

www.gov.uk/dfe

Schedule 1 - Specification

**Tender for School
Leaders' Mental Health
and Wellbeing Support
Package**

Tender Reference: itt_670

Project reference: project_5591

Version Control		
Version	Date	Comment
1.0	25 th June 2020	Issued with tender

SPECIFICATION

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Authority is seeking to appoint a Contractor to deliver a programme of professional supervision to a minimum of 2,000 school leaders experiencing mental health and wellbeing challenges meeting the eligibility criteria (see section 7.1) The service shall be delivered, as a minimum, through facilitated virtual or telephone-based peer support and one to one counselling.
- 1.2 This is an opportunity to support the mental health and wellbeing needs of school leaders across England, and to contribute to the development, delivery and evaluation of an ambitious government support programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 Focusing on improving the mental health and wellbeing of school leaders supports the Department's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, which sets out the vital importance of fostering supportive school cultures. Improving staff wellbeing is a crucial element of the commitment to recruit and retain more teachers, as well as supporting teacher quality. The Department is committed to taking a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, and to ensure that staff wellbeing policy is integrated within schools' culture. This is why we have worked in partnership with the education sector and mental health experts to inform and deliver commitments to protect and promote school staff mental health and wellbeing. These include publishing the first ever Education Staff Wellbeing Charter in May 2021. The charter sets out the actions that government and other organisations, including Ofsted, will take to improve wellbeing of staff in schools.
- 2.2 The Department recognises the pressure that staff, especially school leaders, have been under during the pandemic. The sector has expressed concerns about increasing senior leader stress: 77% of senior leaders described themselves as stressed in the 2020 Education Support Teacher Wellbeing Index, up from 75% in 2017¹. Evidence of the negative impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and wellbeing of senior staff is also emerging with 37% headteachers reporting that they are suffering from persistent burnout.²
- 2.3 In terms of access to provision for mental health and wellbeing support, the Teacher Wellbeing Index 2020 cited that 17% of education professionals do not speak to anyone about work-related stress and only 8% have access to supervision. 20% of professionals report there are no forms of mental health support available at their school/college (this includes forms of support such as encouragement to speak to line managers or union officials).
- 2.4 This clear need for dedicated mental health and wellbeing support for school leaders and gaps in provision underpins the government's response. This was why the Department took decisive action to launch a pilot support programme from July 2020 to March 2021, to provide online peer-support and telephone supervision from experts to over 225 school leaders. Following the completion

¹ [Teacher Wellbeing Index 2020 | Education Support](#)

² [Teacher Tapp, October 2020](#)

of the pilot, to maintain support, the Department provided additional funding to extend the programme to August 21, enabling an additional 160 school leaders to benefit.

2. 5 The Department is now seeking to appoint a Contractor to deliver a longer-term and larger programme of professional supervision in the form of a virtual peer to peer support and one to one counselling to school leaders (deputy headteachers and above) working at state funded primary and secondary schools in England. We expect the successful Contractor to prioritise those without access to existing support through an EAP or equivalent to direct support where it is most needed.

3. Purpose

3. 1 The primary purpose is to offer a programme of support to school leaders, to help meet their mental health and wellbeing needs, in support of the Department's COVID-19 response.

4. Programme objectives

4. 1 i) To help prevent the onset of mental health difficulties, by taking action to support the wellbeing of school leaders in England, affected by the pressures caused by COVID-19 in schools and in support of the Department's COVID-19 response.
4. 2 ii) To support school leaders experiencing mental health difficulties who do not have access to independent support by plugging the gap in provision.
4. 3 iii) To increase the evidence base on the impact and value for money of professional supervision and wellbeing support for school leaders and learn lessons to inform future policy and interventions by government and within schools.

5. Services requirements

Overview

5. 1 We require, as a minimum:
 - 2,000 school leaders to be supported via six sessions of either;
 - An online peer support group programme, with the size of support group and maximum number/length of sessions determined by the Contractor. This should be delivered by experienced, qualified coaches who have an accredited coaching qualification or equivalent, and experience of group facilitation, ideally in school-based settings.
 - Or,
 - Online/telephone one-to-one counselling, with the maximum number/length of sessions determined by Contractor. Support shall be delivered by British Association for Counselling and

Psychotherapy (BACP) or UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) registered counsellors, or equivalent.

5. 2 Participants are expected to undertake one of the offered support programmes, however where appropriate, and at the Contractor's discretion, participants could access both types of support or transition from one to the other where there is a demonstrable need.
 - Based on the pilot delivery profile, it is expected that peer support will reach a higher proportion of those supported.
5. 3 Services to be free for school leaders meeting the eligibility criteria (Section 7), at the point of use.
5. 4 All service offerings must be via methods that accommodate and complement COVID-19 control and recovery efforts, e.g., virtual based support via internet / telephone.
5. 5 Tenderers are encouraged to outline, where applicable, how their proposals may add value/benefit to the Authority, over and above the minimum requirements set out in this specification.

6. Delivery profile

6. 1 Accessibility: The Contractor shall set up secure, appropriate technology and processes, to support participants from initial point of contact through to successful completion of either a one-to-one or peer support programme.
6. 2 Registration: The Contractor's participant registration process shall include, as a minimum,
 - i) a process to confirm eligibility of potential participants and help target the support to those who would most benefit. Given the sensitivities, this should include as a minimum and without breaching confidentiality, self-declarations that participants meet the eligibility criteria.
 - ii) a process to collect data relating to relevant protected characteristics³ to facilitate consideration of equality implications pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty).
6. 3 Support: The Contractor shall set up an appropriate process to signpost participants who seek support but are not eligible, to relevant, alternative support services. The Contractor shall have effective emergency protocols in place for participants who are facing a major crisis. This process will enable participants to seek the most appropriate support for their needs.
6. 4 Availability: The Contractor shall ensure the service offers both support methods (peer support and one-to-one counselling) to participants across England, for the duration of the contract.

³ age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

6. 5 Service continuity: The Contractor shall ensure service provision is staggered across tranches and made available to participants for the duration of the contract, with a robust exit plan in place. Associated milestones will be agreed with DfE upon award of contract.
6. 6 Ability to upscale: The Contractor shall have the ability, capacity and strategy to mobilise resources at pace, early in the programme and flex as required to meet programme demand.

7. Eligibility criteria

7. 1 The full service offer must be made available to state funded primary and secondary school⁴ leaders (deputy headteachers and above) in England and prioritised to those with no existing access to an EAP or equivalent⁵.
7. 2 State funded primary and secondary schools include the following: community schools; community special schools; foundation schools; foundation special schools; voluntary schools; pupil referral units, non-maintained special schools - approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996; academy schools; and alternative provision academies.
7. 3 For school leaders seeking support who are not eligible for this service, the Contractor shall ensure they are signposted to alternative support services.

8. Marketing and branding

8. 1 All marketing material relating to this programme will be DfE approved and branded prior to publication/print.
8. 2 All marketing materials will be clear about who the programme is targeting (see eligibility criteria), the purpose and objectives of the programme, and the availability of places/demand management arrangements.
8. 3 All marketing shall ensure leaders' expectations are not raised to there being services available beyond the confirmed funding period.
8. 4 The service shall be promoted across state funded schools in England, targeting those leaders most in need of support (including those without existing access to an EAP or equivalent, and having regard to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty).
8. 5 The Contractor shall ensure all marketing relating to the services achieve a broad geographical reach across England.
8. 6 As a minimum, the Contractor shall ensure marketing materials reach potential participants via email and social media. DfE will support, where

⁴ The support will therefore not cover senior leaders in early years, further or higher education providers, colleges and sixth form colleges, independent schools and independent training providers/employer providers

⁵ Existing access to an EAP is defined as when a service has been purchased or procured by a school, local authority, or academy trust on behalf of the individual.

appropriate and necessary, with reaching potential participants for the programme through its existing networks, social media, and email distribution lists.

9. Programme evaluation

- 9.1 The Contractor shall develop an evaluation approach to monitor programme milestones and delivery, achievement of KPIs, and SLAs and enable continuous improvement. This should incorporate participant feedback. Written proposals for this evaluation approach shall be provided to DfE within 6 weeks of contract start for review and approval.
- 9.2 It is anticipated that in addition, an independent external evaluation will take place, funded separately and overseen by a DfE appointed contractor. The independent evaluation is expected to assess the overall success of the programme in meeting its objectives, value for money, and capture lessons learned for future interventions. If commissioned, timing, frequency, and approach will be determined by DfE within three months of contract start, in consultation with the successful Contractor. The successful Contractor shall cooperate with all requirements for this external evaluation.

10. Maximum contract value

- 10.1 Contract value for FY2021/22 shall be a maximum of £380k.
- 10.2 The departmental budget is subject to annual review, therefore the funding for this programme is subject to continued government funding.

11. Detailed breakdown of costs

- 11.1 The Contractor shall provide a detailed breakdown of costs in **Document 3b - Cost Matrix**.

12. Payment

- 12.1 Payments will be made by BACS transfer following receipt of a valid invoice, completion of milestones and progress made against KPIs as confirmed at monthly contract management meetings.

13. Milestones

The milestones set out in Table 1 below are indicative, subject to funding and agreement with the successful Contractor.

Table 1 - Milestones

Target period	Key milestones	Date
Contract start	Successful tenderer signs contract.	September 2021
TBC upon contract award, including mobilisation activities (within first 2 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor to set up secure, appropriate technology and processes to enable participants to apply to the programme (including marketing). • Contractor to develop and agree with DfE, a process for communicating with participants and feedback process. • Contractor to recruit and induct staff and personnel as required. • Contractor and DfE to commence monthly contract management meetings (ongoing throughout contract term). • Contractor to provide proposed exit plan, for DfE review and approval. • Contractor to provide a security plan, for DfE review and approval. • Contractor to provide Social Value plan, for DfE review and approval. 	November 2021
TBC upon contract award (within first 6 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor to support school leaders (minimum number supported to be agreed upon contract award). • Contractor to implement internal evaluation processes and assess impact of support, to consider any adjustments needed to be made 	March 2022

	<p>(in consultation with DfE).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor to support anticipated independent evaluation (ongoing). 	
TBC upon contract award (month 6 to 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor to support school leaders (minimum number supported to be agreed upon contract award). • Contractor to assess impact of support, to consider any adjustments needed to be made (in consultation with the DfE). • Contractor to support anticipated independent evaluation (TBC) • Contractor to provide proposed end of contract exit plan for DfE review and approval. 	September 2022
TBC upon contract award (month 12 to 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor to support school leaders (totalling a minimum of 2,000 school leaders across the programme). • Contractor to assess impact of support, to consider any adjustments needed to be made (in consultation with DfE and subject to agreement). • Contractor to support intended independent evaluation. • Contractor to end programme. • DfE to set up exit meeting and finalise end of contract arrangements. 	March 2023

14. Key performance indicators (KPIs)

These KPIs are indicative and subject to agreement with the successful Contractor.

Table 2 - KPIs

KPI ref:	Performance Indicator Description	Monitoring period	Monitoring method
Programme Delivery – Key Performance Indicators			
1. Programme impact	Demonstrate an increase in wellbeing for 80% of participants who complete the programme, by using an established wellbeing metric.	Measures will be taken at the start and end of each individual participant's involvement in the programme, as a minimum. Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th September until Contract end	MI reporting
2. Programme Delivery	<p>i) 90% of eligible participants for the one-to-one support have their first support session within 21 business days of initial contact.</p> <p>ii) 90% of eligible participants for the peer support have their first support session within six weeks of initial contact.</p> <p>iii) Ensure a broad geographical reach across England, with at least 70% of participants based in schools outside London.</p>	Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th September until Contract end	MI reporting
3. Participant Retention	At least 90% of all participants complete a full programme.	Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th	MI reporting

		September until Contract end	
4. Participant Satisfaction	At least 90% of those who complete a full programme would recommend the programme to a friend or colleague.	Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th September until Contract end	MI reporting
5. Reporting	All reporting and evaluation requirements met within timescales set out in the contract – 100% compliance.	Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th September until Contract end	MI reporting
Social Value Performance Indicators			
6. Social Value Performance Indicator 1	Investment in/no, of initiatives to provide and manage safe virtual spaces to staff.	Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th September until Contract end	MI reporting
7. Social Value Performance Indicator 2	Investment in/no, of initiatives to redesign spaces to address Covid-19 related risks and impacts on staff and work	Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th September until Contract end	MI reporting
8. Social Value Performance Indicator 3	% of companies in the supply chain (incl. the Contractor) to have implemented the 6 standards of Mental Health at Work Commitment	Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th September until Contract	MI reporting

		end	
9. Social Value Performance Indicator 4	Investment in/no. of initiatives to provide support to staff working remotely or on furlough related to mental health and wellbeing	Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th September until Contract end	MI reporting
10. Social Value Performance Indicator 5	Number/% of staff accessing mental health and wellbeing support provided by the Contractor	Measured bi-annually (every 6 months) on 31 st March & 30 th September until Contract end	MI reporting

15. Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

These SLAs are indicative and subject to negotiation with the successful Contractor.

15.1 Administration/Communication

- Respond proportionately to 100% of participant programme queries within two business days of receipt⁶. In delivering the services, the Contractor shall therefore offer a responsive and supportive service to applicants.

15.2 Delivery

- Set up appropriate technology to deliver the support remotely.

15.3 Finance

- Ensure invoices are submitted to DfE within 10 business days of the end of the relevant charging period/completion of the activity.

15.4 Complaints

- Ensure all administrative personnel are aware of and abide by

⁶ We would expect, for example, a generic holding email to be sent to all enquiries and a specific, personalised response to sign up requests or specific queries.

relevant complaints procedures.

- Main management contact to report all complaints orally and in writing to DfE within 3 business days.

15.5 Evaluation

- Ensure participant evaluation of programme is shared with participants within two business days of programme completion.
- Contribute and cooperate with intended independent evaluation of programme.

16. Contract Management

16.1 A start-up meeting shall be held following contract signatures, hosted virtually by the Department.

16.2 Subsequently, monthly contract management meetings shall take place between the Contractor and DfE as a minimum, to update on:

- progress against milestones and KPIs
- budget management and planned expenditure
- evaluation, including feedback from participants, and
- delivery risks and issues and mitigations.

16.3 These meetings will be set up, administrated, and chaired by DfE. Key products will include an actions and decisions log and risks and issues log.

16.4 The successful Contractor shall be required to provide management information to meet the needs of the Department. As a minimum,

- a. The Contractor shall provide to DfE a written report two business days before each scheduled progress meeting. DfE templates will be used to provide this information, which will show progress against milestones and KPIs, identify risks and slippages associated to the delivery of the programme.
- b. The Contractor shall provide an annual certificate of expenditure.
- c. The Contractor shall use learning from the delivery of the programme (including participant feedback) to inform any proposed adjustments to the programme where appropriate, and subject to DfE's approvals.

16.5 All change requests shall follow the process set out in Attachment 1 – Conditions of Contract

17. Social Value

Social Value in Government Contracts

17. 1 The Contractor shall commit to delivering Social Value during the Contract Period with a specific focus on helping local communities to manage and recover from the impact of COVID-19. The Authority will monitor the Contractor's success in achieving these social value objectives and measure the Contractor's performance against the performance indicators set out in Schedule 4 (Performance Levels).
17. 2 The Contractor shall develop, submit, and maintain a Social Value Plan in accordance with clause 39 (Social Value) of the Contract.
17. 3 The Contractor shall meet the objectives set out in paragraph 1 by making commitments in its Social Value Plan to undertake activities, implement policies and develop initiatives that demonstrate:
 - a. understanding of the need for improvements to workplace conditions that support the COVID-19 recovery effort including effective social distancing, remote working, and sustainable travel solutions.
 - b. plans to engage the contract workforce in deciding the most important workplace conditions to address.
 - c. actions to improve contract workplace conditions that support the COVID-19 recovery effort including those worst affected or who are shielding.
 - d. methods to measure staff workforce conditions over time and adapt to any changes in the results, with clear processes for acting on issues identified.
 - e. plans to engage the contract workforce in deciding the most important health and wellbeing issues to address and how the organisation will respond to and monitor delivery of the agreed actions.
 - f. actions to invest in the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the contract workforce, especially in the context of COVID-19, including reducing the demand on health and care services; and
 - g. methods to measure staff physical and mental health and wellbeing engagement over time and adapt to any changes in the results.

18. Security of Data

18. 1 The Contractor shall submit a security plan for Departmental review and approval setting out how they will ensure that departmental or personal data will be protected throughout the contract. This will address managing sensitives around participant data. Please see Schedule 4 – Conditions of Contract and paragraphs 15.1 to 15.5 (SLAs) in this document.

19. VAT

19. 1 Where the contract price agreed between the Department and contractor is inclusive of any VAT, further amounts will not be paid by the Department should a variable supply claim be made at any later stage.
19. 2 Where the overall contract price is exclusive of VAT, the Department will pay any VAT incurred at the prevailing rate (currently 20%). If the VAT rate changes the Department will pay any VAT incurred at the new rate.
19. 3 It is the responsibility of tenderers to check the VAT position with HMRC before submitting a bid.