

Functionality of software does not provide sufficient space to respond to all questions - please resubmit each question separately.

**1. Is attendance at the site visit mandatory for tender submission, or can suppliers who were unavailable still submit a compliant response and arrange a site visit later if shortlisted or awarded?**

**Response Q1:**

Site visits are intended to be mandatory as part of the tender process to enable Tenderers to contextualise the requirement and review the HCC Group's physical IT infrastructure. However, HCC Group recognises that there may be mitigating circumstances which prevent attendance (for example, where a supplier became aware of the opportunity after the scheduled site visit dates). In such cases, HCC Group may offer an alternative site visit at its discretion. Suppliers who have been unable to attend the scheduled site visit should contact HCC Group as soon as possible to discuss arrangements. Attendance at an alternative visit will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**2. Is Cyber Essentials Plus required from the supplier at tender submission, or is it acceptable for the supplier to evidence Cyber Essentials / equivalent controls and commit to achieving Cyber Essentials Plus before contract commencement?**

**Response Q2:**

The successful Supplier must hold **Cyber Essentials Plus certification as a minimum and/or ISO 27001 accreditation at the time of Contract award**. In addition, the ITT states that any provider of outsourced IT services to EIDCymru must hold certification to at least Cyber Essentials Plus level. Therefore, HCC Group's expectation is that certification will be in place by contract award rather than being a future commitment to obtain certification after award.

**3. Where ISO 27001 / IASME / Cyber Essentials Plus expectations apply to hosting, backup, security or outsourced infrastructure providers, can these be satisfied through accredited third-party platforms and specialist subcontractors?**

**Response Q3:**

Yes. HCC Group recognises that elements of hosting, backup, security monitoring, disaster recovery, SOC services and other specialist infrastructure functions may be delivered through third-party platforms and subcontractors. Accreditation requirements may therefore be satisfied through appropriately accredited third-party providers, provided that:

- The prime contractor retains overall responsibility for service delivery and compliance.
- Relevant subcontractors and platforms hold appropriate certifications where applicable.
- Full details of proposed subcontractors and third-party providers are disclosed within the tender submission.
- All data protection, security, audit, contractual and UK data residency requirements are met.

**4. Please confirm whether offshore or nearshore service desk / engineering support is permitted, provided UK GDPR, DPA 2018, access control, audit logging and data residency requirements are met.**

**Response Q4:**

Offshore or nearshore service desk facilities will not be accepted.

**5. For backup and disaster recovery, should the supplier price for retaining the current approach where appropriate, or propose a replacement solution as part of the managed service?**

**Response Q5:**

Tenderers should assume responsibility for providing and managing their own backup and disaster recovery solution as part of the proposed managed service. Whilst information regarding the current arrangements has been provided for context, HCC Group is seeking a proactive and comprehensive outsourced IT support service and expects Tenderers to propose their own fit-for-purpose backup and disaster recovery solution that meets or exceeds the requirements set out within the Specification. This should include off-site UK-based backups, regular integrity testing, disaster recovery capabilities and support for agreed business continuity objectives. Tenderers should clearly describe their proposed solution, associated technologies, hosting arrangements and management approach within their submission.

**Additional clarification:** The current MSP360 and associated backup arrangements should be considered the incumbent solution only. Tenderers should not assume that these arrangements will be retained and should instead propose the solution they believe represents best value, security, resilience and supportability for HCC Group over the life of the contract

**6. Please confirm the expected format for pricing: should suppliers provide a fixed annual managed service charge plus separate onboarding, project and additional service rates?**

**Response Q6:**

Yes. The Commercial Evaluation is structured into three separate pricing elements:

- 1. Managed Service Provision – Total Cost per Annum**
- 2. Onboarding and Implementation – Total Rates**
- 3. Additional Services – Schedule of Rates**

Tenderers should therefore provide the following using the Commercial Response Template provided:

- A fixed annual managed service charge.
- Separate onboarding and implementation costs/rates.
- A schedule of rates for additional services and project work as requested within the Commercial Response Workbook.

**7. Please confirm whether responses should include proposed tooling names for RMM, monitoring, ticketing, endpoint security and backup, or whether tool selection can be finalised during mobilisation.**

**Response Q7:**

Tenderers are encouraged to identify the key tools, platforms and technologies they intend to utilise for service delivery, including (where applicable) RMM, monitoring, ticketing, endpoint security, backup and disaster recovery solutions. This information will assist HCC Group in evaluating the proposed service approach and technical capability. However, HCC Group recognises that some aspects of tooling may be refined following contract award during the mobilisation and onboarding phase, subject to agreement and provided that the proposed solution continues to meet all Specification requirements.