

Our Ref: NG/RM/24322
Date: 27th September 2024

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Lawton House
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ST4 8HH

Reception: 0300 123 1535

Dear

Freedom of Information Act Request

I am writing in response to your e-mail of the 7th September 2024. Your request has been processed using the Trust's procedures for the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

Requested information:

I am writing to submit a Freedom of Information (FOI) request concerning the procurement and award of contracts under Lot 1 of the Workforce Alliance RM6281 framework for temporary clinical and healthcare staffing. I would appreciate your assistance in providing the following information:

1. Direct Award Method:
 - Has your Trust employed the direct award method for sourcing workers or small groups of workers under the RM6281 framework? If so, please provide evidence demonstrating that the selected suppliers offered the most economically advantageous terms in accordance with the framework's guidelines.
 - What measures does your Trust implement to ensure transparency and fairness in direct award decisions, including maintaining a clear audit trail?
2. Further Competition:
 - Has your Trust used the further competition process for awarding contracts where adjustments to the framework terms were necessary or where commercial benefits could be achieved? Please provide documentation detailing:
 - The identification of the relevant lot.
 - Invitations sent to all capable suppliers.
 - Evaluation criteria used to determine the most economically advantageous tender.
 - Evidence of a fair and transparent evaluation process.
3. Neutral or Master Vendor:
 - If your Trust utilizes a neutral or master vendor to manage temporary staffing, how do you ensure these vendors comply with the framework's requirements, including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015? Please provide evidence of compliance with the framework's rules for transparency, fairness, and economic advantage.

- What processes are in place to monitor and audit the actions of neutral or master vendors?
- 4. Supplier Selection and Exclusion:
 - Please explain how your Trust lawfully selects certain suppliers while excluding others under the RM6281 framework. What justifications are used for these decisions, and how do you ensure compliance with the framework and procurement regulations?
- 5. Processes for Supplier Selection:
 - Could you outline the process your Trust follows when selecting suppliers for temporary clinical and healthcare staff under RM6281? This should include the decision-making steps for choosing between direct award, further competition, or engaging a neutral/master vendor.
 - Please provide contact details for the department responsible for handling legal queries related to procurement under the framework.
- 6. Additional Information:
 - The total number of agencies listed under Lot 1 and the rates at which they supply their services.
 - The name of the master or neutral vendor managing shift allocation.

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust have not utilised Workforce Alliance RM6281 framework; therefore, we cannot answer any of the above questions.

- If your Trust is not using the Workforce Alliance RM6281 framework, please specify which framework is currently in use. **The Trust utilises Health Trust Europe framework Total Work Solutions 2.**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review of the management of your request. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to: Dr Buki Adeyemo, Chief Executive, North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Trust, Trust Headquarters, Lawton House, Bellringer Road, Trentham, ST4 8HH. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely



Nicola Griffiths
Deputy Director of Governance