

**The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland**

**External Audit Tender Specification**

**January 2024**



## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland is an independent grant-making trust. Our vision is a fair and equitable society for everyone, working hand in hand with communities to build a better future. We are passionate and ambitious about what we do, and we act with integrity.

Our work is based around three main areas:

- making grants to local charities and community groups to enable them to support their beneficiaries across a wide range of themes and issues;
- developing, managing and delivering programmes which address specific social issues that we have identified such as housing and homelessness and human rights. Programmes can include training, mentoring, capacity building as well as grants;
- working collaboratively to influence policy, advocating for communities and using impact and knowledge to inform policy and practice.

Our funding practice underpins all our work, as we continue to build our financial sustainability via diverse income streams and ethical investments. We are committed to open and trust-based grant making processes when supporting local communities. We continue to support philanthropic donors and funders to develop their plans for charitable giving.

## **FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Foundation's income levels vary from year to year, depending on donations and funding received. Our income in 2022/23 was £4.4 million, compared to £37.5 million in the previous year. This was due to substantial funding received in advance from the Department of Health in 2021/22 for three health funds. Most of this income was for grant-making and has been spent down over the past two years and will continue to be spent down this year and into 2024/25. We have endowment funds of £20 million, from which we draw down the return annually to support grant-making and core costs. We also manage revenue funding from a range of Trusts and Foundations, government, corporates and private individuals.

A copy of the Foundation's Audited Accounts for 2022/23 is attached.

## OUR REQUIREMENTS

The Board of Trustees wish to invite tenders from suitably qualified and competent registered auditors with a high level of knowledge and understanding of the voluntary and community sector and charity accounts, for the function of external audit to include the following:-

- (i) preparation of annual audited accounts in accordance with the current Charity SORP;
- (ii) attendance at one Finance and Resources Committee meeting and one Trustees' meeting annually, to present the audited accounts;
- (iii) To give occasional advice and guidance to the Foundation's finance staff on accounting issues.

## AUDIT TIMETABLE

31 March	Financial year end
Mid-June	Client trial balance available
July	Audit begins at the start of July with testing completed and draft accounts prepared by early August
August	Final amendments to draft accounts. Accounts reviewed by Community Foundation staff and auditors and finalised by end of August
September	Accounts presented to the Finance and Resources Committee for approval. Final amendments made prior to presentation of accounts to the Board of Trustees for final approval and signature.  Meeting dates for 2024 have been set as: Finance and Resources Committee – 12 September Board of Trustees – 26 September

The tender contract will be awarded for a three-year period to include the preparation of annual audited accounts for the financial years ending March 2024, March 2025, and March 2026. The contract is subject to satisfactory annual contract reviews by the Finance and Resources Committee and Board of Trustees. At the end of the three years, the contract may be extended for a further three years to March 2029, subject to satisfactory review by the Finance and Resources Committee and the Board.

## **TENDER INFORMATION REQUIRED**

Tenders should include the following information, under each of the separate headings numbered 1 to 5:

**1. Organisation Details** – including the structure, size and capacity to undertake the work specified.

**2. Charity Knowledge** – including:

- Competent in providing accounting and auditing services to charities.
- Knowledge of the charity sector and charity legislation in Northern Ireland;
- Details of two referees from clients who are registered charities.

**3. Staff Details** – including information relating to:

- How the audit will be staffed, including details of relevant skills and qualifications;
- How the organisation will manage succession planning and staff continuity.

**4. Audit Approach** – with details of how the organisation will plan and carry out the audit.

**5. Fees** – to include the proposed annual fee including VAT – this should be fixed for the next three years. The fee proposal should also include the proposed billing schedule and how fees will be set and agreed if the contract is extended for a further three years.

**NB: Tender proposals should be a maximum of 10 A4 pages.**

Queries on the tender specification should be sent by email to Fiona O'Toole (Director of Operations) – [fotoole@communityfoundationni.org](mailto:fotoole@communityfoundationni.org)

## **TENDER SUBMISSION AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS**

Please ensure that you provide information on each area requested in a clear and concise manner to ensure that this can be reviewed and scored in line with the scoring matrix below.

Tender proposals should be submitted by email by **12 noon on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024** to [fotoole@communityfoundationni.org](mailto:fotoole@communityfoundationni.org)

Tenders received after the closing date will not be considered.

A tender panel appointed by the Finance and Resources Committee will score submitted tenders and if deemed necessary, may shortlist up to three organisations for interview. Scoring will relate to the requirements outlined in this tender specification and as follows:

**Selection Marking Criteria:**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Score</b>
Organisation details & capacity	20%
Charity Knowledge	20%
Staffing and staff continuity	20%
Audit approach & method	20%
Clear fee structure & Value for Money	20%

The successful organisation will be contacted at the end of the process. It is hoped to complete this process by the middle of March 2024. The panel reserves the right not to accept the lowest or any tender.