

Theme	Question Asked	NHS Supply Chain Response
<b>Innovation</b>	<p>We have an innovative IVD solution which is regulatory approved. Multiple clinicians showed interest, but clinical adoption has been difficult due a demand for local data in the context of the NHS. We are open to support a clinical study if this is what it takes but don't have the financial muscle and resource capability to manage a study in the context of the NHS. How could the Pathology Team could help overcome that hurdle?</p>	<p>NHS Supply Chain would not financially support a clinical trial but could support suppliers in giving customers a compliant route to procure new products. There is also a MedTech innovation portal that any innovative products can be submitted to, this will allow us to then make decisions on if a Pilot Contract could be undertaken.</p> <p>If the product is true innovation, we would ask you to review the proposed framework specification to ensure that your product is accounted for and is within scope.</p>
<b>Innovation</b>	<p>If we have an innovative product, is there a faster way to release these to market and add them to the range? Currently a range extension request can take some time as I am sure you are aware.</p>	<p>Under the existing framework, if you are an awarded supplier, you are eligible to go through the range extension process. Depending on your route to market i.e., transacted through our catalogue or direct via a URN will vary the timescales it takes to go through this process and the level of product information required.</p> <p>Under the proposal for the new framework agreement the same range extension process will be available as well as the option to reopen the framework agreement to new applicants during the term of the framework agreement, we envisage every 12-18 months. The framework specification will remain the same but new applicants will be eligible to be awarded to the framework agreement.</p>
<b>Inventory</b>	<p>Are there any plans to improve the option to stock refrigerated goods as this could drive savings if suppliers can save on delivery costs</p>	<p>This will need to be explored further with wider NHS Supply Chain teams, the consideration will need to be made for adjustments to our current distribution centres as well as the NHS Supply Chain fleet to transport goods.</p>
<b>Pricing</b>	<p>Obviously, every single market has been under massive cost pressures recently. Will your new framework allow for price adjustments during the contract without the very long process that there is now?</p>	<p>NHS Supply Chains Supplier webinar recently covered this point. All price increases reviewed on case-by-case basis and there is a specific process that we must follow to review, evaluate, and potentially approve. This process unlikely to change. We do recognise the significant challenges suppliers are under. Your support and engagement will ensure this process is managed as effectively as possible.</p>

<b>Pricing</b>	Due to the volatile currency markets are the supply chain going to impose minimum pricing for various products	We interpret this question to be in relation to Threshold pricing as part of the pricing evaluation; this is something we are still considering but any allocated threshold pricing will be established based on market research and the use of price indexing tools to reflect market values.
<b>Pricing</b>	How will agreed pricing established with NHSE be accounted for in the proposed NHS Supply Chains tendering process?	Pricing that is agreed separately to the framework agreement does not impact the framework. This is a standalone framework with no affiliation to any other agreed pricing.  The price offered at tender is the pricing you should be able to sustain for the duration of the framework term.
<b>Pricing</b>	How does your national pricing matrices consider reagent rental options? I do not see this working	National Pricing Matrix only apply to "off the shelf" pricing and will not be applicable to reagent rentals or service provision.
<b>Pricing</b>	Support the idea of NHS as a single customer pricing. Managing the tiers could be interesting where orders are adhoc. Committed Standing Orders would make tier pricing more obvious. Otherwise, you'd have a reduction in pricing as the year went on with a "reset" at the start of each next contract year.	National Pricing Matrices (NPM) requires upfront commitment to volume from the Customer and call-off agreements will be signed by the Customer & Supplier before pricing is changed, it will be the responsibility of the supplier to ensure the customer purchases in the volumes they committed too, NHS Supply Chain will also support this.
<b>Pricing</b>	Can you please clarify by what you mean when you say, 'price ranking will be publicly made available'.? will this be available to our competitors, or available within the customer base only.	This information is downloadable from the NHS Supply Chain catalogue via a customer log-in. Only customers have access to download this information.
<b>Pricing</b>	Will the pricing models allow a cost per kit price?	If supplier can provide a definition of cost per kit and how this differs from cost per test or cost per reportable, we can certainly investigate it
<b>Pricing</b>	How will LDT (Lab Developed Test) services be handled within this process? Will they be excluded?	Further support from our Clinical & Product Assurance (CAPA) team has been consulted on this, due to the products not always having a CE or IVD classification there may need to be another way of assuring these products have been clinically assured and this being audited internally.  We want to support customer with procurement compliance as much as we can, if a supplier has developed a diagnostic test in collaboration with a customer we can add bespoke products into the framework agreement as part of the range extension process, we can then support suppliers in making these products visible to new customers or keep them a bespoke product only.

<b>Pricing</b>	Can you confirm that you must submit ALL products in a basket? This may exclude some smaller niche product suppliers as they can't supply all products.	The baskets are still in development, as part of the specification review product & test matrices were requested to be completed, this is so we can ensure our baskets are fit for the market and would not intentionally exclude participation in the tender. We encourage suppliers to complete the matrices and return to us as soon as possible for us to develop the baskets
<b>Pricing</b>	will line by line consumables be awarded to multiple suppliers that reach a threshold?	Award Criteria are still under development, but we do envisage that there will be areas where line-by-line pricing and an award to all who meet the Non-Financial & Financial threshold.
<b>Range &amp; Catalogue Management</b>	Do NHS Supply Chain have any plans for "sponsored" google searches to ensure Top 3 listing for search hits?	This will need to be explored further, for NHS Supply Chain to remain fair and equitable to all suppliers this is unlikely to be an option.
<b>Range &amp; Catalogue Management</b>	Can you advise an average time for adding on new products onto your framework?	Depending on your route to market, transacted through our online catalogue or Direct via a URN this can vary, currently we work with wider NHS Supply chain colleagues for up to approximately 4 weeks, but this is subject to change as we are reliant on other shared NHS Supply Chain teams to support.
<b>Range &amp; Catalogue Management</b>	Is there a process of removing products which become discontinued during the framework	The existing & proposed new framework will both have a delist process. We ask suppliers to notify us of any product changes as early as possible along with plans for alternatives (please bear in mind new products could take up to 4 weeks to be made available via the transacted catalogue).  Alternatives are integral for customers continuity of supply, where we have sales against products, we ask suppliers to maintain supply until an alternative can be made available.
<b>Range &amp; Catalogue Management</b>	Is there a way for a supplier to see their own pricing on the catalogue to ensure it is accurate at all times, and if an increase/decrease has been applied that this is live?	Not currently. However, you can request your catalogue download from the team.
<b>Range &amp; Catalogue Management</b>	I'd like to ask about the advertising of our products in your catalogue. Currently we only have 3 of our 11 or so products in your catalogue which doesn't represent our company at all. How do we go about getting all our equipment on your online catalogue? We feel we are really missing out on connecting with customers	We touch upon catalogue optimisation within the slide deck, we want suppliers to work with us to ensure we are offering the right products to our customers through the online catalogue, please bring any products that you are currently selling into the NHS and we can discuss adding these to the online offer, we want to support suppliers in having one ordering platform that will allow them access to our online reporting tools and consolidated orders to customers.
<b>Range &amp; Catalogue Management</b>	If we are tendering for the products in Jan 2023 and the go live isn't until March 2024, I guess some products may have changed style or availability or price in this time. How do you imagine this to be managed?	We understand the period from tender to go-live is around 12 months, we will likely require suppliers to revalidate the product information before the final push to go-live, around 7 weeks prior to go-live.

<b>Range &amp; Catalogue Management</b>	<p>Presumably bespoke equipment is not entered into the catalogue?</p>	<p>We view the online catalogue as an "off-the-shelf" platform, any equipment or test that is configurable will be validated through our direct route rather than a national available product code.</p> <p>There can be exceptions to this, our catalogue does allow for regional/customer specific product codes to be created so if there are products that are frequently purchased by a customer that are configured to suit that specific customer need, we can utilise the catalogue but only give visibility of that product to specific customers, for example reagent rentals</p>
<b>Range &amp; Catalogue Management</b>	<p>How do we view the catalogue to see how our products are presented?</p>	<p>Suppliers can utilise the catalogue in the same way customers can, there is a search function for the online catalogue where you can search by description, MPC or NPC. Please note with supplier access you will not be able to see pricing.</p>
<b>Range &amp; Catalogue Management</b>	<p>Currently for URN orders you are adding to the framework, this is not viable as the cost is for one-off and not a framework price. Can we go back to how it used to work?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, this is the only way we can compliantly direct award, all products and pricing must be listed on the framework agreement before we are able to issue and validate a URN. We would suggest you submit as much as you can as additionally lines at tender to avoid additional range extensions throughout the term of the framework agreement.</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>When you refer to Sample Transport are you referring to the actual service of transportation or the products used in transport?</p>	<p>Both will be covered, the sample logistics service and sample packaging, the later already been covered by the existing framework.</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>Do you mean Home Testing or Home Sampling, will a Lab do test?</p>	<p>We plan to include provision for both, remote diagnostics as well as self-sampling provision where samples can be sent to a laboratory for analysis &amp; diagnosis.</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>You may want to use the term Remote Testing rather than Home Testing?</p>	<p>Suggestion has been taken on board and will be reviewed in further detail.</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>Can you clarify the difference for molecular as this sits in Lot 1 and genomics which is in a separate lot</p>	<p>The genomics lots is for all tests approved by NHS England within the Genomics Test directory; linked here for reference <a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/national-genomic-test-directories/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/national-genomic-test-directories/</a></p> <p>All other types of molecular test will sit within lot 1.</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>What is the expected accuracy of unwitnessed home testing collections?</p>	<p>We are unable to answer this question, but the expectation is that kits provided for self-sampling are supplied with detailed instructions for use to ensure optimum samples for testing.</p>

<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>Is digital pathology on a separate framework as I am looking at the NHS SC catalogue now and I can't see any (Lot 6 I am assuming)</p>	<p>Digital Pathology is already covered within scope of the existing framework, we are doing further engagement in this category in the hope to extend our offering.</p> <p>Digital Pathology products are unlikely to be covered by the transacted catalogue due to the configurable nature of the customer requirement so these types of solution will be dealt with on a direct basis with our procurement delivery team, customers &amp; supplier engagement.</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>Is there a scope document for the Digital pathology (Lot 6)</p>	<p>The proposed specification for the retender has been made available to all suppliers via email or via the Jaggaer e-Tendering portal via a broadcast message. This is for suppliers to review and feedback any comments they feel are relevant to them.</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>Lot 2: Can a customer only run a tender for, as example, molecular testing?</p>	<p>Yes, customers can make awards to any suppliers awarded to the framework agreement based on any requirements meaning it can be 1, multiple or all the categories/ product areas covered within the framework agreement.</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>Is digital temperature monitoring still included under Lot 5?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>Can the team explain why Cellular Pathology (including Immunohistochemistry) is not listed under Lot 2 provision? Apologies if this was covered and I missed it.</p>	<p>Our lot structure within the slide deck is illustrative only as we wouldn't have the space to list every type of testing, consumable or equipment in the slide deck, cellular pathology is covered within the specification, the technology is listed under Lot 2 and histopathology consumables such as slides &amp; stains are listed under lot 5</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>For home testing kits (home sampling) that are returned in the post. Will specifications be updated to include this? There was mention of this new service type, but it's not covered in the draft service specs already provided to suppliers.</p>	<p>Yes, we hope to cover the full-service provision, if you feel this hasn't been reflected in the specification, please provide us some feedback and we can look to review the specification whilst still in draft.</p>
<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	<p>Would like to understand how our test will fit within this tender exercise? We currently have a NICE approved test. The pricing for this test is agreed with NHSE but we have encountered many problems in arranging supply of test because it wasn't originally included on the NHS SC framework. Also, we supply an instrument for running the test and not sure if we will need to tender for this in a different Lot? Also interested how we add new products?</p>	<p>Please review the draft specification that has been sent to all engaged supplier via the eProcurement portal Jaggaer and via email. This will indicate where you will sit within the retender of the framework agreement.</p> <p>If you are not an awarded supplier under the existing framework agreement there is little, we can do to support procurements with customers until the launch for the framework where you will need to submit a bid at tender and be awarded based on meeting the requirements of the Grounds for Exclusion, Non-Financial &amp; Financial evolution.</p>

<b>Specification Requirements &amp; Lot Structure</b>	There was little information about outsourced pathology services.	Unfortunately, due to time constraints we have been unable to go into the details on each specification requirement which is why the draft specification was sent out prior to this webinar for you to raise and feedback. If you still have questions regarding the requirement, we encourage suppliers to get in touch with the team to discuss.
<b>Supplier Support</b>	What will the SME support look like?	We are looking to plan further webinars to guide all suppliers through the tender process before tender publication. Post award we are also looking to provide training sessions on the use of the framework agreement & ongoing contract management
<b>Supplier Support</b>	With a drive towards direct awards, how can SMES/niche suppliers ensure they are not overshadowed by direct award bids?	NHS Supply Chain is not driving the requirement for direct award but when required and relevant to do so we will support the Customer to do so in line with our direct award process and utilisation of objective conditions.  We ask all suppliers to ensure they are still working directly with customers on market engagement as the frameworks primary purpose is to facilitate the enablement of contracts rather than supplier marketing & customer product education.
<b>Supplier Support</b>	For lot 2, does NHS Supply Chain recognise that these Pan-Pathology tenders are often restrictive to SMEs since the larger Pan-Pathology primary MES providers do not open areas of these tenders beyond their own product ranges?	The framework will allow customers to compete & award requirements at a product line level and they will not need to cover the entire lot therefore not being exclusive to the larger Pan-Pathology Primary Contractors. All lots will allow customers to base award decisions on their clinical requirements rather than the size of the supplier.
<b>Supplier Support</b>	if the primary MES has an equivalent product to a third-party supplier, the Primary will put their own in, regardless of the customers preference - often the primary won't even ask the third parties for a bid. this kills both innovation and best value product placement	We understand this as a concern for several SME & Innovators in this market, we ask suppliers to engage with Customers to ensure they understand what is available in the market as well as the additional value your products can offer. The framework agreement will allow all suppliers to work directly with Customers should they wish.
<b>Sustainability &amp; Social Value</b>	What support for small companies can you provide for sustainability	Government guidance on Sustainability & social value is all around what additionally you can provide to Customers. We will be tailoring our tender questions to allow both SMEs and Large companies provide responses proportionate to their business.
<b>Sustainability &amp; Social Value</b>	Under the new framework will there be a preference for UK manufactured products especially in view of sustainability issues and reducing global transport impact on environment etc	We have no plans to restrict offers based on country of origin but following the award we are looking to make information available to customer regarding the environmental factors of a product for example, country of origin, material, energy consumption etc.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	When will the tender be issued for the next framework	Covered within the slide deck, estimated tender publication is January 2023

<b>Tendering Activity</b>	When do you expect the 4-year framework to commence?	The new framework agreement needs to be live to customers prior to 12th March 2024.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	What will be the ISO9001:2015 requirement, is it going to be UKAS accredited?	As part of the Grounds for Exclusion we will require all suppliers to be ISO 19001 or 13485 accredited.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	Can you confirm that this will be awarded on a line-by-line basis not a mandatory lot of products?	Across the framework there will be various award criteria. Some areas will be line by line and some areas will be baskets. This will be detailed within the Invitation to Tender upon publication.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	What is the framework reference for the HPV one please	OJEU reference for the existing framework is covered within the slide deck. Going forward LBC & HPV will be included within scope of the new framework.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	Why do we need Professional Indemnity? For small companies, this is far too expensive to even consider.	These insurances form part of the standard NHS grounds for exclusion. We ask suppliers to contact us with their comments and concerns about the appropriateness or otherwise these insurances as we understand that a blanket insurance value may not be appropriate or proportionate for some suppliers
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	A lot of manufacturers do not have GTIN numbers, as this is not a regulation, I think we are going to struggle to enforce this, what happens with this?	GTINs form part of our internal data input systems and flag as a mandatory requirement if the product is marked as GS1 compliant but is also recommended to be provided as widely possible.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	It was stated that for Lot 1, evidence of working with cyber and sustainability guidance is required. Is there a specific source we are to refer to?	We will be referencing guidance from the ISO standard although full ISO certification will not be mandated. We will be asking suppliers to show evidence of how they ensure Cyber Security and how they are working towards more sustainable practices within their organisation.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	Can the issue of professional indemnity insurance be clarified before tender is published? There was some confusion last time. It would normally apply to vendors providing professional or consultancy services, but not for manufacturers.	Linked to response on insurances, we will look to have this clarified before tender publication but do ask suppliers to feedback their concerns as soon as possible detailing the challenges this poses for them.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	Will the documentation template (line items/ product info) be the same as the previous tender to reduce the need to completely re-write the equipment info (for products that have not changed)?	No, a change in eProcurement portal means the tender is going to be run in a different environment.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	In relation to Slide 28, if existing suppliers are not able to transfer over to the new agreement, does that therefore mean that all exiting products with existing NHS Supply Chain references will be issued with new NHS Supply Chain references as part of the new framework.	For the avoidance of doubt, if you are existing supplier and you do not bid or do not submit product lines as part of your offering during the retender your products will be removed from the NHS Supply Chain offer.  Where you have products listed on the NHS Supply Chain catalogue with an assigned National Product Code (NPC) and you submit these products again for the new framework agreement the NPC code will remain the same under the new agreement, but pricing can be changed at tender.

<b>Tendering Activity</b>	Given Lot 7 is 'new' and there is current increased demand due to backlog and capacity issues for 'send away' within the NHS, are you still planning on 'go live' for lot 7 as 2024	We are going to consider a phased launch approach, particularly for a service position, if there is significant demand from the customer and market, we would like to bring this forward to support the customer with requirements & procurement compliance.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	Is there any way we can get a listing of what products will be included in the tender in advance of the tender publication so that we can work with factories to ensure we have everything ready ahead of the tender?	At present we are not able to finalise and share this detail, we will where possible share as much detail as we can prior to tender publication via the Jaggaer portal.  There are issues associated with this, under PCR regulations we are required to be fair and equitable to everyone, if we accidentally miss a supplier from communications or a supplier is not yet engaged in this process we could be seen as being providing an unfair level of detail to suppliers.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	Will the 3% charge on capital purchases be applicable on the new framework? if so, is there a risk of other frameworks (such as countess of Chester) under cutting the NHS Supply Chain offering?	Management fee is only applicable to Capital purchase only. We do not charge management fee on Consumable purchases, Reagent Rentals or Managed Service provision putting us in a much more advantageous position and making us the most cost-efficient route to market than most other framework providers.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	Can we have visibility of the sustainability requirements ahead of the tender release?	At present we are not able to finalise and share this detail, we will where possible share as much detail as we can prior to tender publication via the Jaggaer portal.  There are issues associated with this, under PCR regulations we are required to be fair and equitable to everyone, if we accidentally miss a supplier from communications or a supplier is not yet engaged in this process we could be seen as being providing an unfair level of detail to suppliers.
<b>Tendering Activity</b>	Does the 3% management fee apply to consumables?	No, consumables form part of the centrally funded model and are part of the Buy Price = Sell Price initiative brought in in 2018

*If there are any further question in relation to the retender of the NHS Supply Chain Pathology framework agreement, please don't not hesitate to contact us, our details are within the slide deck shared along with this document.*