



PATHOLOGY DIRECTORATE
TENDER SPECIFICATION

Transportation of Specimens

NOVEMBER 2013

SERVICE SPECIFICATION



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This contract is for the provision of courier services for the Pathology Directorate, Heart of England Foundation Trust. The contract is broken down into 3 specific lots.
- 1.2 Lot one involves the transport of specimens, consumables and documents between the laboratory at Heartlands Hospital and customers of the laboratory, primarily local General Practitioners and local NHS Trusts. This lot also includes the provision of ad-hoc work including occasional long distance journeys transporting specimens/packages to other locations anywhere in the country, of which may be urgent, at any time in the day. See appendices 1
- 1.3 Lot two is for the provision of an “out of hours” service between Solihull and Heartlands Hospitals 7 days a week including bank holidays. This lot also contains provision for an emergency on-call service. See appendix 2
- 1.4 Lot three is the provision of an ad-hoc blood courier service (available 24 x7 x365) between the National blood Service in Birmingham and either Heartlands, Good Hope or Solihull hospitals to transport blood and blood products . See appendix 3
- 1.5 There is an option for the storage and distribution of consumables by the successful bidder from their own premises. Please confirm if this is something you can provide and if so give details of location, space capacity and any other relevant information.

2. SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 Bidders can bid for any combination of the following;
 - Lot 1
 - Lot 2
 - Lot 3

3. LOT ONE - DAILY ‘GENERAL PRACTITIONER’ ROUTINE JOURNEYS

- 3.1 Courier to provide daily collection/delivery service between Laboratory Medicine at Heartlands, and general practices including other NHS Trusts according to the schedule provided. See Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Couriers duties include:
 - 3.2.1 Daily collection of transport containers, mail pouches and consumables from Laboratory Medicine



3.2.2 Daily collection of specimens and mail pouches from surgeries to return to Laboratory Medicine

- 3.3 Couriers will depart from Pathology Reception daily Monday to Friday inclusive (but excluding Bank Holidays) at the time specified on the schedule, collect specimens and mail from the surgeries according to the time schedule for that route, and return all specimens and mail at the appropriate time as specified on the schedule.
- 3.4 Although it is acknowledged that delays may occur due to adverse weather and traffic conditions or delays at the collection/delivery point, the courier is required to ensure that such delays are kept to a minimum.
- 3.5 Drivers will be expected to track the samples collected at each surgery to enable a full audit log of specimen transit times and chain of custody from collection to delivery at Heartlands Hospital. Please confirm how you would undertake this.
- 3.6 Drivers will also be expected to assist in the temperature monitoring of the specimens from point of collection at GP surgery to sample delivery at heartlands Hospital. Please confirm how you would undertake this.
- 3.7 These runs maybe subject to change – (either addition or removal of locations) during the course of the contract, we would expect minor changes to the schedule to be accommodated within the contract value;
- 3.7.1. Provide a separate quotation for collections that cannot be incorporated into the main schedule. Confirm if this is included in your Commercial Offering
 - 3.7.2.. A tolerance of +/- 10% is applicable for changes within the contract rate as described above. Thereafter both parties have the right to renegotiate. Confirm your acceptance of this requirement.

3.8 Transportation of Blood Samples

3.8.1. Principle

It is the responsibility of the courier to protect blood samples and specimens against breakage, adulteration and theft, and to ensure that temperature conditions are maintained within acceptable limits during transport.

Regardless of the mode of transport, it should be possible to demonstrate that the samples have not been exposed to conditions that may compromise their quality and integrity. A risk-based approach should be utilised when planning transportation.

3.8.2. Transportation



The required storage conditions for blood samples and specimens should be maintained during transportation within the defined limits as described by the Pathology Laboratory organising the collection of samples for processing.

If a deviation such as temperature excursion or product damage has occurred during transportation, this should be reported to the laboratory on arrival.

A procedure should also be in place for investigating and handling temperature excursions.

It is the responsibility of the courier company to ensure that vehicles and equipment used to collect and handle blood samples and specimens are suitable for that use. They should be appropriately equipped to prevent exposure of the products to conditions that could affect their quality and packaging integrity. There should be written procedures in place for the operation and maintenance of all vehicles, including cleaning and safety precautions.

- 3.8.3 Risk assessment of delivery routes should be used to determine where temperature controls are required. Equipment used for temperature monitoring during transport within vehicles and/or containers, should be maintained and calibrated at regular intervals at least once a year.

Deliveries should be made to the location on the schedule and into the care of laboratory personnel. Blood samples and specimens should not be left on alternative premises.

For emergency deliveries outside normal business hours, persons should be designated and written procedures should be available.

The courier company will be made aware by the laboratory of the relevant transport conditions applicable to the consignment. Where the transportation route includes unloading and reloading, particular attention should be paid to temperature monitoring, cleanliness and the security of the vehicle when left unattended.

- 3.8.4. Containers, packaging and labelling

Blood samples and specimens must be transported in the designated containers (provided by the laboratory) that have no adverse effect on the quality of the samples and specimens being transported.

Selection of a container and packaging should be based on the storage and transportation requirements of the samples and specimens; the space required for the amount of containers; the anticipated external temperature extremes; the estimated maximum time for transportation including; the qualification status of the packaging and the validation status of the transport containers.

Containers should bear labels providing sufficient information on handling and storage requirements and precautions to ensure that the products are properly handled and secured at all times. The containers should enable identification of the contents of the containers and the contact details of the laboratory.



3.8.5. Products requiring special conditions

In relation to deliveries containing blood samples and specimens requiring special conditions such as samples being transported on dry ice. There should be additional control systems in place for delivery of these products.

3.8.6 The temperature monitoring equipment used during transport should be maintained and calibrated at regular intervals. Temperature mapping under representative conditions should be carried out and should take into account seasonal variations.

If cool packs are used in insulated boxes, they need to be located such that the product does not come in direct contact with the cool pack. Staff must be trained on the procedures for assembly of the insulated boxes (seasonal configurations) and on the reuse of cool packs.

There should be a system in place to control the reuse of cool packs to ensure that incompletely cooled packs are not used in error. There should be adequate physical segregation between frozen and chilled ice packs.

The process for delivery of sensitive samples and control of seasonal temperature variations should be described in a written procedure.

4. LOT TWO - OUT OF HOUR SERVICE

- 4.1 This specification is for the transportation of patient samples, blood products and laboratory supplies to and from Solihull Hospital Accident & Emergency Department, Solihull Blood Bank and Birmingham Heartlands sample reception.
- 4.2 This service is required seven days a week, between the hours of 17.00pms and 09.00am Monday to Friday, plus 24hours weekends and Bank Holidays, to a specified timetable - refer to appendices 2 for the schedule.
- 4.3 In addition, and 'Emergency On-Call' is required to cover the same time period, seven days a week, 365 days a year between the specified times for all sites (Heartlands/Good Hope and Solihull Hospital).
- 4.4 Drivers must respond to a call within 20 minutes maximum.
- 4.5 In the event of an 'emergency call out' switch board should be able to make contact with the courier on first attempt. There should only ever be one number to call, irrespective of the on call driver.

5. LOT THREE - BLOOD COURIER



- 5.1 The provision of an ad-hoc blood courier service as required by the laboratory, this would require a dedicated courier driver to be on standby 24x7 x 365 days. This courier would be available to respond to a call to pick up blood / blood products from the National Blood Service in Birmingham and transport blood / blood components (adhering to GMP regulations) to either Heartlands, Good Hope or Solihull blood banks.
- 5.2 The ad-hoc blood courier must be available for immediate response to any requests and should be able to reach the National Blood Service in Birmingham within 20 minutes.

6. PACKAGING

- 6.1 The appropriate packaging for the transport of specimens will be provided by Laboratory Medicine, and must be used by the provider, in line with the Directorates Health and Safety Procedure for the Transportation of Specimens and the Department of Transport regulations for the transport of specimens by road (PI650).
- 6.2 If it is blood or blood product deliveries then the National Blood Service will provide appropriate blood transportation boxes at point of issue.

7. CONTRACTORS STAFF AND VEHICLES

- 7.1 The successful company will be expected to supply dedicated drivers to carry out the service. All drivers are to be uniformed and carry Trust identification.
- 7.2 The successful company will have to submit evidence of training for drivers on Health & Safety [including manual handling] and customer care. Specialist training will be provided by Laboratory Medicine.
- 7.3 The Blood Courier drivers will be trained to comply with GMP regulations.
- 7.4 The successful company must supply a list of dedicated Drivers to Laboratory Medicine to ensure up to date training records are maintained. Drivers who have not received appropriate Laboratory Medicine Health and Safety training (including 'back-up' and 'new' Drivers will not be allowed to transport specimens).
- 7.5 Vehicles must be company owned, of recent registration (no older than 5yrs at start of the contract) and regularly serviced. The Company will be responsible for ensuring all vans comply with public highway legal requirements. The Directorate requires a documented annual review of vehicles to include service history, registration numbers, insurance sufficient for the purpose, vehicle licence fee, MOT and drivers licence details. A quarterly check should also be undertaken covering all these aspects and included on the annual review.
- 7.6 Security of the vehicles and their contents is the responsibility of the courier company, all vehicles are expected to be locked and immobilised or alarmed when parked, whilst on Trust business.



- 7.7 The successful company is obliged to comply with any other security measure required by the Trust.
- 7.8 . All vehicles used for this particular contract must not be used for passenger transport.
- 7.9. All vehicles must carry a clearly visible, standard 'biohazard' warning sign.
- 7.10 Laboratory Medicine should be notified of any change in driver or vehicle details.
- 7.11 All drivers must carry a communication system that allows them to be contacted at any point whilst on Trust business.
- 7.12. Drivers must adhere to the Trust's No Smoking Policy – no smoking in vehicles.
- 7.13. Should the Trust receive any complaints about a driver, we reserve the right to request he/she is not used on this contract.
- 7.14. Fully trained 'Back-up' Drivers must be available to cover; sickness, annual leave, compassionate or carers leave, who have a detailed knowledge of the routes, collection times and have received relevant training, such that the service is not compromised. State the number of 'back-up' drivers.
- 7.15. The courier company will be responsible for obtaining the appropriate parking permit for collections within restricted parking zones. It is further, the contractors responsibility to determine where any or such restrictions may apply.

8. SUB CONTRACTOR

- 8.1 It will be deemed unacceptable for this contract to be performed by a third party without prior consent and agreement in writing from Laboratory Medicine, Heart of England Foundation Trust.

9. CONTRACT PERIOD

- 9.1. The contract is for a **THREE** year period, with effect from April 2014, with the option to extend to a fourth year.

10. CONTRACT VARIATION

- 10.1. Any changes to schedules must come directly from Laboratory Medicine



- 10.2. Any difficulties encountered in the delivery of this service must be communicated to Laboratory Medicine immediately.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

- 11.1 Details of your company's Environmental Policy are required by the Directorate.

12. ELECTRONIC TRACKING SYSTEM

- 12.1 The courier company will be responsible for ensuring a comprehensive electronic tracking system is in place for all samples transported. This will enable a full chain of custody to be established for all samples transported.

13. TEMPERATURE MONITORING

- 13.1 The courier company will be responsible for ensuring a temperature monitoring system is in place for all samples transported from point of collection to delivery.

14. STANDARDS

- 14.1 The courier company must comply with ISO 9001:2008 couriers standard and audited to this effect and be able to meet ISO 15189:2012 with regard to transportation of samples and material. This is a pass/fail requirement therefore if you cannot evidence compliance your bid will not be taken further in line with the scoring criteria.

15. TRAINING

- 15.1 Heart of England (HEFT) Laboratory Medicine Unit will be responsible for providing induction training to drivers in the safe transport of specimens and the importance of data protection.

16. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 16.1 The attention of the provider is drawn to the confidential nature of the information collected within the NHS. The unauthorised use and/or disclosure of patient, financial or other personal information is an offence and may result in termination of contract.
- 16.2 It is also a requirement following termination of the contract, whether the provider withdraws service or the service is terminated by the Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust, that confidentiality be maintained. In the case of computerised information, breach of confidentiality



could result in a prosecution for an offence or action for civil damages under the Data Protection Act 1984.

17. COMPLAINTS

- 17.1 It is anticipated that the successful company will liaise with Laboratory Medicine to ensure any complaint raised against either the Trust or its provider will be handled in compliance with both parties Complaint Policy. The Trust has a legal requirement to respond to a complaint within a fixed 20-day period, any deviance from this is deemed unacceptable.
- 17.2 If a complaint about the Courier Service is received within Laboratory Medicine it will be fully investigated in line with Trust Policy. A copy of any analysis will be forwarded to the successful company for reference. However, there may be occasions whereby liaison between both parties will be required. Both the provider and Laboratory Medicine will be responsible for monitoring complaints.

18. PERFORMANCE AGAINST CONTRACT

- 18.1 Laboratory Medicine requires that the courier company monitor performance against the agreed standards and report any issues and actions to Laboratory Medicine on a monthly basis.
- 18.2 To ensure a professional quality service is provided and maintained at all times, it is deemed appropriate to set targets to monitor performance against contract, if these are not met penalties will be implemented for the following;
- 18.2.1. Failure to meet documented collection time [± 15 minutes] from any one user location, on 97% of occasions, measured over a 4 week rolling period.
 - 18.2.2. Failure to comply with any condition of the contract.
 - 18.2.3. If a driver arrives at a general practice later than the practices designated collection time on more than three occasions within any 4 rolling weeks, or three complaints about the same driver from a general practice.

19. PENALTIES

- 19.1 The Directorate of Laboratory Medicine reserves the right to give three months notice to terminate the contract should the performance of the successful company prove unsatisfactory, despite receiving three official warnings. The provider will be expected to continue to provide a satisfactory service until the notice period is complete. Failure to do so would result in a financial penalty. Should termination of contract be necessary it is expected that service provision be maintained during the three-month notice period, and penalties would apply the same as usual as if in trading mode.



- 19.2 These would be in the form of not achieving.
- 19.2.1 97% compliance attracts no penalties.
 - 19.2.2 For every 1% below this the bill will be reduced by the corresponding amount, to a maximum of 10%.
 - 19.2.3 Continued failure to meet the standards will result in the contract being terminated.

19.3 Key Performance Indicators

- 19.3.1 Failure to notify the laboratory of not undertaking any part of schedule - £500
- 19.3.2 Completion of runs greater than an hour outside scheduled finish time (exclusions of adverse weather conditions and major traffic disruption) - £250
- 19.3.3. Failure to deliver samples collected but not delivered on the same day - £1000

20 .BUSINESS / SERVICE CONTINUITY PLAN

- 20.1 Bidders are required to submit their service continuity plans which include at last the following situations:-
- Telecommunications failure
 - Adverse weather conditions
 - IT failure
 - Fuel shortages
 - Staffing / driver shortages (Flu outbreak etc)