

INVITATION TO TENDER

Towards better sickle cell transition services

Date: 15/5/24

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About the NHS Race and Health Observatory

The NHS Race and Health Observatory ('the Observatory') is a new, independent organisation, set up to explore ethnic inequalities in access to healthcare, experiences of healthcare, health outcomes, and inequalities experienced by black and minority ethnic members of the health and care workforce. In doing so, it assesses aspirations in these areas as outlined in national healthcare policy, including those set-out in the NHS Long Term Plan. It is a proactive investigator, providing strong recommendations that inform policymaking and facilitate change. It is evidence-driven and solution-focused.

The Observatory is supported by NHS England and hosted by the NHS Confederation. The Observatory's board and team are independent, and it dictates its own direction and areas of focus. The Observatory has three main functions:

- facilitating new, high-quality, and innovative research and evidence
- making strategic policy recommendations for change
- supporting the practical implementation of those recommendations

Scope of the work

Background

The Observatory's proposed work programme on children and young persons' sickle cell care focuses on identifying and rolling out optimal transition (from paediatric to adult services) care. Specifically, we aim to establish optimal online and face-to-face resources for delivering high quality transition sickle care - drawing on experience in transition for other disorders. We are interested in patient reported quality of life, health service usage, educational attainment, and employment status as outcomes and would wish that partners carry out the necessary data linkage to measure these.

The Observatory's overarching sickle cell programme was developed following a parliamentary inquiry into avoidable deaths and failures of care for sickle cell patients in secondary care which found that too sickle cell patients experience poor care and avoidable harm in the NHS.[1] The inquiry report recommended that the NHS Race and Health Observatory undertake concerted work into sickle cell care in relation to race and ethnicity. As part of its response to the recommendation, the Observatory, in collaboration with the National Haemoglobinopathy Panel, the UK Forum on Haemoglobin Disorders, and the Sickle Cell Society, is commissioning research to improve sickle cell transition care. We work closely with NHS England on this work programme and will ensure that this work programme is aligned with other work being undertaken at national level.

Project outline

Transition from paediatric to adult services is an important process for patients with chronic conditions. The likelihood of chronic conditions being well managed into adulthood is greater when the process is well supported, and a lack of good transition care can have lasting harmful consequences.

Prior research has revealed experiences of poor care among young people with sickle cell disorder outside specialist services in the NHS, with young people's voices being often ignored.[2] Clinical guidelines suggest a model of transition care and make service recommendations,[3] but more research is needed to identify the optimal face to face and

online resources needed to support transition care. Evaluation of interventions aimed at improving transition care with respect to patient reported quality of life, health service usage, educational attainment, and employment status, using data linkage as necessary, is also needed.

This is a deliberately broad tender which invites bids that are likely to lead to evidence-based improvements in sickle cell transition care in the NHS.

The winning bid will combine academic and clinical subject matter expertise with the requisite people skills to deliver the project collaboratively in the NHS. This will include skills in, and experience of, working closely with patients with lived experience, healthcare professionals, community organisations, and healthcare managers. We will be looking to be convinced of the ability of bids to maintain a razor-sharp focus to deliver on the end goal of the programme, better transition sickle cell care. We expect to see a plan to demonstrate collaborative working with community representation to ensure that the work is 'trustworthy' among the target communities.

Bids that aim to extend existing programmes of work are welcome providing there is clear evidence that the work is new and not already funded. We would look favourably on applications that include partnership between NHS trusts and academic organisations with a focus on delivering tangible patient benefit.

Detailed specifications

- The initial work period will be for 11 months from the date of award, with a further 3-4 weeks for review and sign off. Longer periods may be considered if justification for the longer timescale can be provided.
- The work should include extensive and meaningful community engagement at all stages, including initial scoping and assurance of final conclusions and recommendations.
- Quality criteria should be applied to evidence including, where appropriate, evidence of user-validation and stakeholder validity.
- A final main report should take the form of a MS Word document or similar (maximum of 60-80 pages) and should be produced for the NHS Race and Health Observatory. The research report will be for external publication (to be published by the Observatory). Please ensure you provide communications support for the Observatory's PR handling approach, pre and post report publication. A lay summary report should also be produced (maximum of 10-12 pages).
- We welcome bids up to £100,000. Higher value bids may be considered if adequate justification can be given for the additional amount.

Tender submission

Your tender submission should be organised under the following headings:

'Company information' to include:

- Briefly outline your values, structure, size and capabilities in general
- Examples of similar tenders or grants you have won and delivered
- List two previous clients (preferably not for profit) that we can contact for reference purposes (references will be taken up for firms shortlisted)
- Complete the equalities questionnaire at schedule 1.

‘Project plan’ to include:

- A summary project plan highlighting key dates to demonstrate how you would meet the proposed deadline.
- An indication of how much input/capacity would be required from the Observatory team.
- Details of key personnel who will be involved in the project.
- Key risks and mitigating actions for the project
- An explanation of the unique benefit you will bring to this work.
- Detail of any elements of the work that would be provided by another company/freelance staff.
- Details of how you propose to ensure GDPR compliance, as appropriate

‘Fee proposal’ to include:

- Costings for the work including VAT.
- A detailed budget covering both personnel costs and any non-pay expenses.
- The costs of any elements of the work that would be provided by another company/freelance staff.

Selection criteria

We will rank tenders on the basis of:

1. Overall fit to requirements of the brief and proposed methods.
2. A proven track record of impactful high quality previous work in the area.
3. Relevant experience of team, including a demonstration of cultural competence, understanding of digital health, and an ability to engage with issues around ethnic health inequality and racism.
4. Value for money to the Observatory.
5. Your approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Key Dates

ITT released	15/05/2024
Deadline for bids	03/06/2024
Potential follow-up interviews	13/06/2024
Contract awarded	17/06/2024
Interim main and summary reports	17/03/2025
Final main and summary reports	17/06/2025

Instructions for the return of the tenders

Tenders should be submitted by email to info@nhsrho.org

Tender ref: RHO_TBSCTS

Tenders must be received by the end of 03/06/24. Tenders received after this date will not be considered.

It is incumbent on tenders to ensure they have all of the information required for the preparation of their tenders.

Further information about this tender can be obtained from:

Name	Dr Carl Reynolds
Title	Senior Clinical Adviser
Email address	tenderbids@nhsrho.org

Schedule 1

Equalities questionnaire

This questionnaire must be completed satisfactorily in order for any company to be considered to tender for this NHS Confederation contract. The equality legislation consists of the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Religion/Belief) Regulations 2003, all amendments to these Acts and all relevant regulations made under them.

1. Is it your policy as an employer and as a service provider to comply with your statutory obligations under the equality legislation, which applies to Great Britain, or equivalent legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff?

Yes No

2. Accordingly, is it your practice not to discriminate directly or indirectly in breach of equality legislation which applies in Great Britain and legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff:

• In relation to decisions to recruit, select, remunerate, train, transfer and promote employees?

Yes No

• In relation to delivering services?

Yes No

3. Do you have a written equality policy?

Yes No

4. Does your equality policy cover:

• Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal?

Yes No

• Victimisation, discrimination and harassment making it clear that these are disciplinary offences?

Yes No

• Identify the senior position for responsibility for the policy and its effective implementation?

Yes No

5. Is your policy on equality set out:

- In documents available and communicated to employees, managers, recognised trade unions or other representative groups?

Yes No

- In recruitment advertisements or other literature?

Yes No

- In materials promoting your services?

Yes No

Please evidence all questions.

If you answered NO to any part of questions 4 or 5 can you provide (and if so, please do) other evidence to show how you promote equalities in employment and service delivery.

6. In the last three years, have any findings of unlawful discrimination been made against your firm by the Employment Tribunal, the Employment Appeal Tribunal or any other court or in comparable proceedings in any other jurisdiction?

Yes No

7. In the last three years, has any contract with your organisation been terminated on grounds of your failure to comply with:

- Legislation prohibiting discrimination; or

Yes No

- Contract conditions relating to equality in the provision of services

Yes No

8. In the last three years, has your firm been the subject of formal investigations by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, The Equal Opportunities Commission or a comparable body, on grounds of alleged unlawful discrimination?

Yes No

9. If the answer to question 6 and 7 is YES, or, in relation to question 8, a finding adverse to your organisation has been made, what steps have you taken as a result of that finding? Please summarise the details below and provide full details as an attachment.

10. If you are not currently subject to UK employment law, please supply details of your experience in complying with equivalent legislation that is designed to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity. List any attached documents.

Guidance in answering the equality questionnaire

When completing the questionnaire, all companies must answer each question fully and supply any documentary evidence requested. Failure to fully answer each question or failure to submit any documentary evidence required may lead the NHS Confederation to consider the answer unsatisfactory.

Question 1 and 2

If your firm has implemented an effective equality policy, you will be able to answer yes to these questions. You will be able to confirm your answers by submitting your equality policy and supporting evidence as for as part of this section.

Question 3 and 4

You will need to submit a copy of your firm's equality policy. You will need to ensure that your policy covers:

- Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal
- Victimisation, discrimination and harassment
- Identifies the senior position responsibly for the policy

Question 5

Documents available and method of communication to staff. You will be required to submit examples of any documents, which explain your firm's policies in respect of recruitment, selection, remuneration, training and promotion outside of the equality policy asked for in Question 3 and 4.

You will also need evidence of how your firm has communicated this document to staff i.e. notice boards or issue individual employees with a copy. There is no prescribed evidence here. You will need to submit whatever documents your firm uses for these purposes.

In recruitment advertisements or other literature, you will need to submit evidence that makes public your firm's commitment to equality in employment and service delivery.

Small firms may not have detailed procedures, but you must ensure that evidence is provided which demonstrates that personnel operate in accordance with a written equality policy that includes:

- Open recruitment practices such as using job centres and local newspapers to advertise vacancies
- Instructions about how the firm ensures that all job applicants are treated fairly.

In material promoting your services This relates to how your firm provides information in materials promoting your services e.g. in different languages, making information accessible to people with hearing and visual impairment and physical access for disabled users.

Question 6

This question's concern is whether any court or industrial tribunal has found your firm guilty of unlawful discrimination in the last three years. It is important to be honest with your answers. The NHS Confederation may check your responses. If the answer is yes, you may wish to insert additional information which details the actions your firm has undertaken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

Answering yes will not automatically mean that you do not get the contract; you need to ensure that the NHS Confederation feels confident that you have sufficient measures put in place to prevent a re-occurrence.

Question 7

This question's concern is whether your firm has ever had a contract terminated for noncompliance with equality legislation or equality contract conditions. If the answer is yes, your firm may wish to submit additional information which details the actions they have taken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

Question 8

This question asks whether your firm has had any investigation carried out, whatever the outcome. The NHS Confederation can check a contractor's answer from lists that the CRE and EOC produce, so please be honest. The NHS Confederation is aware that because a firm has been investigated does not mean that it is guilty of discrimination. The result of the investigation will be taken into account when assessing your firm's answers to the questionnaire.

Question 9

If your firm has been found guilty of unlawful discrimination, you will need to provide evidence that details the steps your firm has taken to correct the situation. The Court, Industrial Tribunal or CRE will have made recommendations about steps your firm should take to eliminate the discrimination. If no action or inadequate action has been taken in this respect, only then will your firm be considered refusal onto the tender list.

Question 10

If your firm is not subject to UK employment law you must ensure that you supply details of equivalent legislation that you adhere to.

1. Sickle Cell Society. Sickle cell disease: no one's listening [Internet]. 2021. Available from: <https://www.sicklecellsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/No-Ones-Listening-Final.pdf>

2. Renedo A, Miles S, Chakravorty S, Leigh A, Warner JO, Marston C. Understanding the health-care experiences of people with sickle cell disorder transitioning from paediatric to adult services: This Sickle Cell Life, a longitudinal qualitative study. Southampton (UK): NIHR Journals Library; 2020 Nov. PMID: 33237686.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33237686/>

3. Sickle Cell Society. Standards for the Clinical Care of Adults with Sickle in the UK [Internet]. 2018. Available from: <https://www.sicklecellsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Standards-for-the-Clinical-Care-of-Adults-with-Sickle-Cell-in-the-UK-2018.pdf>