

## **Capita SIMS contract extension**

As you are probably aware schools' current contracts for Norfolk SIMS Management information system were based on an initial 5 year agreement with Capita SIMS which is due to end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. We are now in the process of extending the agreement with Capita within the terms of the contract and expect to have the revised agreement and pricing available for schools later this term.

The contract with Capita for SIMS was awarded through the OJEU European procurement process based on the requirements of schools and involving schools in evaluating the various systems offered by bidders.

SIMS was selected by Norfolk schools because it met schools' requirements but we also made sure that SIMS complies with Data Protection Act requirements and security standard ISO27001 because it's storing and hosting your sensitive school data.

We are aware that a number of other providers are approaching you to change MIS. If you are intending to remain with Capita SIMS then NCC has already made sure that the Norfolk contract ticks all the boxes for school requirements, DPA and security.

Our ICT Shared Services team has been visiting many schools this term to make sure that you have access to information at the touch of a button from your homepage. We want to develop this support network further as feedback tells us both Heads and administrators' appreciate the opportunities for networking with their peers as well as hearing about best practice from experts. The revised contract is likely to bring some system changes to SIMS which will be more user friendly.

### **Considering changing supplier?**

If you are considering changing product then DfE and ICO offer guidance for schools on what should be considered when buying an MIS.

The guidance includes the following which are available via the links below:

- DfE for purchase of cloud based systems [Cloud software services and the Data Protection Act](#)
- ICO Guidance on the use of [Cloud Computing](#)
- DfE [Buying for schools – selecting a school MIS](#)
- ICO Guidance on assessing the [adequacy of International Data Transfers](#)

**Key areas to ask suppliers** (but these are not exhaustive) based on the DfE / ICO guidance available from the above links are):

- 1) Is the Supplier on a Framework?
- 2) Which countries will your cloud provider process your data in and what information is available relating to the safeguards in place at these locations? Does this meet the UK DPA requirements?

- 3) Can your cloud provider provide an appropriate third party security assessment? Does this comply with an appropriate industry code of practice or other quality standard? ISO27001 is the most common standard.
- 4) Find out if your data, or data about your cloud users will be shared with third parties or shared across other services the cloud provider may offer?
- 5) What audit trails are in place so you can monitor who is accessing which data?
- 6) How quickly could the cloud provider restore your data (without alteration) from a back-up if it suffered a major data loss?
- 7) How quickly will the cloud provider react if a security vulnerability is identified in their product?
- 8) What are the timescales and costs for creating, suspending and deleting accounts?
- 9) What are the data deletion and retention timescales? Does this include end-of-life destruction?
- 10) Financial security of the company?
- 11) Does the contract have additional value for money options?

#### **Where can I find a framework?**

- Crown Commercial Services framework [Information Management and Learning Services framework](#)
- Norfolk County Council's contract was procured by Children's Services through a tendering process and awarded to Capita SIMs.

#### **Facts about frameworks**

- suppliers have already gone through a competitive tendering process;
- complies with public sector procurement regulations
- favourable terms and conditions have already been negotiated
- if anything does go wrong during the life of the contract, you'll have the support and assistance from the organisation that negotiated it. Information regarding frameworks is available [Buying for schools](#) on GOV.UK

#### **Remaining on Capita SIMS?**

As we said above the Norfolk contract made sure that all the above checks relating to SIMS were covered as part of the tendering process to make sure Capita complies with these.

The contract extension from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 is currently being negotiated. As soon as more information is available we will update all school using SIMS as well as providing information for schools who have expressed an interest in moving to SIMS.