Bid brief: Managed Detection and Response (MDR) Service

The Cambridge Housing Society Limited (CHS) | Notice 108226-2026 | https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Notice/108226-2026

Scope

A 24/7 managed detection and response service for CHS, a Cambridge housing association with more than 3,000 homes: SOC monitoring and response, EDR/XDR, Microsoft 365 and Entra ID monitoring, identity threat detection, threat hunting, incident response and forensics, reporting and service reviews (17 scope items, PSQ 2.4). Single lot, one supplier. Must cover Windows, iOS and Android mobile endpoints.

Value and key dates

£140,000 excluding VAT (£168,000 including VAT), per the notice. 36 months from 6 Jan 2027, with possible 12 + 12 month extensions to 5 Jan 2032. The documents do not say whether the value includes the extensions.

Clarification deadline	27 Nov 2026, 17:00	**Award letters and assessment summaries**	17 Dec 2026
Tender deadline (all documents)	9 Dec 2026, 23:59	**Standstill**	18 Dec 2026 to 4 Jan 2027
Evaluation	10 to 17 Dec 2026	**Contract start (estimated)**	6 Jan 2027
Presentations, if needed	Key date 5, to be advised	**Initial term ends / latest end with extensions**	5 Jan 2030 / 5 Jan 2032

Eligibility and pass/fail conditions

- Open only to SMEs and VCSEs located in the UK (notice reservation).
- Must cover Windows, iOS and Android mobile endpoints (notice selection criterion).
- Capability for the entire scope (PSQ 2.2), financial viability (PSQ 4) and no exclusion grounds (PSQ 12): failing any disqualifies.
- Three relevant reference contracts from the last three years; one negative reference disqualifies (PSQ 10.1).
- Insurance: employer's and public liability £10m each, professional indemnity £2m, plus data protection indemnity cover (PSQ 9).
- Registered on the Central Digital Platform; Disclosure of Interests and Non-Collusion certificates correct and signed; on time; accept CHS terms (derogations may disqualify).

How it is scored

Most Advantageous Tender. Price 30%, quality 70%: functionality against the specification 40%, future-proof capability 10%, consultancy support 7.5%, implementation and mobilisation 7.5%, social value 5% (notice). Minimum quality scores apply but are not stated (ITT p.3). Social value pledges score 3 points in CHS communities, 2 in Cambridgeshire, 1 elsewhere. No quality questions, scoring scale, word limits or pricing schedule are published.

Risks (our view)

- Scoring detail is missing, so answers and price rest on assumptions until the buyer clarifies.
- 24/7 SOC is required. A small firm needs its own SOC or a partner; CHS accepts partnerships, but each associated person must be on the CDP.
- Go-live by 6 Jan 2027 is about three weeks after award, over Christmas.
- Contract terms are unpublished, and submission rules conflict (notice: no electronic submission; ITT: email plus a hard-copy certificate).
- Environment size (users, endpoints) is not stated, so pricing carries volume risk.

Estimated effort (our estimate)

About 22 to 30 hours: PSQ and evidence 6 to 8, quality narrative for the five quality criteria 10 to 14, pricing 3 to 4, social value 1 to 2, forms and final review 2. Assumes policies, certificates, accounts and three MDR references are ready.

Bid / no-bid (our view): Bid, if you pass the gates

- Reserved for SMEs and VCSEs, below-threshold open procedure, simple PSQ: the competition is limited to firms like yours.
- Bid only if you (or a named SOC partner) already run 24/7 MDR with Microsoft 365/Entra integration and Windows, iOS and Android coverage, and have three MDR references from the last three years.
- Quality is 70% of the score, so a well-evidenced capability answer can beat a lower price.
- No-bid if you cannot meet the insurance levels or show financial viability: both disqualify outright.

Clarification questions for the buyer

- No quality questions, scoring scale, minimum score or word limits are published. How will responses be evaluated against each notice criterion?
- No pricing schedule is published. In what format and on what basis (annual, per user or endpoint, 3-year total) should price be given, and how many users, endpoints and servers are in scope?
- The Form of Tender (ITT p.2) is not published. Please provide it, and say what 'Other documentation' should include.
- Please provide the full contract terms bidders must accept (ITT p.5).
- The notice says electronic submission is not allowed, but the ITT asks for email. Which is correct, and is a signed PDF Non-Collusion Certificate acceptable instead of an original hard copy?
- Does the £140,000 value cover 36 months only, or include the extensions? What minimum data protection indemnity cover is required (PSQ 9.2)? When is 'key date 5'?

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