

VCSE Skills and Information Workshops – Victims’ Services

Guide to Typical PQQ Sections

This resource complements a series of Skills and Information workshops that Pulse Regeneration has been contracted to deliver by the Ministry of Justice to providers in the VCSE sector that deliver victims’ support services.

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Guide to Typical PQQ Sections

The PQQ

The main purpose of a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) is to assess the suitability of a supplier's commercial, technical and financial capabilities. This provides the commissioning body or buyer, such as a PCC, with a method of shortlisting interested parties that meet the required minimum qualification criteria.

The PQQ also helps the buyer in controlling the cost of the tendering process, as while many suppliers may meet the basic criteria only those with the top scores will be shortlisted and invited to tender.

It is therefore important to demonstrate that suppliers fully meet the basic criteria when completing the PQQ, and just 'ticking the boxes' is unlikely to be enough. Suppliers must also show that they can bring real value to the bidding process.

Typical PQQ Sections

While PQQs vary dependent on the buyer and the nature of the service being commissioned, most have a number of typical sections:

1. General Company Information
2. Mandatory Exclusions
3. Technical Capability
4. Financial Information
5. Insurance
6. Health and Safety
7. Equal Opportunities
8. Quality
9. Environment

A number of the PQQ sections are scored, for example technical capability whereas other sections are usually a pass or fail, for example, mandatory exclusions. Some of the sections may include a mixture of scored and pass or fail, for example policies, whereas other sections may be for information only, e.g. general company information. The buyer will usually assess the pass/ fail sections first and the scoring criteria for the sections that are scored should be set out in the PQQ document.

Each of the typical sections is summarised in the following pages.

1. General Company Information

Usually the first section of the PQQ and will generally ask for:

- Name, address and contact details
- Company details including legal status, registration number, registered address, year established and number of employees
- Names of any directors, partners or trustees

2. Mandatory Exclusions

Suppliers will usually be excluded at the PQQ stage on a number of grounds including organised crime, fraud, corruption, money laundering, tax evasion as well as misrepresentation and professional conduct.

The PQQ will usually ask if there is any order of suspension of provision against the supplier, if there has been any court action against the supplier in the past three years and if any contracts delivered have been terminated within the last three years. If any of these apply then the supplier will risk failing at the first hurdle and will need to supply additional information to minimise this risk.

3. Technical Capability

Sometimes also referred to as 'business activities', the aim is to determine if the supplier can satisfy the requirements of the contract. This includes assessing the supplier's abilities as well as experience. Key questions may include:

- Details of relevant experience and track record of similar service delivery within the last three years
- Standards of competence of staff to undertake this type of service
- Evidence of any accreditations or licenses
- Details of how the service will be delivered
- Three referees from the past three years, each with contact, contract value, and dates

4. Financial Information

A buyer will need to know about the financial situation of the supplier and will want to know if they have the financial stability and resources to undertake the contract. Basic financial information is likely to include:

- Three years of accounts
- Cashflow forecasts
- Turnover for the last three years
- Name and contact details of the supplier's banker

Assessment of the financial information may include ratio of contract value to turnover, credit rating and reserves level.

5. Insurance

A PQQ will almost certainly ask questions about insurance levels as the buyer will want to be assured that the supplier has the right insurance in place to cover against claims, especially if problems emerge during the contract.

Evidence in the form of certificates will usually be required and typical insurance cover levels are £10m for public liability, £5m for employer's liability, and £2m for professional indemnity insurance.

6. Health and Safety

Health and safety is a key criteria as the buyer will want to know that comply with the relevant legislation. The minimum requirement will usually require the supplier to submit their Health and Safety Policy and provide a description on how the Policy is conveyed to the workforce, how it is managed and who is the responsible person is for Health and Safety.

It is also likely to ask if there have been any prosecutions made against the supplier in the last three years for contravention of Health and Safety legislation.

7. Equal Opportunities

Public bodies are legally obliged to ensure that no unlawful discrimination takes place in the supply of goods and services therefore the buyer will require suppliers to meet certain equal opportunities requirements and to comply with the relevant legislation. The minimum requirement will usually include an Equal Opportunities or Equality and Diversity Policy and a description of how the Policy is managed and conveyed to the workforce.

It will also ask if there have been any court findings made against the supplier in the last three years for discrimination.

8. Quality

Public bodies also have a responsibility to ensure quality standards are upheld and the buyer will want to know that the service will be up to the required standard. The PQQ will usually ask for evidence of a Quality Assurance Policy and how this is conveyed to the workforce as well as details of quality management. The PQQ will also ask if the supplier has been assessed against a relevant standard, for example ISO 9001.

9. Environment

Environmental issues are becoming ever more important therefore it is now normal practice for PQQs to ask for information around environmental standards and sustainability. This will usually include evidence of an Environmental Policy and how this is conveyed to the workforce, details of any Environmental Management System or relevant standard, for example ISO 14001 and details of any prosecutions or served notices for breaking environmental law in the last three years.