

NFCC establishes national framework agreement for the supply and delivery of emergency response equipment

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), in consultation with its members, identified a preference for the future procurement of emergency response equipment to be undertaken on a 'sector led' basis as part of its commercial reform initiatives and the work of the National Procurement Hub.

UK fire and rescue authorities have a mission to make communities safer through prevention, protection and response activities. In order to provide these activities safely, suitable equipment is required to be procured and supplied to safeguard the safety and health of its employees and public while carrying out fire fighting and other duties from risks that cannot otherwise be controlled.

Emergency response equipment that is provided to operational personnel must be fit for purpose, meet operational needs and is compatible with existing protective equipment and meets or exceeds appropriate published BS/EN standards for quality and performance.

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The equipment shall be capable of operating at all fire and rescue service operational incidents and in a multiplicity of environments and shall be operated in accordance with relevant guidance.

In addition, some emergency response equipment may be used in the training environment, where it could be repeatedly subjected to high temperatures and prolonged usage, including use in confined spaces and fire behavioural training scenarios. The emergency response equipment shall be sufficiently robust to withstand such usage.



Photo: West Midlands Fire Service.

'Sector led' procurement

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority agreed to undertake the role of Lead Authority to establish a framework agreement for the supply and delivery of emergency response equipment and associated services on behalf of the participating services, participating customers and their agents.

Extensive premarket engagement with suppliers and consultation with the fire sector has taken place, which has assisted in shaping the framework, including the Lots and equipment that will be available to purchase, and the equipment specifications.

The Framework Lots are as follows:

- Lot 1 – Rescue equipment
- Lot 2 – Fluid transfer and CAFS
- Lot 3 – Ultra high-pressure lances and misting systems
- Lot 4 – PPV fans and smoke curtains
- Lot 5 – Thermal imaging cameras.

Through the establishment of the framework participating services, customers and their agents will be able to place call off contracts with framework contractors for equipment and associated services under the five available Lots. Call off contracts can be awarded via direct award or further competition. Further competitions can also be run collaboratively with other services, which should see a reduction in multiple tenders being issued at the same time for the same products.

Technical refresh and innovation

The framework that is established will also allow for technical refresh and innovation of products throughout its four-year life. If products have been tested, certified, are commercially available and sit within the scope of one of the five Lots, framework contractors can apply to have their latest products added to the product catalogue.

There are numerous benefits that will hopefully be achieved with the establishment of the framework: reduction in the duplication of costs and effort



Photo: West Midlands Fire Service.



associated with conducting multiple procurements; contractors are not required to pay the Lead Authority a rebate and it is therefore hoped that this will be reflected in the pricing, making it competitive; the option to place a direct award for up to 20% of an operational fleet per annum (per Lot); a comprehensive suite of goods and associated services available from one place; all contractors are pre-vetted and qualified to provide the required goods and services; all products (where applicable) are certified to the required standards, with certifications remaining up to date throughout the term of the Framework Agreement(s) and Call-Off Agreement(s); standardised terms and conditions for all customers; a suite of KPIs to ensure optimal contract performance; and strategic supplier relationship management on behalf of all customers.

For any suppliers interested in tendering for the opportunity for either one or multiple Lots please search for the opportunity on the EU Supply Portal using the tender opportunity reference number: 44002.

The deadline date and time for completed tenders to be uploaded to the portal is 10 May at 17:00 hours.

www.wmfs.net

For further information please contact the Framework Manager: liz.davies@wmfs.net



Photo: West Midlands Fire Service.