interests and optimise terms.

Risk Assessment and Management: Identifying potential legal risks associated with contracts and developing strategies to mitigate them.

Compliance Monitoring: Ensuring contracts adhere to relevant laws, regulations, and industry standards throughout their duration.

Dispute Resolution: Handling disputes that may arise during the contract lifecycle, including mediation, arbitration, or litigation if necessary.

Intellectual Property Protection: Advising on intellectual property rights related to contracts involving research, collaborations, or proprietary materials.

Vendor and Supplier Agreements: Reviewing and negotiating agreements with vendors and suppliers to secure favourable terms and conditions.

Data Protection and Privacy: Ensuring contracts address data protection laws and privacy considerations, especially with third-party service providers.

Contract Renewals and Extensions: Supporting the renewal or extension process to ensure continued compliance and alignment with institutional goals.

Termination and Exit Strategies: Advising on the legal implications of contract termination, including notice periods, liabilities, and transition plans.



Lot 4 - Property and Land

Acquisition and Disposal of Land or Property: Providing legal advice and conveyancing support for buying, selling, or leasing property, ensuring due diligence and compliance with charity and education law.

Lease Negotiations and Management: Drafting, reviewing, and negotiating lease agreements for campus sites, office spaces, or student accommodation, including landlord-tenant matters.

Estates Strategy and Development Projects: Supporting legal aspects of capital projects such as campus developments, refurbishments, or new builds, including planning law, construction contracts, and procurement.

Licences and Occupation Agreements: Preparing and advising on temporary occupation licences, service occupancy agreements, and shared use arrangements with partner organisations.

Planning Law and Permissions: Advising on planning applications, section 106 agreements, and appeals related to land development or change of use.

Environmental and Sustainability Compliance: Ensuring legal compliance with environmental obligations related to land use, energy efficiency, and sustainability initiatives.

Title and Boundary Disputes: Managing legal risks related to title irregularities, access rights, easements, or boundary issues.

Property Litigation: Representing the college in legal disputes related to real estate, including breach of lease, dilapidations, or enforcement actions.

Wayleaves, Easements, and Rights of Access: Advising on utility access agreements and rights over land that may impact college operations or development.

Charity and Educational Land Restrictions: Navigating specific legal requirements for land held by educational institutions or charities, including consents from the Charity Commission or DfE where applicable.



3. Service Standards

3.1 Professional Expertise and Quality Assurance:

Legal services must be delivered by qualified professionals with the necessary expertise in education law, employment law, property law, and any other relevant areas. The quality of advice and representation must consistently meet the highest professional standards, ensuring clarity, accuracy, and compliance with all relevant regulations.

3.2 Responsiveness and Communication:

The legal service provider must respond promptly to all inquiries, with an initial response within 24 hours of receipt. Ongoing communication should be transparent and regular, ensuring the College is fully informed throughout the duration of any legal matter. All communications should be clear, concise, and written in non-technical language where appropriate.

3.3 Timeliness and Deadlines:

Legal services must be delivered within agreed timelines, ensuring that all deadlines are met for legal filings, consultations, and document submissions. In cases where delays are unavoidable, the provider must promptly communicate the reasons for the delay and propose an amended schedule.

3.4 Cost Transparency and Value for Money:

The legal provider must offer clear, transparent pricing structures and detailed billing statements. Any additional costs beyond the agreed scope must be approved in advance, and the College should receive value for money in terms of the quality and outcome of the legal work performed.

3.5 Confidentiality and Data Protection:

All legal work must adhere to the highest standards of confidentiality and comply with data protection laws, including GDPR. The provider must have appropriate safeguards in place to protect sensitive information and ensure that all client data is handled securely and in compliance with legal requirements.

3.6 Proactive Legal Support:

The provider should take a proactive approach to identifying potential legal issues and providing early guidance to prevent escalation. This includes regular reviews of contracts, policies, and procedures to ensure compliance with changing laws and regulations.

3.7 Collaboration and Partnership:

The legal provider should work collaboratively with the College, understanding its culture, objectives, and operational needs. This partnership approach should aim to deliver solutions that support the College's strategic goals, ensuring that legal risks are minimized and opportunities maximized.

3.8 Ethical Standards and Integrity:

The provider must operate in full compliance with all ethical and professional standards, maintaining integrity in all dealings. This includes avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring that any legal advice or actions taken are in the best interests of the College.

3.9 Dispute Resolution and Risk Management:

The provider must support the College in effectively managing legal disputes, whether through



negotiation, mediation, or litigation. The focus should always be on resolving matters efficiently and cost-effectively, with a clear strategy to mitigate legal risks and protect the College's reputation.

3.10 Sustainability and Social Value:

The College expects its legal service provider to contribute to its sustainability goals and social value initiatives. This includes reducing the environmental impact of legal work where possible and engaging in community or pro bono activities that align with the College's mission and values.

4. Contractor's Responsibilities

4.1 Provision of Expert Legal Advice:

The contractor shall provide expert legal advice and representation across the four defined service areas (HR, General and Education, Contract Management, and Property and Land), ensuring that the College receives timely, accurate, and actionable counsel on all legal matters within the scope of the contract.

4.2 Compliance with Laws and Regulations:

The contractor must ensure that all legal services provided comply with applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards, including but not limited to employment law, education law, data protection (GDPR), health and safety, and environmental legislation.

4.3 Confidentiality and Data Protection:

The contractor is responsible for safeguarding the confidentiality of all sensitive information obtained during the course of service delivery, adhering strictly to data protection regulations (including GDPR), and implementing robust measures to protect the College's data.

4.4 Timely Delivery of Services:

The contractor is responsible for delivering legal services in a timely and efficient manner, meeting all agreed deadlines and promptly informing the College if there are any issues or delays that may impact the service delivery timeline.

4.5 Regular Communication and Reporting:

The contractor must maintain clear, transparent, and regular communication with the College, providing updates on ongoing legal matters, reporting on key developments, and offering strategic advice when necessary. The contractor must also ensure that all communications are in clear, non-technical language where appropriate.

4.6 Cost Management and Transparency:

The contractor is responsible for providing cost estimates for services in advance and ensuring that fees are reasonable, competitive, and transparent. Any additional costs beyond the agreed scope must be pre-approved by the College, and the contractor must provide detailed, itemised billing statements for all work completed.

4.7 Risk Management and Advice on Legal Exposure:

The contractor must proactively identify and assess potential legal risks facing the College and provide timely advice on how to mitigate or address such risks. This includes recommending preventative actions to avoid legal disputes or compliance issues.



4.8 Dispute Resolution and Litigation Support:

In the event of a legal dispute or potential litigation, the contractor must assist the College in managing and resolving the matter efficiently. This includes providing strategic advice, preparing documentation, representing the College in legal proceedings, and working towards cost-effective resolution through mediation, arbitration, or litigation.

4.9 Ethical Conduct and Professional Integrity:

The contractor must operate with the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity, ensuring that all services provided are in the best interests of the College. This includes avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring impartiality in all legal matters.

4.10 Staff Training and Development:

The contractor should offer training or professional development sessions to College staff on relevant legal topics such as compliance, contract management, and safeguarding. This ensures that the College's internal teams are equipped with the knowledge to manage routine legal matters independently and to spot potential issues early.

4.11 Collaboration and Partnership:

The contractor must work collaboratively with the College's internal teams, departments, and stakeholders, understanding the institution's specific needs, values, and objectives. This includes providing tailored legal solutions that align with the College's strategic direction.

4.12 Sustainability and Social Responsibility:

The contractor should support the College's sustainability and social responsibility objectives by adopting environmentally friendly practices and contributing to the College's community engagement efforts, such as pro bono work or supporting local initiatives.

4.13 Monitoring and Reviewing Performance:

The contractor must participate in regular performance reviews and provide feedback on the effectiveness of the legal services being provided. They must be open to making adjustments to improve service delivery and ensure that the College's needs are being fully met.

5. Weston College Group Responsibilities

5.1 Provision of Information and Access:

The College is responsible for providing the contractor with accurate, complete, and timely information relevant to the legal services required. This includes access to necessary documents, records, and personnel to ensure that the contractor can provide informed and effective legal advice.

5.2 Timely Decision-Making and Approval:

The College must make timely decisions and provide approval on any legal matters, strategies, or costs that require College input. This includes approving additional work outside the agreed scope and ensuring that necessary instructions are communicated promptly to avoid delays in service delivery.

5.3 Collaboration and Communication:

The College must maintain open and regular communication with the contractor, keeping them informed of any changes in circumstances or requirements that may impact legal matters. This



includes providing feedback on the legal services provided and engaging in discussions about strategy, priorities, and outcomes.

5.4 Budget and Payment:

The College is responsible for ensuring that payment for legal services is made in accordance with the agreed terms of the contract, including providing timely payment for work performed as invoiced by the contractor. The College must adhere to any agreed payment schedules, subject to the satisfactory completion of services.

5.5 Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Obligations:

The College must ensure that it operates within the boundaries of applicable laws, regulations, and contractual obligations, particularly in areas such as data protection (GDPR), employment law, and health and safety. It must also ensure that the contractor is informed of any changes in laws that may affect their legal responsibilities.

5.6 Access to College Facilities and Staff:

The College should provide the contractor with appropriate access to its facilities and staff, where necessary, to support the provision of legal services. This could include access to key personnel for interviews, meetings, or data collection to assist with legal matters.

5.7 Support for Dispute Resolution:

The College must cooperate with the contractor in any dispute resolution process, providing necessary documents, evidence, and access to relevant individuals. The College should also consider and provide guidance on any settlement or negotiation proposals put forward by the contractor.

5.8 Confidentiality and Data Protection Compliance:

The College must ensure that it adheres to confidentiality agreements and legal data protection

requirements, particularly when sharing sensitive information with the contractor. This includes ensuring that data shared with the contractor complies with GDPR and is protected accordingly.

5.9 Training and Capacity Building:

The College is responsible for ensuring that its internal staff members are adequately trained on

relevant legal policies and procedures, which may include working with the contractor to facilitate training or educational sessions on key legal topics.

5.10 Monitoring of Service Delivery and Performance:

The College must regularly monitor the performance of the legal services provided by the contractor, including reviewing reports, legal outcomes, and adherence to the agreed service standards. This includes addressing any performance issues with the contractor and working collaboratively to resolve them.

5.11 Facilitation of Innovation and Continuous Improvement:

The College should support the contractor in providing innovative legal solutions and continuous improvement initiatives. This includes encouraging the contractor to propose more efficient, cost-effective, or sustainable legal practices and exploring opportunities for improvement.



5.12 Sustainability and Social Responsibility Engagement:

The College is responsible for integrating sustainability and social responsibility initiatives into the legal services partnership, working with the contractor to identify ways to reduce the environmental impact of legal work, such as digital document management and reducing the need for travel.

6. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

6.1 Regular Performance Reviews:

Conduct quarterly or bi-annual reviews of the contractor's performance, evaluating service delivery against agreed key performance indicators (KPIs), service standards, and outcomes. These reviews should focus on responsiveness, quality of advice, adherence to deadlines, and overall client satisfaction.

6.2 Client Feedback and Satisfaction Surveys:

Regularly gather feedback from relevant College departments and stakeholders involved with the contractor. This can be done through surveys or interviews, assessing satisfaction with the legal services provided, communication, and the contractor's ability to meet the College's needs.

6.3 Case and Work Audits:

Periodically audit specific cases or matters handled by the contractor, reviewing the quality, consistency, and effectiveness of their legal advice and strategies. This ensures that services meet the required standards of legal professionalism and regulatory compliance.

6.4 Invoice and Cost Reviews:

Monitor and assess the accuracy and transparency of invoicing practices. Review invoices regularly to ensure they reflect the agreed-upon rates and that charges are appropriately documented and justified, helping to prevent overcharging or misallocation of costs.

6.5 Compliance and Legal Risk Monitoring:

Ensure that the contractor adheres to all relevant legal, regulatory, and ethical standards. Regularly check for compliance with laws such as GDPR, employment law, and health and safety regulations. This measure could also include reviewing any emerging legal risks and the contractor's ability to mitigate them proactively.

7. Financial Monitoring

Weston College Group Contract Manager shall meet with the Contractor from time to time for discussions on standards of all aspects of the contract.

The suppliers Contract Manager shall also be required to attend a monthly meeting to present and discuss the trading account.

8. Open Book Policy

8.1 Access to Records

The Contractor shall grant the Weston College Contract Manager, or their designated representative, full and unrestricted access to all records, documentation, and data relevant to the provision of legal services. This includes, but is not limited to, records maintained at the Contractor's



principal place of business as well as any documentation held onsite or electronically. The Contractor shall fully cooperate with any audits or reviews conducted by or on behalf of Weston College Group.

8.2 Performance Monitoring and Reporting

The Contractor shall undertake regular internal assessments relating to the quality of service delivery, market trends (including changes in legal service rates or commodity prices), compliance with applicable health and safety standards, and any other relevant operational metrics. The Contractor shall proactively communicate the outcomes of such assessments to Weston College Group in a timely and transparent manner.

8.3 Ongoing Oversight

Weston College Group reserves the right to implement performance monitoring mechanisms throughout the duration of the contract. The Contractor shall provide all necessary trading and performance-related information on a monthly basis, or as otherwise agreed, to the College's appointed representative to facilitate effective oversight and contract management.

9. Insurance

The Supplier shall hold all relevant insurances including Public Liability Insurance **not less than £5 million** and Employee Liability Insurance **not less than £10 million**.

10. Basis of the Contract

The contract will be structured based on a rate card structure.

The initial period of the contract will be 3 years + 1 year, to be reviewed annually.

Weston College Group may from time to time, by giving notice in writing to the Contractor, amend the operational requirements. Any such variation shall be subject to a fair and reasonable price adjustment to be agreed between Weston College Group and the Contractor.

The bidder is required to confirm acceptance of the proposed contract with their return bid.



Contract Monitoring

Weston College Group Contract manager shall meet with the suppliers Contract Manager on a quarterly basis, to discuss performance, feedback and any other aspects of the contract as required.

Performance and KPIs:

КРІ	Target	Measure
KPI 1 Client Satisfation	90% Customer satisfaction	To be measured through regular satisfaction surveys conducted by the Contractor, gathering feedback from College staff, senior leadership, and relevant stakeholders regarding the quality and timeliness of legal services provided.
KPI 2 Service Delivery & Timeliness	100% Compliance with Agreed Deadlines	To be measured through monthly monitoring reports detailing the timely completion of all legal tasks and projects, ensuring that services are provided within the specified timeframes as outlined in the contract or case plan.
KPI 4 Legal Expertise and Quality	100% Adherence to Legal and Regulatory Standards	To be measured through regular audits and reviews of legal services, ensuring compliance with all relevant laws, regulations, and internal policies. Non-compliance or legal oversights will be tracked and addressed immediately.
KPI 6 Innovation and Added Value	5 Innovative Solutions Implemented Annually	To be measured by reporting on the number of innovative legal strategies, processes, or technologies introduced by the Contractor to improve efficiency, reduce costs, or enhance legal outcomes for the College, with documentation of results and impact.



Appendices

Appendix A Conditions of Tender



Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility will be assessed through the SQ stage.

SQ Scoring Matrix:

Met	3
Partially met	2
No met	1

Scores will be collated, only suppliers who score above **6** will receive an Invitation to presentation stage. Suppliers who score **1** on any of the SQ questions will not be progressed to presentation stage.

Evaluation process

- Selection Questionnaire will allow potential suppliers to self-declare their status against the
 eligibility criteria and exclusion grounds to provide preliminary evidence of their suitability to
 pursue a professional activity, economic and financial standing, and technical and professional
 ability.
- 2. **Invitation to Tender** will include service specific tender questions to enable potential suppliers to submit a full and detailed offer to supply services against the specification provided in the PIN.
- 3. **Supplier Presentation** will allow potential suppliers to present service models, innovation and finances to the evaluation panel.
- 4. Evaluation of tenders and presentation.

ITT Scoring Matrix: [This may vary by service]

Innovation and added value	10%
Account management	10%
People and mobilisation	10%
Service specific detail	20%
Financial	20%
Added & Social Value	10%
Business continuity and Disaster planning	10%
Presentation	10%

5. **Formal notification** of scoring and contact award.



Appendix A Conditions of Tender

- 1. Every tender received is deemed to have been made subject to these conditions.
- 2. The bidder must obtain for themselves at their own expense all information necessary for the preparation of their tenders.
 - a. Information supplied to the bidder by Weston College Group is only for guidance in the preparation of the tender. The bidder must satisfy themselves by their own investigations of the accuracy of such information.
 - b. The bidder is required to complete and provide all information required by Weston College Group in accordance with the contract appendices and schedules. Failure to comply with these conditions will lead Weston College Group to reject the tender unless omissions have been expressly agreed by Weston College Group.
- 3. Any bidder who directly or indirectly canvasses any member or official of Weston College Group concerning the award of the contract for the provision of the services, or who directly or indirectly obtains or attempts to obtain information from any such member or official concerning any offer tender or proposed tender for the services shall be disqualified.
- 4. All information supplied by Weston College Group in connection with this invitation to tender shall be regarded as confidential to Weston College Group. This invitation to tender and accompanying documents are and shall remain the property of Weston College Group and shall be returned and/or deleted on demand.
- 5. Any bidder who fixes and adjusts the amount of this tender by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person, or in any way acts in a collusive manner shall be disqualified.
- 6. Tenders must be for the supply of the whole of the services upon the terms and conditions as set out.
- 7. The bidder shall cost the contract for X years from the commencement date.