

## Member Briefing:

# NHS Shared Business Services Healthcare AI Solutions Framework

*What members need to know from the UK Healthcare and Life Sciences Innovation and UKAI webinar*

**Important note on value:** The webinar was advertised to some audiences as the £900m Healthcare AI Solutions Framework. NHS Shared Business Services clarified during the session that the formal contract value is £750m excluding VAT, which is equivalent to £900m including VAT.

## Overview

[UK Healthcare and Life Sciences Innovation](#) (UKHLSI) and [UKAI](#) supported by [NHS Shared Business Services](#) (NHS SBS) convened the webinar to brief suppliers and members on the [Healthcare AI Solutions Framework](#) (the Framework). The session followed an earlier member briefing and was opened more widely in the interests of transparency, reflecting the scale, and importance of the opportunity for the healthcare artificial intelligence (AI) market.

The webinar was chaired by Chief Executive of UKHLSI, Jo Bekis with Chief Executive of UKAI, Tim Flagg facilitating the question and answer session. Procurement Solutions Director at NHS SBS, Paddy Howlin and Head of Category for Digital and IT at NHS SBS, James Gee set out the purpose of the Framework, the lot structure, the submission process, the evaluation approach, and key considerations for bidders.

The central message for members was that this framework is a major route to market for healthcare AI across the National Health Service (NHS) and wider public sector, but it is also a structured, compliance led procurement. Members considering a bid should move quickly, review the documentation in SAP Ariba, check their evidence against the required standards, and submit any formal clarification questions through the NHS SBS procurement portal.

## Why the Framework matters

NHS SBS positioned the Framework as a response to a real and immediate need across the NHS. AI adoption is accelerating, but organisations seeking to buy or deploy solutions can face fragmented procurement routes, duplicated effort, and long procurement cycles. The Framework is intended to give NHS and wider public sector buyers a compliant, assured route to procure a broad range of healthcare AI solutions and services.

The Framework is also designed as an Open Framework. This means it can reopen at intervals during its lifespan, allowing new suppliers, existing suppliers, and new



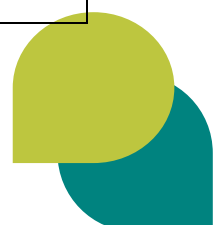
technologies to enter or refresh their offering as the market develops. NHS SBS emphasised that this matters because AI is moving quickly and the NHS cannot afford to be locked into outdated solutions.

The policy and delivery emphasis throughout the session was on the adoption of technology and on outcomes. The Framework is intended to support safer, more interoperable, and more locally relevant solutions that can improve diagnostics, support clinical decision making, reduce administrative burden, enable better use of data, and improve value for money across health and care.

### What the Framework covers

The Framework covers eight lots. Lots 1 to 6 are primarily solution focused, Lot 7 is focused on advisory and specialist support, and Lot 8 is for combined solutions. Lot 8 is not separately evaluated in the same way; bidders successful on two or more other lots may be added to Lot 8 where they have opted in, enabling buyers to procure more integrated end to end workflows through one process.

Lot	Area	Scope
<b>Lot 1</b>	Radiology and Diagnostic Imaging	AI powered radiology tools, imaging platforms, and integrated software to support image-based diagnostics and clinical decision making.
<b>Lot 2</b>	Pathological Diagnosis and Early Detection and Preventative Healthcare	Solutions supporting pathology workflows, AI assisted diagnostics, early detection, and preventative healthcare.
<b>Lot 3</b>	Virtual and Robotic Health	AI, robotics, and machine learning enabled tools that enhance clinical capabilities, automate clinical tasks, and support safer, more efficient care.
<b>Lot 4</b>	Predictive Analytics	Platforms and software for forecasting patient outcomes, health trends, service demand, and broader public sector needs.
<b>Lot 5</b>	Research, Innovation and Development	Solutions supporting synthetic data generation, federated learning, clinical validation, and the use of AI to advance medical



		knowledge and care delivery.
<b>Lot 6</b>	Operational Efficiency	Platforms for data capture, analytics, workflow automation, real time reporting and productivity improvements in NHS, and public sector environments.
<b>Lot 7</b>	Advisory and Specialised Support	Strategic consultancy, deployment, and integration support, including needs analysis, business cases, solution architecture, vendor selection, and regulatory guidance.
<b>Lot 8</b>	Combined Solutions	Bundled or comprehensive workflows drawing together multiple components for approved organisations seeking an integrated AI solution.

### Procurement process and key dates

All bids must be submitted through SAP Ariba. NHS SBS described SAP Ariba as the single compliant route for engagement, including access to documentation, submission of final responses, and clarification questions. Bidders were encouraged to review historical clarification questions before raising new ones, as many common issues may already have been addressed.

NHS SBS warned suppliers not to leave submission until the final hours. Bids can be submitted before the deadline, and early submission gives NHS SBS the opportunity to confirm receipt and gives suppliers more time to resolve technical issues. Late submissions cannot be accepted.

Milestone	Date
Deadline for Supplier Clarification questions	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
Invitation to Tender Deadline	12 noon, Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2026
Post tender evaluation and governance period (including standstill and Spend Controls)	Anticipated to conclude by early Q1 2027
Framework Commencement	Anticipated to conclude by mid-late Q1 2027



**Note 1:** These dates are subject to change given the tremendous amount of bidder interest shown in the ITT stage of procurement. Actual dates will be communicated to bidders once re-panning activity has been completed noting the additional 2 weeks granted for the submission of ITTs.

**Note 2:** Following the webinar, NHS SBS extended the Invitation to Tender deadline from 12:00 noon on Tuesday 7 July 2026 to 12:00 noon on Tuesday 21 July 2026. The dates above reflect this updated deadline and supersede those presented during the webinar.

## Assessment and scoring

The tender is split into two stages: Conditions of Participation (CoP), and the Invitation to Tender (ITT). The CoP stage acts as a gateway, with pass or fail criteria focused on compliance, capability, and assurance. Only bidders that pass these gateway requirements move through to the scored elements of the ITT.

For Lots 1 to 6, quality accounts for 90 per cent of the overall mark and social value accounts for 10 per cent, with the commercial section assessed on a pass or fail basis with the additional request of prices to be submitted for a catalogue. For Lot 7, the scoring balance reflects its advisory and consultancy focus: quality is assessed at 70 per cent, commercial at 20 per cent and social value at 10 per cent.

This distinction matters. For product and solution providers, the strongest submissions will need to focus heavily on quality, safety, technical capability, interoperability, and delivery evidence. For advisory and specialist support providers, pricing will also be scored, so bids will need to demonstrate both expertise and proportionate commercial value.

## Compliance, standards, and assurance

NHS SBS repeatedly emphasised that compliance is central to the Framework. Suppliers will be expected to meet relevant recognised standards, including [Cyber Essentials Plus](#), applicable [International Organization for Standardization](#) (ISO) accreditations and medical device standards where relevant. NHS SBS also referred to alignment with wider government expectations, including the [Technology Code of Practice](#) all of which aim to protect patient outcomes and safety.

A key theme from both the presentation and question and answer session was proportionality. NHS SBS said it had considered barriers to entry and sought to set standards that are achievable while protecting patient and citizen outcomes. However, NHS SBS also said that the Framework will not accept lower standards than those set out in the specification. Equivalent or more substantive alternative accreditations may be considered where bidders can evidence equivalence through the clarification process.

Members should not assume that every standard applies in the same way to every lot. NHS SBS gave Lot 7 as an example where requirements such as medical device compliance may



not apply in the same way as they would to clinical product lots. Where there is uncertainty, the formal route remains the clarification process through SAP Ariba.

The timing of accreditation requirements was discussed in the question and answer session. NHS SBS indicated that, in some procurements, suppliers on a journey towards accreditation may be able to demonstrate completion before the Framework goes live, but the exact position for this procurement requires confirmation through the clarification log. NHS SBS have since confirmed that the accreditations are required to be available at the point of go-live and commencement of the Framework and not for the ITT submission deadline. Though the ITT may require evidence that they have commenced this journey to the applicable standard to show commitment to the process.

Members should therefore check the tender documents and any NHS SBS clarification responses before relying on this point.

### Key points from the Q&A session

The question and answer session showed strong supplier interest and some areas for further consideration. NHS SBS stated that more than 1,100 organisations had registered interest through SAP Ariba, making this one of the largest procurement exercises by supplier interest that the team had handled in recent years.

On small and medium sized enterprises, NHS SBS stressed that the Framework has no predetermined supplier limit per lot. Any organisation can register and bid, provided it meets the minimum standards. Paddy Howlin indicated that suppliers passing the relevant quality threshold and meeting the required certifications would be given a place on the Framework, rather than places being limited to a fixed number of suppliers. Members should still rely on the tender documentation for the formal threshold and award rules.

On the relationship with [G Cloud](#), NHS SBS described this Framework as health focused. While G Cloud offers a broader government procurement route, the Healthcare AI Solutions Framework is owned and run by NHS SBS, dedicated to healthcare AI, and designed around NHS and public sector health needs. The benefit is therefore not simply access to public sector buyers, but a more healthcare specific route with NHS SBS support and market focus alongside standardised NHS Terms & Conditions

On potential deadline extensions, NHS SBS said suppliers who believe recent amendments or portal issues have materially affected their ability to respond should submit a formal request through the official procurement route. NHS SBS did not commit to an extension during the webinar, but said it would consider formal requests, particularly in light of the scale of supplier interest, and the volume of clarifications received. As noted above, NHS SBS have extended the deadline and can now confirm that ITT bids are due back 12 noon on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2026.

On SAP Ariba, NHS SBS acknowledged that some suppliers find the portal difficult to use but explained that it is the organisation's designated sourcing portal and cannot be



changed for this procurement. This makes it particularly important for bidders to register, access documents, test the system, and upload responses well before the deadline.

On technical standards, including terminology and coding requirements such as SNOMED CT and ICD 11, NHS SBS advised suppliers to raise specific clarification questions where the relevance of a standard to a particular product, service or lot is unclear. The Framework is broad, and NHS SBS cannot determine every product specific use case during a general webinar.

On social value, NHS SBS drew a distinction between the Framework level and the call off level. At Framework level, bidders should respond to the model award criteria and explain their overall approach. At call off stage, approved organisations may ask for more specific social value commitments linked to the individual contract or service requirement.

On product roadmaps, NHS SBS indicated that products or services need to be available by the point where the Framework goes live. Future iterations and ongoing enhancement may be relevant, but bidders could face difficulty evidencing compliance with technical standards where a solution is still materially in development.

On future opportunities for startups and companies not ready for the July 2026 deadline, NHS SBS said the next formal reopening is currently aimed for 2030, with likely market dialogue beginning around 2029. Paddy Howlin also indicated that NHS SBS may start engagement in late 2027 / early 2028 to understand emerging innovation and prepare for the reopening.

### **What members should do now?**

Members considering a bid should first decide which lot or lots best reflect their offer.

They should then review all tender documents in SAP Ariba, check the clarification log, map their evidence against the standards and scoring criteria, and identify any gaps in accreditation, technical compliance, social value evidence, or commercial governance.

Where members are unsure whether a standard applies, whether an equivalent accreditation will be accepted, whether a product roadmap can be relied upon, or whether a consortium or subcontracting structure is appropriate, they should use the formal clarification route rather than rely on informal interpretation.

Members should also consider collaboration. The Framework explicitly permits subcontracting and consortium bids, provided arrangements are clearly described in the tender submission. UKHLSI and UKAI offered to help promote opportunities for members seeking consortium partners, specialist support, or complementary services across their networks.



## Suggested member checklist

- Register and access the full opportunity through SAP Ariba.
- Review the tender documents and existing clarification log before drafting responses.
- Confirm the most appropriate lot or lots for the product, service, or advisory offer.
- Check all required accreditations, standards, and evidence against the relevant lot requirements.
- Re-view the existing clarification logs for common queries where your query may have already been raised and responses provided by NHS SBS
- Raise formal clarification questions before the published deadline where requirements are unclear and no previous responses have been provided
- Prepare clear, direct answers that address the question asked and avoid relying on unsupported hyperlinks or embedded documents.
- Clarify consortium or subcontracting arrangements early and describe them clearly in the submission.
- Submit before the final hours to reduce the risk of technical issues in SAP Ariba.
- Contact UKHLSI or UKAI if seeking introductions to potential consortium partners or specialist support.

## Summary

The Healthcare AI Solutions Framework is a major opportunity for members working across diagnostics, digital health, operational efficiency, analytics, research, robotics, and advisory services. It also reflects a wider shift in NHS procurement: demand for AI is growing, but access to the market will depend increasingly on demonstrable assurance, interoperability, security, quality, and governance.

For members, the July deadline is close, the clarification window is limited, and the portal is the only compliant route for engagement.

Organisations that intend to bid should treat the Framework as both a commercial opportunity and an opportunity to help deliver the next phase of healthcare AI adoption.

This report summarises the webinar and accompanying slides. It is not a substitute for the official tender documentation, NHS SBS clarification responses, or independent procurement advice. Bidders should rely on the live tender documents and SAP Ariba notices for the final position.

## Download Slides

Download the slides [here](#).

