

Invitation to Tender

External Audit Services

February 2021

1. Background

Nexus Multi Academy Trust is medium sized Trust with ten open academies across South Yorkshire and a Free Special School in pre-opening.

Nexus MAT is a truly forward thinking Trust. The Trust was formed in 2016, has a clear mission statement, shared values, and has a concise vision with a limited number of key strategic priorities.

The vision for Nexus is that we are constantly **“Learning together, to be the best we can be.”**

This vision is what we aspire for and is as relatable to every employee and partner of our Trust as it is to our children, young adults and their families.

In order to achieve our vision, we have the following mission statement:

- **Our learners and their families are at the centre of what we do;**
- **Our employees and partners are passionate about being the best that they can be;**
- **Our Trust is relentlessly focused on improvement;**

We believe it is really important and that we are, in all the things we plan and do: **Inclusive; Child Centred; Family Focused; Caring; Passionate; Nurturing; Encouraging Enriching; Empowering.**

Nexus Multi Academy Trust is a private Limited company with charitable status, company number 10075893, based at A06 Magna 34 Business Park, Temple Road, Rotherham, S60 1FG. The main contact for the purposes of this procurement is:

Gaynor Bailey - Purchase to Pay Officer
Email: Nexus.Finance@nexusmat.org Tel: 01709 257277

2. Introduction

The Trust currently consists of ten open academes:

- Abbey School, Little Common Lane, Rotherham
- Bader Academy, Edenthorpe, Doncaster
- Becton Hospital School, Sevenairs Road, Sheffield
- Coppice School, Ash Hill Road, Doncaster
- Craggs Community School, Strauss Crescent, Rotherham
- Heatherwood School, Ledger Way, Doncaster
- Hilltop School, Larch Road, Rotherham
- Kelford School, Oakdale Road, Rotherham
- North Ridge School, Tenter Balk Lane, Doncaster
- Pennine View, Old Road, Doncaster

We currently employ 846 staff across the ten academies and the Central Trust Team.

Nexus Multi Academy Trust has won the right to open two new special schools. The first opened in Doncaster on 1 September 2020. The second that the Trust has been granted permission to open is an 80-place special free school for children with autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional, and mental health needs in Sheffield from 1 September 2022.

The final service will cover all eleven academies and the central Trust team for external audit services as detailed in this specification. We also anticipate incremental growth over the next 3 years, of around 1 to 2 converter academies each year (though this isn't guaranteed).

We anticipate that all academies will move to the new arrangements from 1st September 2021 (with the first external audit and accounts preparation taking place for the 2020/21 academic year), but we reserve the right to vary membership and timings to reflect circumstances. For the duration of this contract, we may further grow the Trust. We will let this contract on the basis that other schools can be added on (at least) the same terms.

3. Requirements

Learning together; to be the best we can be.

We are seeking to procure a service that provides:

- External Audit Services

The Trust requirements are as follows:

- Preparation of the Nexus Multi Academy Trust Annual Report and Accounts;
- Expressing an opinion of the above Financial Statements;
- Accountants Assurance Report on Regularity as required by the ESFA;
- Accountants Assurance Report on the Annual Accounts Return as required by the ESFA;
- Attendance at the Trust Board of Directors meeting at which the Statutory Accounts are scrutinised;
- Audit of the Teachers' Pension Scheme End of Year Certificate;
- Preparation and submission of the Corporation tax return;
- Preparation and submission of the Academies Accounts return;
- A working knowledge of the Access (HCSS) financial management system;
- Other ad hoc services as required;
- Taxation advice as required;
- VAT advice as required.

4. Procurement Timeline

Event	Date
Tender Notice posted	10th February 2021
Tenderers to express interest and submit clarifications questions via email	19 th February 2021
Nexus Multi Academy Trust to issue responses to clarification questions, options for scope clarification phone calls	24 th February 2021
Tender response deadline	5 th March 2021
Tender review process	8 th March 2021
Shortlisted/Unsuccessful tenderers notified	9 th March 2021
Meet with shortlisted tenderers	17 th March 2021
Initial Contract award/unsuccessful tenderers notified	18 th March 2021
Stand still period	18 th March 2021 – 24 March 2021
Contract Award – Confirmation by Directors	24 March 2021

Tenderers should raise any queries they have about the requirements via email to Nexus.Finance@nexusmat.org. Any questions will be included on an FAQ document and posted on the Trust website alongside the Tender Notice, to ensure all interested parties have access to the same information.

Nexus MAT will endeavour to answer all written enquiries prior to tenders been submitted and reserves the right not to respond to a request for information or clarification.

All tenders are required to be submitted by the date quoted in the table: 5th March 2021. It is the responsibility of the tenderer to ensure that the tender is submitted and delivered on time. The Trust will not consider late or incomplete submissions. The submission should be via email to Nexus.Finance@nexusmat.org although tenderers may also submit paper copies of any documents to the Purchase to Pay Officer, Magna 34 Business Park, A06 1st Floor, Temple Road, Rotherham, S60 1FG.

The Trust will shortlist tenders and then invite providers to a formal interview. The Trust reserves the right to vary the timetable, and is also under no obligation to appoint a preferred bidder from this exercise.

5. Submission of Tender

All tenders should specifically identify:

- A total annual cost proposal;
- A clear indication of services provided as part of the fee;
- The variable costs for the proposal, including charge per new academy / ad-hoc advice, if applicable;
- Any inflationary or other provisions for periodic increase in fees;
- Fees chargeable for additional services that are not included in as part of the annual cost proposal;
- Your firms approach to client management and how you offer ongoing support;
- Evidence of working with Multi Academy Trusts and/or charitable trusts;
- Evidence of working with Access (HCSS) Budgeting and Accounting software;
- Example Management Letter;
- Statistics on Client Retention and Recruitment rates;
- Biographies of staff the Trust will be working with, listing expertise and experience;
- The reports available to the Trust;
- Two References from organisations that you have worked with within the educational sector;
- Compliance measures for meeting the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018;

- A brief description of your business continuity plans that mitigate against an interrupted service should this arise;
- Confirmation that you will carry out code of conduct of the professional body;
- Details of any additional measurable benefits you can provide in terms of quality and cost which impact on social value indicators;
- Explanation of training / events provided to clients. Are these FOC?;
- What “added value” you can offer Nexus Multi Academy Trust.

6. Contracting and Invoicing

The contract will be for a three-year period, commencing on 1st September 2021 and ending on 31 August 2024, unless terminated earlier in accordance within the terms of the contract.

The Trust is under no obligation to appoint a provider from this exercise and reserves the right not to appoint or to re-run the exercise. The Trust will not be liable for any costs prior to appointment, including submission of Tender.

Invoicing arrangement will be made clear with the appointed provider as part of their confirmation of appointment.

7. Instructions to Tenderers

Please submit your tender offer in accordance with all of the instructions, requirements and specification.

Please ensure your proposal is no longer than 10 pages or up to 15 slides.

All tenders must be complete and submitted to Nexus.Finance@nexusmat.org by the specified deadline.

8. Compliance

Nexus Multi Academy Trust reserves the right to disqualify or reduce the evaluation score of any tenderers who do not fully comply with the requirements in the tender documentation, in particular the closing date and time.

The Trust reserves the right to evaluate proposals on a variety of criteria. The tender with the lowest price will not automatically be accepted as the successful bid.

9. Termination

Either party may terminate the contract by giving 6 months' notice.

The initial period of the contract is three years; this could be renewed for an additional one or two year.

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