

NMNC Frequently asked Questions

What is the scope of the framework?

The Non-Medical/Non-Clinical (NMNC) agreement provides access to temporary staff, interims and contractors in any white collar or blue collar role from the most junior to the most senior, including board level roles across eight lots.

When did the framework launch?

RM971 launched on the 1st July 2015 and replaces the old NMNC Framework CMAAC095124, which expired on the 30th June 2015.

How long will the Framework run for?

The framework has been awarded for 2 years with a 1 + 1 year option of extension. The framework was extended in July 2017 and will run until 30th June 2019.

Is the framework different from the expired NMNC Framework?

RM971 follows the same pay structure and compliance as the previous NMNC Framework. The new framework however has 8 Lots to separate suppliers by specialism, such as IT.

Who do I contact if I have an issue?

Please email the NMNC team at NMNC@crowncommercial.gov.uk with any enquiries or alternatively call our helpdesk on: 0345 410 2222.

Further Information on the framework can be found on the CCS website: <http://ccs-agreements.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/contracts/rm971>

What is the Lot Structure of RM971?

There are 8 Lots under the new Framework – Lot 1 Neutral Vendor, Lot 2 Master Vendor, Lots 3-8 are specialist providers. Lots 3-8 focus on different streams of work such as Admin, Corporate Services, IT, Legal, Clinical Coding and Ancillary Staff. Details of Lots can be found on the Supplier Matrix Document within the Documents tab of the NMNC webpage

What roles can be filled through RM971?

RM971 covers a wide range of roles across the eight Lots. Full details of common jobs that can be filled using RM971 can be found within the Framework Specification.

What are the Pay Bands?

The Framework has 10 pay bands, the first 9 of which are based around the NHS Agenda For Change Pay Bands as of April 2015. Within each of these 9 bands there are spine points that allow customers to choose a rate of pay within the banding. We added a tenth band to cover roles that require a rate of pay that is higher than the Agenda for Change pay scales allow. This is usually used for senior interims.

NHS Customers wishing to appoint roles at Band 10 over the equivalent of £142,500 p/a (£548+ per day) must first submit a business case to NHSi for approval. More information on VSM placements can be found at:

https://improvement.nhs.uk/uploads/documents/Guidance_on_pay_for_VSMs_-_ed3.pdf

Does the pricing take into consideration a higher rate of pay required for London based workers?

As per the Agenda for Change workers in the London area receive an uplift in their pay. Details of the HCAS (High Cost Area Supplement) geographical boundaries can be found below within Annexe H of the AfC T&Cs

http://www.nhsemployers.org/~media/Employers/Documents/Pay%20and%20reward/AfC_tc_of_service_handbook_fb.pdf

Non-NHS customers should include any uplift they wish to pay candidates for London weighting in the 'pay to worker' rate.

What does the framework deem to be unsociable hours?

Based on the Agenda for Change pay there is an uplift given to the worker if they work unsociable hours which is between 8pm and 6am and Saturdays, There is a further uplift for working Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Non-NHS customers should include any uplift they wish to pay candidates for unsociable hours in the 'pay to worker' rate.

How many suppliers are on the framework?

176 Suppliers were originally successful in being awarded a place on the framework. Details of suppliers can be found on our website.

What is a Neutral Vendor?

A Neutral Vendor does not supply temporary workers directly from their own resource pool. They use an approved supply chain to complete the call-off agreement via an online portal. For the customer receiving the service, the provision is seamless as you contract only with the neutral vendor and not with the supply chain directly.

What is a Master Vendor?

A Master Vendor takes overall responsibility for providing customers with their temporary worker needs. They will provide temporary workers directly from their own resource pool and may make up any shortfall by managing supplementary supply from an approved subcontractor supply chain in line with Framework Agreement Schedule 7: Subcontractor(s). You contract only with the master vendor, and they are responsible for their supply chain.

What is as Managed Service Provider?

A managed service provider is a supplier that manages all temporary staffing services for the customer either as a Neutral Vendor or a Master Vendor.

Is this framework approved for use by NHS Improvement?

Yes, NHS Improvement (NHSi) have mandated use of "Approved Frameworks" throughout NHS Trusts. NMNC was awarded this status in April 2016.

Do NMNC suppliers have to adhere to NHSi caps?

Yes. All suppliers were required to sign a contract variation, which states that they must attempt to place workers at the current capped worker rates and charge rates. If patient safety is deemed to be at risk then a supplier can go above the capped rate, but no more than the framework rate in order to obtain a worker. This is called "breaking glass" and can only be done with written permission from a Trust. If framework rates are below the capped rates this is not a licence for suppliers to increase their fees. It should always be the cheaper option out of the cap rate or the framework rate that is offered to customers.

Where can I find more information on NHSi and the capped rates?

NHSi has lots of details on their website:

<https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/reducing-expenditure-on-nhs-agency-staff-rules->

[and-price-caps/](#)

CCS also has more framework specific details around the caps:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-improvement-approved-health-temporary-staff-frameworks>

Who can use the Framework?

While 75% of customers are within the NHS, the framework can be used by anyone within government, the wider public sector and central government. It is also an alternative option to Contingent Labour One for temporary worker requirements.

Where can I find the pricing for the framework?

Customers can email the [NMNC mailbox](#) to request a copy of the supplier's pricing. Please note this can be updated regularly so do check you have the latest version.

Is there an Award Support Tool?

CCS have developed an Award Support Tool which uses criteria entered by the customer to rank suppliers by those who have a presence within a set geographical location and those that can offer the best rates for the requirements of the customer. Customers are able to request the Award Support Tool by emailing the [NMNC mailbox](#).

What is the benefit of using the Award Support Tool?

The Award Support Tool can be used for directly awarding to a supplier without the need for a mini competition. The tool will rank the suppliers who can offer the best rate for the requirement of the worker and have a branch within a set catchment area as defined by the user. Customers can Direct Award to suppliers based on the ranking and price information of the supplier as provided by the tool. When running a further competition the tool can be used when deciding which suppliers to invite to bid on the requirement.

How do I decide between Direct Award and Further Competition?

You can award a call-off contract directly where the terms (meaning the information on award of call-off contained in the framework agreement and the call-off terms and conditions) are sufficiently precise and complete to allow you to identify the most economically advantageous offer. This will be the case where the commercial and technical specifications and all the other contract documents define the services, the supply of services and the application of the prices with sufficient precision and completeness.

If the T&Cs, pricing, specifications etc. do not sufficiently cover the service requirements, then a further competition should be conducted.

How do I Direct Award?

CCS' advice would be to use the Award Support Tool to identify the most economically advantageous supplier. However, the framework leaves decisions on award to customers and awards can be made on the basis of a customer's own internal justifications.

When using the tool you should go in turn to each of the next highest ranking suppliers until the requirement is met, if the top ranked supplier is unable on occasion to supply suitable temporary workers.

You could award for a defined period of time (e.g. a year), providing the period starts within the duration of the framework agreement.

How do I run a Further Competition?

1. Identify which suppliers are capable of meeting your requirements. Unless it is clear how to objectively determine which suppliers are capable of meeting the requirements of the particular supply contract, then you should invite all suppliers to participate in the further competition.
2. Issue written/electronic tender documentation to all capable suppliers, with a reasonable time limit for return of tenders. You can modify award criteria, providing they derive from the original award criteria and the capable suppliers are notified of this. Award criteria that are completely new cannot be introduced in a further competition.
3. Evaluate the returned tenders against the award criteria, using an evaluation plan and the weighting (totalling 100%) that best reflects your circumstances and requirements, within the range limits.
4. Award to the supplier with the most economically advantageous offer, represented by the highest score.
5. If the supplier awarded the call-off of service is unable on occasion to supply suitable work-seekers then you should go in turn to each of the next highest scoring suppliers until the requirement is met.

How can CCS help?

CCS are able to visit customers and determine requirements and best routes to market via the framework. We can offer advice and help to put together a further competition based on your needs. Please get in touch via the [NMNC mailbox](#) if this is something you are interested in.

What employment checks are carried out on workers?

The Framework states that employment checks should be in line with the NHS Employment Check Standards. Details of the checks can be found below

<http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/recruit/employment-checks>

Non-NHS Customers can agree levels of checks within a signed SLA with the supplier.

What documentation do I need to complete to procure an agency worker?

Customers should complete an order form that can be found on our website. Within the order for customers should clearly state all the requirements needed from the supplier and the candidate including any training, the level of disclosure and immunisations. Customers can also put in place their own call off agreements. In return a supplier should complete the Assignment Checklist. All documents located on the website.

Can I make a worker permanent and what are the fees involved?

RM971 is for the supply of temporary workers and should not be used as a tool to fill permanent positions. However, if you do wish to make a worker permanent then you can agree to an extended hire period to avoid paying fees.

You can also engage candidates on a Fixed Term Appointment basis. Candidates will be added to the customer's payroll upon appointment and the supplier fee will be based on a

percentage of the annual salary. After 12 months you are free to extend the worker's contract or make the role permanent without any further charge.

What is the Extended Hire Period?

The extended hire period for all workers regardless of role or pay band is 8 weeks from the date the supplier receives the written notice. If the supplier is not notified or the 8 weeks extended hire cannot be met then the customer is liable to pay transfer fees to the supplier. Transfer fees are available on request.

[Government guidelines](#) state that a fee is chargeable either; 14 weeks from the start of the assignment or 8 weeks from the end of the assignment –*whichever is the later of the two dates*. In most cases 8 weeks after the end of the assignment is the later date.

Can a customer terminate an assignment?

Yes, the customer can terminate an assignment immediately without financial cost unless a notice period was agreed with the supplier at the start of the assignment.

Can a customer audit suppliers?

Customers are able to audit suppliers if they wish. CCS also carries out thorough financial and compliance inspections of suppliers.

How do the changes to IR35 legislation affect the framework?

We advise that customers should follow HMRC guidance and complete their assessment tool online to determine whether a role falls in or outside of IR35 legislation. If a role is deemed to fall outside of IR35, a copy of the assessment and justification of the decision must be provided to the supplier.

HMRC's guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-employment-status-for-tax>

NHSi have provided the following guidance on applying the legislation for NHS customers: https://improvement.nhs.uk/uploads/documents/IR35_Update_30May1.pdf

How does the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy affect the framework?

The Apprenticeship Levy is payable by all employers with an annual payroll of +£3m, including employment agencies. We have introduced a mechanism within our rate card for non-NHS customers to view the addition of the levy to their total charge rate if applicable. To check if a supplier is eligible to charge the levy please contact the [NMNC mailbox](#).

HMRC's guidance on the Apprenticeship Levy can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-apprenticeship-levy>

NHSi have advised that NHS customers should not accept application of the levy to their charges under the framework. To discuss this issue with NHSi please contact them at nhsi.agencyrules@nhs.net

Non-NHS customers

Who can use the framework?

Outside of the NHS all public bodies can use NMNC – Central Government, Local Authorities, Charitable Bodies and the Wider Public Sector, which includes higher education, emergency services, libraries etc.

How do I understand the Agenda for Change pay bands?

We have created a rate card that strips out most of the Agenda for Change pay points. As a non-NHS customer you are able to determine how much you wish to pay the workers - this will then fit in with one of the pay bands and our calculator will produce a total charge rate based on the supplier that you decide to use.

Some of the framework requirements aren't relevant to my department, what should I do?

If there are requirements that aren't relevant to you such as NHS Employers employment checks you can stipulate your exact requirements within a call-off contract and put into writing what services you do or do not require from the supplier.

Do patient facing/non-patient facing fees apply to me?

For non-NHS customers fees would usually be Fee Type 3 – Non Patient Facing, No DBS Required. If you require security clearance or DBS checks for your candidates you may be charged Fee Type 2 - Non Patient Facing, DBS Required, which would cover an agency's additional costs of obtaining extra checks.

Suppliers

Can suppliers supply workers under Lots that they have not been awarded to?

No. Suppliers can only provide workers that come under the Lots that they have been Awarded.

Can suppliers be terminated from the framework?

Yes, CCS has the right to terminate for a number of reasons. Details of cause for termination can be found within Clause 31 of the Framework Agreement.

Can suppliers who have not been awarded a place on the framework supply?

Suppliers who have not been awarded a place on the framework can only provide workers through the framework if they become part of an awarded supplier's approved supply chain. The framework supplier must ensure the framework fees and T&Cs are adhered to.

Who is liable for employment checks if a supply chain is used to fill a position?

The lead supplier on the framework is responsible for all candidate employment checks are carried out to the required standards, whether they are using their own workers or using their approved supply chain.

Can suppliers offer discounted rates to customers?

The rates recorded in the tender against pay bands are the maximum that the supplier can charge for that band. Suppliers must offer rates either equal to or lower than that rate.

Is it mandatory to offer a +12 weeks discount as recorded during the tender?

Yes. Suppliers must offer customers the discount they included within their bid after candidates have been in position for 12 weeks.

Do suppliers need to provide CCS with any information?

Suppliers are required under the Framework to provide full and correct Management Information by the 7th of each month for the previous month's spend. This is to be submitted through the MISO system using the template available. Please email the [NMNC mailbox](mailto:NMNC@crownccommercial.gov.uk) for more information regarding this requirement. For login details and reset passwords please email MISO.Mailbox@crownccommercial.gov.uk

Will suppliers be audited?

Suppliers will complete a quarterly self audit and submit to CCS. CCS has its own Health Assurance Team, who undertake inspections of each supplier on a yearly basis, or ad-hoc basis if deemed necessary. The Health Assurance Team monitor each supplier's adherence to core operational policies and procedures detailed within the conditions of contract, to which each supplier has agreed to supply.

What training is required for new starters?

The supplier shall provide work-seekers that are suitably trained and experienced for the duties required of them. The framework training is based around the NHS core skills framework. Customers must outline what specific training is required for the role in their order form. Details of the modules covered under the core skills can be found below: <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/services/item/146-core-skills-training-framework>

Do all workers require immunisation?

Any immunisations required must be stated within the order form for the assignment. Customers should work with their Occupational Health department/provider to determine requirements. The Framework Agreement is based around the NHS employer standards and details of inoculations can be found on the below link. <http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/recruit/employment-checks/nhs-employment-check-standards/work-health-assessments>

What is the Cyber Essentials Scheme?

It is mandatory for Suppliers to demonstrate that they meet the technical requirements prescribed by Cyber Essentials. This is in order to further reduce the levels of cyber security risks in their supply chains. With regard to the Services, Suppliers have demonstrated that they have achieved the level of assurance known as Cyber Essentials. More information can be found below <https://www.cyberstreetwise.com/cyberessentials/files/requirements.pdf>

Contacts

Visit: <http://ccs-agreements.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/contracts/rm971>

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