

Service Specification – Refuge Communication System

Weston College Group are inviting tenders for the following services:

Contract Name: **Weston College Group Refuge Communication System**

Service Description	Term of contract
The successful provider will be required to provide servicing, repair and maintenance of our Refuge Communication System across Weston College Group campuses. Estimated contract value up to circa. £30,000 excluding VAT	2 years + 1 year

Timeframe for tender process:

Process stage:	Proposed dates:
Specification Published	8th December 2025
Expression of Interest and Clarification period	19th December 2025
Tender submission deadline	16th January 2026
Evaluation period	19th January – 23rd January 2026
Provisional scores & Invitations to Presentations issued.	26th January 2026
Interviews/presentations	3rd February 2026
Formal feedback issued and successful supplier notified.	11th February 2026
10-Day stand still period	12th February 2026
Contract Award Notification	26th February 2026
Contract commencement date	2nd March 2026

***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 **01/03/2026** for a term of **2 years + 1 year**.

Weston College is seeking tenders for the servicing, repair and maintenance of Refuge Communications Systems across its estate. These systems are critical for emergency evacuation and compliance with BS5839-9. The contract will cover five main system types: Complus Teltronic, Sovereign Fire and Security, Cooper VoCALL, EVCS Compact, and Pentech Electronics Ltd Model Series 6000. These communications systems are based across the Weston College Estate Campuses.

We invite bidders to submit comprehensive proposals that outline their services including a pricing model basis that provides transparent, itemised rates, allowing the college to effectively plan and manage 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 upkeep of the Refuge Communication Systems. The appointed provider will be expected to demonstrate a strong track record of service delivery within the education sector, offering proactive and solution-focused support that upholds the highest standards 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.

Weston College is committed to partnering with a supplier that not only delivers a robust and compliant service, but also demonstrates a clear commitment to social value, inclusion, and community engagement. As part of this procurement, the College encourages bidders to outline how their organisation will contribute to the wider College community. This could include offering training or awareness sessions for staff and students, supporting digital literacy or safety initiatives, providing work experience or mentoring opportunities, or contributing to community-based projects. Proposals that demonstrate how the supplier's involvement will extend beyond the core system delivery positively impacting 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:

Scope of Services

- Biannual planned preventative maintenance (PPM) for all listed systems including master station and all associated outstations, battery backup and generator systems
- Fault repair with no charge for labour or parts
- Compliance with BS5839-9 standards
- Next working day response for callouts
- Annual Ofcom licence renewal
- Provision of refuge signage
- Telephone support (08:30–17:00)
- Optional 5-year fixed pricing with free replacement of obsolete equipment beyond the 3-year base term

3. Service Standards:

3.1 Professional Expertise and Quality Assurance

The supplier must demonstrate proven expertise in delivering Refuge Communication systems for the types of equipment listed. Solutions must comply BS 5839-9 and the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**. Servicing and maintenance must support high standards of auditability, and usability, with quality assurance processes embedded throughout the service lifecycle.

3.2 Responsiveness and Communication

The supplier must provide responsive support, with an initial response to service tickets or queries within **one business day**. Communication should be clear, jargon-free, and tailored to a non-technical audience where appropriate. Regular updates must be provided during implementation, issue resolution, and system upgrades.

3.3 Timeliness and Delivery Milestones

All project phases including discovery, configuration, testing, and go-live must be delivered in accordance with the agreed implementation plan. Any deviation from timelines must be communicated promptly, with mitigation strategies proposed.

3.4 Cost Transparency and Value for Money

Pricing must be transparent, with all licensing models, renewal terms, and optional modules clearly itemised. Any additional costs outside the agreed scope must be pre-approved by the College. The solution should demonstrate value for money in terms of functionality, compliance, and long-term sustainability.

3.5 Data Protection and Information Security

The system must comply with **UK GDPR** and align with **ISO 27001** standards. It must include robust access controls, encryption, audit trails, and secure data storage. The supplier must have clear

breach notification protocols and demonstrate a strong security posture through a completed Security Assurance Questionnaire.

3.6 Proactive Risk and Compliance Support

The supplier should support the College in proactively identifying and managing health and safety risks and inform the Health and Safety Service of any risks and hazards associated with or arising from the servicing, maintenance or operation of refuge communications equipment.

3.7 Collaboration and Partnership

The supplier must work in partnership with Weston College, understanding its operational context and strategic goals. This includes engaging with stakeholders across departments and adapting the system to meet evolving needs.

3.8 Ethical Standards and Integrity

The supplier must operate with integrity, transparency, and in full compliance with all applicable laws and ethical standards. This includes avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring that all actions taken are in the best interests of the College.

3.9 Incident Resolution and Risk Mitigation

The supplier must support the College in managing and resolving incidents efficiently. This includes automated notifications, and integration with risk registers. The focus should be on continuous improvement and reducing the likelihood of recurrence.

3.10 Sustainability and Social Value

The College expects the supplier to contribute to its sustainability and social value objectives. This may include offering training or awareness sessions, supporting digital inclusion, providing work experience opportunities, or engaging in community initiatives aligned with the College's mission.

4. Contractor's Responsibilities

4.1 Provision of Expert System Implementation and Support

The contractor shall provide expert implementation, configuration, and ongoing support for the Refuge Communication System. The solution must be tailored to the needs of a further education environment, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and best practice in health and safety, risk management, and digital service delivery.

4.2 Compliance with Laws and Regulations

The contractor must ensure that the system and associated services comply with all applicable UK laws and regulations. Servicing and Maintenance arrangements should also align with relevant standards such as BS 5839-9 for refuge communications systems.

4.3 Confidentiality and Data Protection

The contractor is responsible for ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of all data processed through the system. This includes implementing robust access controls, encryption, and audit trails, and ensuring full compliance with UK GDPR and the College's data protection policies.

4.4 Timely Delivery of Services

The contractor must deliver all services including implementation, training, support, and updates

within agreed timelines. Any delays must be communicated promptly, with clear justifications and revised delivery plans.

4.5 Regular Communication and Reporting

The contractor must maintain open and regular communication with the College throughout the contract. This includes progress updates, system performance summaries, and strategic recommendations for continuous improvement.

4.6 Cost Management and Transparency

The contractor must provide clear and transparent pricing for all services, including licensing, support, and optional modules. Any additional costs must be pre-approved by the College, and all invoices must be itemised and aligned with agreed terms.

4.7 Risk Management and Compliance Support

The contractor must support the College in identifying, assessing, and mitigating health and safety risks through the system's functionality. This includes tools for root cause analysis, linking incidents to controls, and maintaining a central risk register.

4.8 Incident Resolution and Escalation Support

The contractor must assist the College in managing and resolving incidents efficiently through automated workflows, escalation logic, and real-time notifications. The system should support compliance with RIDDOR and internal reporting protocols.

4.9 Ethical Conduct and Professional Integrity

The contractor must operate with integrity and in accordance with all relevant ethical and professional standards. This includes acting in the best interests of the College and maintaining impartiality in all service delivery.

4.10 Staff Training and Development

The contractor must provide comprehensive training for College staff, including system administrators and end-users. Training should be accessible (e.g. via MS Teams or webinars) and support the College's goal of embedding a strong safety and risk culture.

4.11 Collaboration and Partnership

The contractor must work collaboratively with College stakeholders to ensure the system meets operational and strategic needs. This includes adapting the system to evolving requirements and contributing to a culture of continuous improvement.

4.12 Sustainability and Social Responsibility

The contractor should support the College's sustainability and social value goals by minimising environmental impact (e.g. through cloud-based delivery), offering community engagement opportunities, and contributing to digital inclusion or learner development initiatives.

4.13 Monitoring and Reviewing Performance

The contractor must participate in regular performance reviews, providing data on system usage, and service KPIs. They must be open to feedback and committed to continuous service enhancement.

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 necessary for the successful implementation and operation of the Refuge Communication System. This includes access to relevant documentation, existing systems, and key personnel to support configuration, integration, and training.

5.2 Timely Decision-Making and Approval

The College must make timely decisions and provide approvals on matters requiring input, including system configuration, data migration, and any changes to scope. Delays in decision-making must be minimised to ensure the project remains on schedule.

5.3 Collaboration and Communication

The College will maintain open and regular communication with the contractor, including updates on internal changes that may affect implementation or system use. Feedback will be provided constructively to support continuous improvement and alignment with College needs.

5.4 Budget and Payment

The College is responsible for ensuring timely payment in accordance with the agreed contract terms. This includes processing invoices promptly, subject to the satisfactory delivery of services and deliverables.

5.5 Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Obligations

The College must operate in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including health and safety legislation, codes of practice, and relevant procurement legislation. The College will inform the contractor of any regulatory changes that may impact system requirements or data handling.

5.6 Access to College Facilities and Staff

Where necessary, the College will provide the contractor with appropriate access to facilities, systems, and staff to support implementation, training, and ongoing support activities.

5.7 Support for Incident Resolution and Risk Management

The College will cooperate with the contractor in resolving system-related issues, this includes providing timely access to relevant information and participating in investigations or reviews as needed.

5.8 Confidentiality and Data Protection Compliance

The College will ensure that all data shared with the contractor complies with UK GDPR and internal data protection policies. Sensitive information will be handled securely and only shared on a need-to-know basis.

5.9 Training and Capacity Building

The College is responsible for ensuring that relevant staff attend training sessions and engage with system onboarding activities. This includes identifying key users and champions to support internal adoption and knowledge sharing.

5.10 Monitoring of Service Delivery and Performance

The College will monitor the contractor's performance against agreed service levels and KPIs. This includes participating in regular review meetings, evaluating system effectiveness, and addressing any issues collaboratively.

5.11 Facilitation of Innovation and Continuous Improvement

The College will support the contractor in identifying opportunities for innovation and system enhancement. This includes being open to adopting new features, workflows, or integrations that improve safety, compliance, or user experience.

5.12 Sustainability and Social Responsibility Engagement

The College will work with the contractor to support sustainability and social value initiatives. This may include reducing paper-based processes, supporting digital inclusion, and exploring opportunities for community engagement or learner development.

6. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

6.1 Regular Performance Reviews

The College will conduct quarterly reviews of the contractor's performance, assessing delivery against agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), service standards, and contractual milestones. These reviews will evaluate system uptime, responsiveness to support requests, resolution times, user satisfaction, and compliance with BS5839-9, the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**.

6.2 User Feedback and Satisfaction Surveys

The College will gather feedback from system users across departments to assess satisfaction with the system's functionality, usability, and the contractor's support services. This may include structured surveys, interviews, or focus groups to inform continuous improvement.

6.3 System and Support Audits

Periodic audits will be conducted on system usage and responsiveness, and support logs to ensure the solution is being used effectively and that the contractor is meeting service expectations. These audits will also assess the quality and consistency of incident handling, risk assessments, and reporting outputs.

6.4 Invoice and Cost Reviews

The College will regularly review invoices to ensure accuracy, transparency, and alignment with the agreed pricing structure. Any discrepancies or additional charges will be reviewed against the contract terms and resolved collaboratively.

6.5 Compliance and Risk Monitoring

The College will monitor the contractor's adherence to legal, regulatory, and information security standards, including BS5839-9, the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**. This includes reviewing the contractor's ability to support the College in identifying and mitigating emerging health and safety risks through the system's analytics and reporting capabilities.

7. Financial Monitoring

7.1 Contract Management Meetings

The Weston College Group Contract Manager will meet with the Contractor quarterly to review all aspects of contract performance, including service standards, system usage, and compliance with agreed deliverables.

7.2 Financial Oversight and Trading Account Review

The Contractor's designated Contract Manager shall attend a monthly meeting with the College to present and discuss the trading account. This includes a breakdown of invoiced services, licensing costs, support hours, and any additional charges. These meetings will ensure transparency, cost control, and alignment with the agreed budget.

8. Open Book Policy

8.1 Access to Records

The Contractor shall provide the Weston College Group Contract Manager, or their authorised representative, with full and unrestricted access to all records, documentation, and data relevant to the delivery of the Refuge Communication System. This includes access to financial records, service logs, support tickets, and system performance data, whether stored on-site or electronically. The Contractor must fully cooperate with any audits or reviews conducted by or on behalf of the College.

8.2 Performance Monitoring and Reporting

The Contractor shall conduct regular internal assessments of service quality, system performance, user engagement, and compliance with applicable standards BS5839-9, the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**, **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**. The outcomes of these assessments, including any identified risks or improvement opportunities, must be shared with the College 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 relevant trading, usage, and performance data on a monthly basis or as otherwise agreed to support effective contract management and ensure continuous alignment with the College's operational and compliance requirements.

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 pricing provided at tender stage.

The initial period of the contract will be **2 years + 1 year, to be reviewed prior to the end of the initial period**.

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:

KPI	Target	Measure
KPI 1 Client Satisfaction	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 services provided.
KPI 2 Service Delivery & Timeliness	99% Service Uptime and Incident Resolution	To be measured through monthly monitoring reports detailing the timely completion of all tasks and issues reported, ensuring service continuity.
KPI 3 Compliance	100% Compliance with security and regulatory standards	Percentage of compliance with agreed standards, including adherence to BS5839-9, health and safety legislation and codes of practice.
KPI 4 Innovation and Added Value	2 Innovative Solutions Implemented Annually	Number of demonstrable innovations or added-value initiatives introduced by the contractor that enhance the functionality, efficiency, or impact of the Refuge Communication System. This may include new features, process improvements, integrations, or user engagement strategies that go beyond the core contract requirements.

Appendix A - Eligibility and Evaluation Process

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility will be assessed through the Selection Questions within the ITT.

Evaluation process

1. **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. Suppliers who meet the acceptable threshold scoring will be invited to presentation stage.
3. **Supplier Presentation** will allow potential suppliers to present service models, innovation and finances to the evaluation panel.
4. **Evaluation of tenders and presentation.**
5. Scoring Matrix

Scoring Matrix	
Excellent	5
Good	4
Acceptable	3
Poor	2
Very poor	1

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%

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

Appendix B - 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 2 years from the commencement date.