Communication

Below are the key considerations for communicating the contract. These should be considered in your communications plan.

Why?

Open or close

Having completed the procurement to the point of award it is essential to communicate effectively. Communication of the Contract Award and of the subsequent procedures is essential to ensure compliance. It also maximises the planned benefit(s) from the procurement exercise.

Who?

Open or close

You must know who you are targeting with your communications. During strategy development you should have identified all key stakeholders from suppliers to end users. You should consider communications in terms of the three areas below, for each of the identified stakeholder groups.

What?

Open or close

What is your communication about? Be clear on your key and supporting messages. Ensure that the subject is appropriate for the audience (stakeholder group). Ensure the communication stays focused on what they need to know and what is expected of them.

When?

Open or close

Plan and consider your communications timings carefully, in line with the implementation process. Your communications must:

- Arrive in good time;
- Allow the audience to digest the information;
- Allow the audience to then act upon or respond within the timescales.

Communication should take place at the start, throughout and end of the process. .

How?

Open or close

You must consider how you communicate to your audience. This can be determined by the stakeholder audience you are targeting.

You may also wish to consider (but not limited to):

- Newsletters- stakeholder community;
- Intranet/internet article - public audience
- e-zines – targeted group;
- e-mail - small targeted group;
- Roadshows – specific bidders or the general supplier community.

Accessibility requirements of your audience and accessibility legislation should be considered.

Some activities undertaken are described more fully further along this process e.g. buyer/end user information packs, supplier buyer events.

This is intended as a guide rather than being prescriptive.

Care and Support Services - Communication and Transitional Arrangements

Open or close

Communication with people who use services and their carers

Having finalised and agreed the procurement plan, an organisation should communicate its intentions to people who use the services and also their carers/representatives. It is important that an organisation provides clear and unambiguous information at this stage and that this information is tailored to the particular audience.

In these communications an organisation should explain:

- how long it will take to decide who will provide the service;
- what will happen at different times in the process;
- how people who use the services and their carers will be involved in the process;
- who will make the final decisions and how these will be made;
- (where appropriate) why there may be a change in service provider; and,
- how service provision may change as a result of the procurement process.

An organisation should also provide contact details for further information.

An organisation should ensure that people who use services and also their carers have help to understand the process and what, if anything, they are being asked about. It should also ensure that these people have sufficient time to consider how they might be affected and to formulate their views before having to respond

Transitional arrangements

It is important that this stage of the procurement process is managed successfully to ensure minimum disruption to people who use services and their carers. This will require close co-operation between different teams within an organisation and between it and service providers.

This is particularly important where the outcome of the procurement exercise involves the transfer of an existing service to a new service provider. This is because there is some potential for the transfer process to be demanding and consume significant amounts of staff time. An organisation should facilitate the

transfer of accurate, up to date information to the new service provider and ensure that the handover arrangements are appropriate and fully implemented.

Service providers will need to satisfy the Care Inspectorate that it can adhere to the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 and Regulations and also meet the relevant National Care Standards. The Care Inspectorate can take up to approximately six months to register a new care service. This depends on a range of issues, including provision of a competent application and the complexity of the service being provided.

Where an existing service provider seeks to deliver a new service under the existing registered care services, this should be discussed with the Care Inspectorate. It may be possible to vary the registration to include the new contract. However, consideration would need to be given to: the current conditions of registration; the size of the service; management and staff support arrangements; geography; client group and needs of those people who use services; transferability of staff across the service; staff skills and training; and the aims and objectives of the service.

If a service provider applies to cancel its registration, it is legally required to state whether notice has been given to those people who use the services and their carers about the changes to its service and how their needs will be met if the application to cancel is approved by the Care Inspectorate. An organisation should provide the necessary support and information to a service provider to enable it to meet its legal obligations.

An organisation which is outsourcing a service or bringing a service back in-house will have to meet its legal obligations under the TUPE Regulations. It should, in all such cases, seek legal advice on application of the TUPE Regulations. In other cases involving the transfer of an existing service, an organisation should consider whether it needs to take any action, for example to facilitate the exchange of information between service providers, should the TUPE Regulations apply.

Post Award Supplier Meeting

Open or close

The first meeting with the successful supplier should be held as soon as possible after contract award.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- discuss the contract implementation phase
- agree roles and responsibilities
- identify activities
- agree timescales.

You must keep in regular contact with the supplier during the contract implementation phase, scheduling additional meetings and communications.

Buyer/End User Information Packs

Open or close

You may wish to create an information pack for organisations and/or users which contains key contract information including:

- Details of the contract goods and services available;
- Contract prices;
- Supplier contact details;
- Sub-contractor details;
- Ordering information;
- Returns and delivery processes;
- Escalation process;
- Complaints process;
- Contract and supplier management process;

This information pack should demonstrate how the contract delivers best value and provides information on contract benefits e.g. savings, KPIs, improvements in quality and service, prompt payment of the full supply chain, sustainable procurement and community benefits expected etc.

An example of an information pack is the Postal Services End User Guide below. This is a detailed example. Every information pack must be proportionate to the size and complexity of the procurement, therefore your information pack may be much smaller.

Supplier/Buyer Events

Open or close

A useful way to raise contract awareness amongst potential customers is to organise Supplier/Buyer events. This gives both parties an opportunity to meet each other and exchange information e.g. undertaking a Supplier/Buyer Event Presentation, and/or distributing information packs / buyers' guides.

Such events can provide useful information which can be used in the current contract (assuming it does not cause a material change) or in future contracts.

Postal Services End User Guide Example

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