

Cross Council Assurance Service Framework

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Introduction

The Cross Council Assurance Service (CCAS) is a framework for internal audit, advisory, risk management and counter fraud services. It was established in August 2014 and is now led by the London Borough of Barnet.

CCAS is intended to be the platform for collaboration and in-house skills development across participating borough boundaries and to deliver premium quality, efficient, innovative and technology enabled assurance services nationally.

Who can use CCAS?

- All Local Authorities in the UK
- Greater London Authority group, including:
 - Transport for London
 - London Fire and Emergency Planning Association
 - London Fire Brigade
 - Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
 - Royal Parks
 - Any other GLA body
- Registered social landlords, tenant management organisations and arm's length management organisations
- Health authorities, councils, boards and trusts
- Police forces
- Fire and rescue services
- Other publicly funded organisations, particularly in Greater London and the surrounding counties

Benefits of the Framework

Many of the issues we face are similar and we believe that by working together, and sharing best practice, we can leverage economies of scale to deliver maximum value to our organisations.

The Suppliers on the Framework work collaboratively with our in-house teams, providing additional resources and specialist work where we may not have the expertise in-house and strengthening our in-house capabilities through joint working.

This joint working is expected to develop over time, and extend to other interested organisations. The extent of the joint working will differ across the organisations and the intention is that in-house resources are also shared and additional in-house capacity created.

Part of the renewed CCAS vision for 2020 onwards is for the service Supplier to enable the member organisations to combine forces where they have the same external contractors for the same services e.g. for back office functions such as finance, IT and HR.

Use of the contract will vary by organisation. For example, some will use it to support the day to day work of the authority via the Advisory lot, while others will use it primarily on specialist audit work.

Available services

The framework will provide the following range of Assurance-related services:

Lot 1 Internal Audit

All Internal Audit services can be delivered through CCAS, including compliance, risk based and specialist internal audit, where an expert is needed to deliver technical input to an audit programme on areas such as Programme Assurance, Data, IT and Contract Management. Lot 1 includes secondments of experienced staff into the organisation to support temporary capacity gaps.

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP have been selected as the Supplier for Lot 1.

Lot 2 Advisory Services

This involves the provision of appropriate resources to the organisation as required for other advisory pieces of work. This could range from helping an organisation develop efficiency plans to carrying out independent investigations or supporting projects of strategic importance.

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP have been selected as the Supplier for Lot 2.

Lot 3 Risk Management

This covers the deployment of resources and risk management techniques to help organisations develop their risk management arrangements and provide practical solutions on how to embed these into the organisation.

Mazars LLP have been selected as the Supplier for Lot 3.

Lot 4 Anti-Fraud and Investigations

This covers the anti-fraud work within each organisation, linking with the internal audit plan to ensure that anti-fraud controls and arrangements (e.g. strategy, policies) are in place and that investigations* take place as necessary into fraudulent activity to identify perpetrators and learn lessons for the future. Benefits fraud is excluded from the scope.

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP have been selected as the Supplier for Lot 4.

*If you require support with Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) investigations please contact London Borough of Barnet's Corporate Anti-Fraud Team whose Accredited Fraud Investigators (AFIs) can assist.

An appropriately experienced and qualified Engagement Manager will be allocated to lead the work to ensure that the services are tailored to the needs of the organisation, including work types, methodology and report formats.

Governance structure

The Framework is designed to operate in the interests of all partners. A steering group has been established to oversee the contract, monitor its effectiveness, and lead the future development of the service. Key roles and responsibilities are:

- To monitor information in the quarterly performance report, including against KPIs, and act a point of escalation for any performance issues.
- To act as a governance forum overseeing and providing direction to the framework agreement, and collectively negotiate and agree any matters which affect each of the lead boroughs.
- To lead the development and vision of the service and agree any proposals to work collectively.
- To discuss new joiners to CCAS.
- To discuss, agree, and oversee plans to develop the service jointly, including sharing staff, conducting joint audits, developing specialisms and standardising processes.
- Discuss any matters relating to pricing, including reviewing work categorisation to ensure that work is being priced consistently.
- To agree and oversee staff development plans including Network Day agendas. Networking Days are hosted by the Framework's strategic delivery partner to promote training, networking and upskilling of in-house staff in all member organisations.
- Resource Planning – sharing expertise.
- To agree and monitor social value benefits arising from the framework.
- To monitor achievement of commitments made within tender documents (those not directly linked to KPIs).
- The Service Providers will support the Steering Group by bringing in subject experts on specific areas, providing briefing notes and updates on key changes.

Management information and KPIs

The Supplier's performance will be measured against the following Key Performance Indicators.

Responsibility for collecting the data will sit with the supplier. The Authority and other organisations accessing the Framework will have the opportunity to check and challenge the data provided through the regular contract monitoring meetings.

1 Lot 1 Internal Audit

1. At least 90% of audit plan allocated via the contract to be delivered by 31st March and 100% to be finalised by 30th April to be included in the Head of Internal Audit (HIA) annual opinion.
2. Average customer satisfaction score for year to meet or exceed acceptable level for at least 85% of completed surveys.
3. Full working papers delivered with draft report - 100%.
4. Draft report to HIA 10 working days after fieldwork complete.
5. Final ToR to be issued to HIA/ audit owner no more than 10 working days after the final scoping meeting is held.
6. Quality assessment of the draft report and scoping document by HIA.

2 Lot 2 Advisory Services and 3 Lot 3 Risk Management

1. 100% of milestones met within agreed timescales.
2. Average customer satisfaction score for year to meet or exceed acceptable level for at least 85% of surveys completed (scale/ acceptable level to be determined and aligned to satisfaction survey in use at organisation).
3. Satisfaction from risk management workshop attendees to meet or exceed acceptable level for at least 85% of responses (scale/ acceptable level to be determined and aligned to satisfaction survey in use at organisation) (NB – this KPI relates to Lot 3 only).

4 Lot 4 Anti-Fraud

There are 11 KPIs within the Supplier's control that will be monitored accordingly. The target for all Anti-Fraud KPIs is 95%.

F Framework Management

Management Information (MI) returns - all quarterly MI returns to be returned to the Lead Authority (Barnet) by the 5th Working Day after the end of each quarter.

How to use the framework

Before using The Framework, all public sector organisations should satisfy themselves as to the scope of Services under the Framework Agreement and consider any necessary internal procedures for accessing external consultancy advice.

Should a public sector organisation wish to utilise the Framework Agreement, the following process shall apply:

Agree scope of work

The organisation should discuss the potential scope of any work with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and/ or Mazars LLP (depending on the Lot required) to agree the outline scope and whether it can be delivered through the framework.



Register with Barnet

This can be done by contacting Caroline Glitre, either by emailing caroline.glitre@barnet.gov.uk or by calling 020 8359 3721.



Enter into an Access Agreement

Each public sector organisation will enter into a contract with Barnet, which allows them access to the Framework (an “Access Agreement”). Once a public sector organisation and Barnet have signed the Access Agreement they have access to the Framework. There is no upfront registration fee, and no commitment to use the Framework exclusively (or at all). There is also no limit on the number of Service Orders that can be placed through the Framework up to the overall OJEU limit.



Issue a Service Order Form

Once the Access Agreement has been entered into, the public sector organisation may raise a Service Order upon PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and/ or Mazars LLP (depending on the Lot required). Service Orders detail the required task, the contract price, the time periods for delivery of the task and any necessary deviations from the specification.

A Service Order becomes effective once it has been agreed and signed by both parties.

Payment for the Services will be made in accordance with the Access Agreement directly to the Supplier. Barnet will separately charge a 1% contract management fee directly to the Supplier.

Procurement process

The London Borough of Barnet (Barnet) invited tenders from providers to establish four single provider lots. The procurement underwent a full OJEU process and Barnet worked with the following group of London boroughs to run the procurement:

- London Borough of Barnet (Framework Owner)
- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
- London Borough of Enfield
- London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
- Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
- London Borough of Lambeth
- London Borough of Waltham Forest
- City of Westminster

The Framework agreement, which commenced on 1 April 2020 for a period of four years, with an option to extend for a further 2 years, encompasses the maximum flexibility, to offer all participating bodies the full range of delivery options, without the need to undertake a tender exercise. The OJEU threshold is £50m, which covers the first 4 years of the contract with a maximum of £12.5m a year.

CCAS can be used for multi-year engagements or one off internal audit, assurance and advisory projects. Users of CCAS can access short, medium or long-term support with 24 hours notice. Organisations can join at any time and draw down services whenever required during the period of the CCAS framework.

Key contacts

For more information, please contact:

London Borough of Barnet

The Framework Owner



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