Stage One Tender Information Pack

Independent Review and Evaluation of the Horizon Project Restorative Justice Programme

Tender reference	Horizon_RJC_Nexus_Oct26
Commissioning and contracting body	RJC Nexus, the commercial and contracting arm and wholly owned subsidiary of the Restorative Justice Council
Stage One issue date	15 October 2026
Clarification deadline	30 October 2026
Stage One submission deadline	5:00 pm (GMT) on 20 November 2026
Clarification contact	Jim Simon – horizon@restorativejustice.org.uk
Year One maximum budget	£57,000 excluding VAT
Full indicative 4.5-year programme budget	£256,500 excluding VAT

1. Purpose of this pack

Stage One at a glance

At Stage One, we are seeking evidence that applicants have the relevant experience, capability, independence, ethical judgement, safeguarding arrangements and delivery capacity to undertake this commission. Applicants should complete Forms 1 to 5, provide the requested evidence, and submit a secure link to the proposed lead evaluator's recorded presentation by 5:00 pm (GMT) on 20 November 2026. A detailed methodology and fully costed proposal are not required until Stage Two.

This pack invites Stage One Expressions of Interest for the independent review and evaluation of the Horizon Project restorative justice programme. It provides the information applicants need to decide whether to apply and to prepare a compliant Stage One submission.

Stage One is a screening and pre-qualification stage. It is designed to identify applicants with the relevant experience, capability, independence, safeguarding arrangements, ethical

competence and understanding of the Horizon context before a smaller number are invited to submit a full tender at Stage Two.

Participation in Stage One does not guarantee progression to Stage Two or the award of a contract. RJC Nexus and the Restorative Justice Council expect to invite approximately four to six of the strongest applicants to Stage Two, subject to the quality, affordability and suitability of submissions received.

2. About the Restorative Justice Council and RJC Nexus

The Restorative Justice Council is the independent membership body for the restorative justice field. It promotes access to safe, high-quality restorative practice and supports the development of effective, ethical and evidence-informed restorative approaches.

RJC Nexus is the commercial and contracting arm of the Restorative Justice Council and is a wholly owned subsidiary. For the purposes of this tender, RJC Nexus will act as the commissioning and contracting body. The Restorative Justice Council will remain the parent organisation, programme lead and primary source of sector expertise, governance oversight and restorative justice learning.

3. Programme context

The Horizon Project restorative justice programme provides opportunities for people harmed by the Horizon and Capture IT systems to identify and pursue outcomes that matter to them through voluntary, participant-led restorative processes. The programme operates in the context of significant and prolonged organisational harm, power imbalance, public scrutiny and understandable mistrust of institutions.

Depending on participant choice, need, readiness and safety, activity may include:

- preparatory meetings with specialist restorative practitioners;
- direct restorative meetings;
- indirect dialogue or written questions and responses;
- acknowledgements, explanations, commitments or other agreed outcomes;
- alternative restorative responses where direct engagement is not wanted or appropriate;
- relational wellbeing support;
- support to reduce barriers to participation; and
- follow-up and monitoring of agreed outcomes and commitments.

The independent review will provide impartial, evidence-based scrutiny of programme implementation, participant experience, participant-defined outcomes, organisational engagement and accountability, relational wellbeing support, the Support Fund, practitioner wellbeing, safeguarding, governance, quality assurance and wider learning for restorative responses to organisational and systemic harm.

The cross-cutting principle is to do no further harm. Safety, voluntariness, informed consent, participant voice, relational accountability, clear boundaries, trauma-informed practice and organisational responsibility are central to the commission.

The review is not intended to determine legal liability or individual wrongdoing; review compensation or redress decisions; replace an inquiry, investigation or complaints process; provide legal, therapeutic or clinical advice; or require participants to retell harmful experiences.

The evaluation is intended to capture: whether the programme is implemented safely, voluntarily and consistently with restorative and trauma-informed principles; how participants experience voice, choice, control, accessibility, preparation, engagement and follow-up; the extent to which participant-defined needs and outcomes are identified, progressed, met, changed or appropriately closed; how participating organisations understand harm, exercise accountability and follow through on commitments; whether relational wellbeing support and the Support Fund are accessible, useful, appropriately bounded and safely governed; whether practitioners are adequately supported through supervision, reflective practice and wellbeing arrangements; whether safeguarding, governance, quality assurance, information management and escalation arrangements are effective; what positive, mixed, negative or unintended consequences arise; and what transferable learning can inform future restorative responses to organisational and systemic harm.

4. Programme logic and evaluation focus

The evaluation will test, rather than validate, the programme Theory of Change. Applicants should show an understanding of four connected domains:

- restorative justice delivery;
- relational wellbeing support;
- the Support Fund; and
- practitioner wellbeing and project governance.

The eventual evaluation framework will need to link intended outcomes and impacts to review questions, indicators, evidence sources, baseline positions, collection points, follow-up intervals and responsible data owners. It must examine implementation, participant experience, outcomes, organisational accountability, longer-term impact, unintended consequences and the risk of further harm.

Outcomes will vary and are not guaranteed. The programme cannot require reconciliation, trust, apology, forgiveness, organisational acceptance of responsibility or participant satisfaction.

The Restorative Justice Programme Theory of Change will be provided as part of this pack. At Stage One, applicants should use it to demonstrate their understanding of the programme logic, intended outcomes, enabling conditions, safeguards and possible indicators, and to

inform their outline approach and response to the Horizon capability question. Applicants are not required to submit a detailed evaluation framework at Stage One. Shortlisted applicants will be expected at Stage Two to explain how their proposed methodology will test and develop the Theory of Change, establish proportionate baseline and follow-up measures, identify suitable evidence sources and data owners, examine unintended consequences and attribution limits, and assess whether programme and evaluation activity may cause or risk further harm.

5. Contract scope, duration and budget

The anticipated evaluation period is 4.5 years. The initial contract award will cover Year One activity only, with a maximum available budget of **£57,000 excluding VAT**. Subject to annual review and commissioning, a further 3.5 years may be commissioned at the same annual value. The full indicative 4.5-year evaluation budget is therefore **£256,500 excluding VAT**.

The successful Year One provider will be treated as the preferred provider for subsequent phases, subject to satisfactory delivery, agreed milestones, annual reporting, programme development, affordability, participant-safety considerations and continued value for money. Future phases will not automatically be re-tendered, and RJC Nexus retains discretion not to proceed, to vary scope or to undertake a further procurement where required.

The Year One budget must include all fees, management, participant involvement, accessibility, travel, transcription or interpretation, specialist ethical or safeguarding input, reporting, design, workshops, secure data management, subcontractors and expenses.

Indicative Year One deliverables

- inception report and mobilisation arrangements;
- confirmed Theory of Change map and detailed indicator framework;
- baseline, follow-up, data-source and data-owner schedules;
- evaluation tools, consent materials and participant information;
- independent review of the pilot project;
- baseline and initial implementation assessment of the full programme;
- early learning and interim briefings;
- participant feedback mechanism; and
- draft and final Year One reports, accessible summary and learning presentation.

Applicants should assume that Year One will require mobilisation from 1 February 2027, regular engagement with RJC Nexus and Restorative Justice Council governance, proportionate access to programme records and management information, engagement with participants and practitioners where safe and agreed, and delivery of the indicative outputs within the first twelve months. Detailed information about anticipated participant numbers, available datasets, access arrangements and delivery dependencies will be provided to shortlisted applicants at Stage Two.

6. Who may apply

Expressions of Interest are invited from suitably qualified individuals, organisations, academic institutions, research teams, consultancies and consortia. Individuals may apply in their own right or as part of a wider team or consortium. Consortium submissions are welcome where the lead applicant, accountability arrangements, roles, decision-making authority, quality assurance and subcontracting arrangements are clear.

Applicants, whether applying as an individual or through a wider organisation, team or consortium, should be able to demonstrate relevant capability across independent evaluation; restorative justice or restorative practice; organisational or institutional harm; trauma-informed and ethical research; participant involvement; safeguarding; governance and accountability; information governance; and complex public-interest programmes.

The proposed lead evaluator must be credible, directly engaged in the commission and able to exercise independent professional judgement. Where an individual applies alone, they must demonstrate sufficient capacity, availability, quality assurance and access to any specialist expertise needed to deliver the commission. Where a wider team is proposed, it must have sufficient capacity, senior oversight, quality assurance and suitable specialist expertise.

7. What to submit at Stage One

The Stage One Expression of Interest must not exceed ten A4 pages. This limit applies only to the completed Form 1, including the response to the Horizon capability question. Forms 2 to 5, the recorded presentation and any supporting evidence expressly requested in this pack are excluded from the ten-page limit. Applicants must not attach additional promotional material, reports, case studies or other appendices unless requested by RJC Nexus. A detailed methodology and fully costed proposal are not required at this stage.

Forms 1 to 5 are supplied separately for applicants to complete and submit. The versions reproduced at the end of this pack contain the same requirements and are provided for reference only. Applicants should use the separately supplied forms for their submission.

Applicants must submit:

1. completed separately supplied Form 1: Stage One Expression of Interest response form;
2. up to three examples of relevant previous work, provided within section 3 of Form 1 rather than as separate attachments;
3. a response of no more than 750 words to the Horizon capability question, completed within Form 1;
4. evidence of safeguarding, ethical and data protection capability, provided through the relevant response in Form 1 and any supporting evidence expressly requested in this pack;
5. completed separately supplied Form 2: Mandatory requirements declaration;

6. completed separately supplied Form 3: Conflict of interest and independence declaration;
7. completed separately supplied Form 4: Indicative cost range;
8. a secure link to a recorded presentation of no more than five minutes from the proposed lead evaluator, or an approved accessible alternative; and
9. completed separately supplied Form 5: Final submission confirmation.

Horizon capability question

Identify the three most significant risks associated with evaluating a restorative justice programme operating within the context of the Horizon scandal. Explain why each risk matters and how an independent evaluator should manage it.

The response must be specific to this commission. It should demonstrate insight into participant autonomy, retraumatisation, repeated retelling, institutional mistrust, power imbalance, accountability, safeguarding, psychological safety, confidentiality and the risk of evaluation activity causing further harm.

Recorded presentation

The proposed lead evaluator must deliver a recorded presentation of no more than five minutes that addresses all four areas below. The presentation should be specific to this commission and should demonstrate the lead evaluator's personal understanding, ethical judgement and approach to independence. It should not be a general introduction to the applicant, a promotional presentation or a detailed evaluation methodology.

- why evaluating a restorative justice programme in the context of the Horizon and Capture IT systems requires a distinctive approach, including the implications of prolonged organisational harm, institutional mistrust, power imbalance, public scrutiny, participant choice and the risk of further harm;
- the principal ethical responsibilities of the independent evaluator, including voluntariness, informed consent, participant autonomy, confidentiality, safeguarding, minimising repeated retelling, responding to distress and ensuring that evaluation activity does not cause further harm;
- how the evaluator would preserve independent professional judgement over evidence, analysis, findings and recommendations while complying with RJC Nexus and Restorative Justice Council ownership, confidentiality, publication, presentation and dissemination controls; and
- why the proposed lead evaluator and team are suitable for this commission.

Production quality, accent, appearance, personal style and use of professional recording equipment will not be assessed. Where video creates an accessibility barrier, an audio recording, live remote presentation, narrated slide presentation or agreed written response with discussion may be accepted.

The recorded presentation will be assessed on the lead evaluator's understanding of the distinctive Horizon context; ethical and trauma-informed judgement; ability to distinguish independent analysis from commissioner ownership and publication control; clarity and proportionality of communication; and personal credibility to lead the commission. Assessors will consider the substance of the response rather than production quality. The presentation must be delivered by the proposed lead evaluator and should demonstrate their own judgement rather than rely on generic organisational statements.

8. How Stage One will be assessed

Assessment will comprise a mandatory pass/fail gateway followed by a weighted quality assessment. A failure against any mandatory requirement may result in exclusion. RJC Nexus and the Restorative Justice Council may clarify a minor administrative omission where this can be done fairly and without allowing an applicant to improve the substance of its submission after the deadline.

Scored criterion	Weighting
Relevant applicant, lead evaluator and team experience	25%
Understanding of Horizon, restorative justice and organisational harm	20%
Response to the Horizon capability question	20%
Restorative, trauma-informed, ethical and safeguarding capability	15%
Independence and management of conflicts of interest	10%
Delivery capacity and quality assurance	5%
Recorded presentation from proposed lead evaluator	5%
Total	**100%**

To be considered for shortlisting, applicants must pass all mandatory requirements and score at least 3 out of 6 for: understanding of Horizon, restorative justice and organisational harm; restorative, trauma-informed, ethical and safeguarding capability; and independence and conflicts management. Meeting these thresholds does not guarantee progression.

Each scored criterion will be assessed on a scale from 0 to 6, where 0 indicates no credible response or evidence, 1 indicates a wholly inadequate response, 2 indicates a response with significant weaknesses, 3 indicates an adequate response that meets the minimum requirement, 4 indicates a good response with relevant strengths, 5 indicates a very good and well-evidenced response, and 6 indicates an excellent response demonstrating exceptional understanding, capability and confidence in delivery.

Stage One scores will be used for shortlisting only and will not normally be carried forward into the final Stage Two score.

9. Procurement timetable

Activity	Date
Stage One Expression of Interest issued	15 October 2026
Deadline for Stage One clarification questions	30 October 2026
Clarification responses issued	6 November 2026
Stage One Expression of Interest, Forms 2 to 5 and recorded presentation deadline	5:00 pm (GMT) on 20 November 2026
Mandatory pass/fail assessment	25 November 2026
Scored evaluation and moderation	30 November 2026
Shortlisting decision	30 November 2026
Stage One outcome notification	2 December 2026
Confidentiality agreements completed by shortlisted bidders	4 December 2026
Stage Two Invitation to Tender issued	7 December 2026
Stage Two bidder briefing, if held	10 December 2026
Stage Two clarification deadline	18 December 2026
Stage Two tender submission deadline	5:00 pm (GMT) on 15 January 2027
Stage Two evaluation	18–20 January 2027
Interviews and scenario assessment, if required	21–22 January 2027
Due diligence and references	18–25 January 2027
Preferred bidder and governance approval	27 January 2027
Contract award	1 February 2027
Inception meeting and contract commencement	1 February 2027

Dates are indicative and may be adjusted to support an efficient, fair and proportionate procurement. RJC Nexus and the Restorative Justice Council intend to complete the process and award the contract on 1 February 2027, with mobilisation and contract commencement from that date, but reserve the right to amend, pause or withdraw the procurement where necessary.

10. Submission and clarification arrangements

Stage One submissions must be received by **5:00 pm (GMT) on 20 November 2026**. The submission subject line must read: **Stage One EOI: Horizon Project Independent Review**.

Submission route: Expressions of Interest must be sent to **horizon@restorativejustice.org.uk.**

Applicants should email the five completed forms and any supporting evidence expressly requested in this pack. Before sending, applicants should use Form 5 to confirm that: Form 1 is complete and within the ten-page limit; up to three relevant examples of previous work are included; the Horizon capability question is within 750 words; safeguarding, ethical and data protection capability is evidenced; Forms 2, 3 and 4 are complete; and the secure link to the five-minute recorded presentation, or an approved accessible alternative, is included in Form 1. Applicants should use the required subject line and check that every attachment and link is accessible.

Clarification questions must be submitted to Jim Simon at **horizon@restorativejustice.org.uk** by **30 October 2026**. Responses of general relevance will be shared consistently with all applicants.

Applicants must not approach programme participants, practitioners, participating organisations, funders, Programme Board members or other stakeholders in connection with this procurement unless authorised in writing.

Late or incomplete submissions may not be considered. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that secure links are accessible and that all required forms and attachments have been included.

11. Stage Two overview

Only shortlisted applicants will be invited to Stage Two. The Stage Two Invitation to Tender will require a full proposal covering methodology, sampling and analysis; Theory of Change and contribution; restorative, trauma-informed, ethical and safeguarding arrangements; participant involvement; accessibility and inclusion; information governance and data security; work plan and milestones; named team and CVs; quality assurance; risk management; detailed pricing; contractual assumptions; and acceptance of ownership, publication, dissemination, branding, data-use and promotional-use requirements.

Stage Two may include bidder interviews and scenario-based assessment. Price will not compensate for weaknesses in participant safety, restorative practice, ethical practice, methodology, independence or publication control.

Shortlisting does not indicate preferred bidder status and does not guarantee contract award.

12. Important conditions

- Preparation and submission costs will not be reimbursed.
- RJC Nexus and the Restorative Justice Council may seek clarification, verify declarations, references and due diligence information, reject any or all submissions, award all or part of the commission, or decline to award where no submission offers sufficient quality, independence, safety or value.

- The evaluator will retain professional responsibility for independent analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- RJC Nexus and the Restorative Justice Council will retain ownership and control of commissioned reports, outputs, data use, publication, presentation, dissemination, branding and public communications, subject to the final contract.
- No applicant may use programme information, participant material or the procurement for publicity, research, teaching, training, promotion or other external purposes without prior written authority.

Appendix 1: Stage One Expression of Interest response form

Applicants should complete all sections. The completed response to Appendix 1, including the Horizon capability question, must remain within the ten-page limit. Appendices 2 to 5, the recorded presentation and any supporting evidence expressly requested in this pack are excluded from the limit. Additional promotional material, reports, case studies or other appendices must not be attached unless requested by RJC Nexus.

1. Applicant details	
Legal name of individual applicant, organisation or lead entity	
Legal status and registration number, if applicable	
Registered address	
Principal contact, role, email and telephone	
Lead organisation, if a consortium	
Consortium members or proposed subcontractors	

2. Proposed lead evaluator and team

Identify the proposed lead evaluator, key team members, roles, relevant expertise, availability, decision-making authority, senior oversight and quality assurance arrangements.

Response:

3. Relevant experience

Provide up to three comparable assignments. For each, state the client or commissioning context, dates, scope, methods, relevance to this commission, applicant role, outcomes or learning, and a referee where available.

Response:

4. Understanding of the commission

Set out your understanding of the Horizon context, organisational harm, participant safety, restorative justice, informed consent, power imbalance, mistrust, accountability and the principle of doing no further harm.

Response:

5. Outline approach

Provide a concise outline of how you would approach an independent, proportionate and adaptable evaluation across restorative justice delivery, relational wellbeing support, the Support Fund, and practitioner wellbeing and project governance. This is not a request for a full methodology.

Response:

6. Safeguarding, ethics and data protection capability

Summarise relevant arrangements, including safeguarding leadership and escalation, ethical review or oversight, informed consent, distress and disclosure protocols, confidentiality, sensitive personal data, secure storage, retention and deletion, subcontractor controls, and researcher support or supervision.

Response:

7. Delivery capacity and quality assurance

Explain how the applicant would resource Year One, maintain appropriate oversight, assure analytical quality, manage delivery risk, access any required specialist expertise and support evaluator wellbeing.

Response:

8. Horizon capability question — maximum 750 words

Identify the three most significant risks associated with evaluating a restorative justice programme operating within the context of the Horizon scandal. Explain why each risk matters and how an independent evaluator should manage it.

Response:

9. Recorded presentation

Secure link:

Access instructions or password, if required:

Accessible alternative agreed, if applicable:

Appendix 2: Mandatory requirements declaration

For each mandatory requirement, tick the confirmation box and identify the section of your Stage One submission where the supporting information can be found. Where separate evidence is expressly requested, name the document or attachment.

Mandatory requirement	Confirm	Evidence or response reference
Submission will be made by the deadline and through the specified route	☐	
Submission is substantially in accordance with Stage One instructions	☐	
Applicant eligibility confirmed, including the eligible individual, legal entity or lead entity and, where applicable, the lead organisation for a consortium.	☐	
At least one significant independent review or evaluation led by the applicant or proposed lead team	☐	
Relevant experience of sensitive subject matter or work involving people affected by significant harm	☐	
Appropriate safeguarding arrangements evidenced	☐	
Ethical review or oversight approach available	☐	
Proposed lead evaluator and sufficient delivery capacity identified	☐	
Conflict of interest declaration complete and no unmanaged conflict identified	☐	
Data protection and confidentiality compliance confirmed in principle	☐	
Acceptance in principle of the core RJC Nexus and Restorative Justice Council ownership, confidentiality, publication, presentation and dissemination requirements, subject to review of the detailed contractual terms at Stage Two	☐	
Indicative cost range provided and broadly compatible with the published budget parameters	☐	
Five-minute recorded presentation, or approved accessible alternative, submitted	☐	

Authorised signatory:

Name and role:

Date:

Appendix 3: Conflict of interest and independence declaration

Declare all actual, potential or perceived conflicts connected with RJC Nexus, the Restorative Justice Council, the Horizon or Capture scandals, participating organisations, funders, government departments, affected communities, legal representatives, campaigning bodies, consortium members and proposed subcontractors.

Declaration	Response
No conflicts to declare	☐
Conflicts declared below or attached	☐
Proposed mitigation approved by authorised signatory	☐
Applicant will notify RJC Nexus and the Restorative Justice Council of any new conflict during procurement or contract delivery	☐

Details of conflict, affected person or organisation, nature and timing:

Proposed mitigation and why independence can be maintained:

Authorised signatory:

Name and role:

Date:

Appendix 4: Indicative cost range

Stage One requires an indicative cost range, not a fully costed proposal. Figures must be exclusive of VAT and should distinguish Year One from the wider indicative opportunity where possible.

Cost item	Applicant response excluding VAT
Indicative Year One cost range, within the £57,000 maximum budget	
Indicative annual range for a subsequent full year, subject to annual commissioning	
Indicative range for the final six-month phase, subject to annual commissioning	
Key assumptions, exclusions or dependencies	
VAT status	

The applicant confirms that the Year One indicative range allows for all fees, management, participant involvement, accessibility, travel, transcription or interpretation, specialist ethical or safeguarding input, reporting, design, workshops, secure data management, subcontractors and expenses.

Confirmed: ☐

Authorised signatory:

Date:

Appendix 5: Final submission confirmation

Submission item	Included
Form 1: Stage One Expression of Interest completed within the ten-page limit	☐
Individual applicant, legal entity or named lead organisation confirmed	☐
Consortium or subcontracting arrangements described, where applicable	☐
Up to three relevant examples of previous work provided within section 3 of Form 1	☐
Understanding and outline approach completed	☐
Horizon capability question completed within Form 1 and within 750 words	☐
Safeguarding, ethical and data protection capability evidenced within Form 1	☐
Form 2: Mandatory requirements declaration completed	☐
Form 3: Conflict of interest and independence declaration completed	☐
Form 4: Indicative cost range completed	☐
Secure link to the five-minute recorded presentation, or approved accessible alternative, included in Form 1	☐
Applicant understands that the initial contract is for Year One only and future phases are subject to annual review and commissioning	☐
Submission authorised by the individual applicant or an appropriate representative of the applicant organisation or consortium	☐

By submitting this Expression of Interest, the applicant confirms that the information provided is accurate to the best of its knowledge; all actual, potential or perceived conflicts have been disclosed; the Stage One requirements are accepted; and, if shortlisted, a fuller response will be required at Stage Two.

Applicant or organisation:

Authorised signatory:

Name and role:

Date: