

Invitation to Tender

For development support and maintenance of
the Understanding Patient Data website

Date 11 December 2025

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About Understanding Patient Data

Understanding Patient Data (UPD) is a UK-wide initiative hosted by the NHS Confederation and backed by leading funders including the Wellcome Trust, NHS England, the Medical Research Council, and the National Institute for Health Research.

Since launching in 2016, our mission has remained clear: to make the use of patient data transparent, trustworthy, and meaningful for patients, healthcare professionals, policymakers, researchers, and commercial partners.

We operate by creating trusted resources such as guides and toolkits to help organisations communicate clearly about patient data, all under an open Creative Commons license. Our team conducts research to understand public attitudes, with a strong focus on including under-represented voices, and we build collaborative networks across health, academia, government, and industry to share best practices.

We influence policy and practice by translating evidence into actionable insights and offering consultancy to embed public values in data-driven decisions. Additionally, we support media engagement by advising journalists and communicators to ensure accurate, balanced reporting on patient data.

Legal overview

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and was incorporated on 23 January 2002 (Charity number 1090329, Company Number 04358614).

The charity has a subsidiary called The NHS Confederation (Services) Company Limited incorporated as a company limited by guarantee (Company Number: 05252407).

Scope of the work

Understanding Patient Data is looking to work with a digital agency to help improve our website to support user needs.

Our website must be accessible, work for everyone and improvements should meet WCAG 2.2 level AA standards. Developments must be secure, ensuring that contact data is protected, and comply with GDPR legislation.

About the Understanding Patient Data website

The Understanding Patient Data website serves and engages with the following key audience groups:

- **Patients and the general public** - individuals looking for clear, trustworthy information about how their health data is collected, used, and protected.
- **Healthcare professionals** - clinicians and NHS staff who need practical guidance and resources on patient data use in care delivery.
- **Patient groups and charities** - organisations advocating for patient interests and requiring accessible tools and evidence to support communication.
- **PPIE leads** – individuals and organisations that ensure patient/public voice is embedded in high level decision making, research design, and service delivery.
- **Policy makers and NHS organisations** - decision-makers and advisors who rely on authoritative insights to shape policy and governance around health data – but also on guidance around communications and resources they can use to support public engagement.
- **Researchers and academics** - professionals using health data for research, evaluation, and service planning, requiring clarity on ethical and legal frameworks.
- **Media and journalists** - communicators who need accurate, balanced information to report responsibly on patient data issues.
- **Industry and commercial partners** - organisations exploring data-driven innovation under trusted frameworks and public accountability.

Our website currently delivers a diverse range of content designed to support and shape transparent, accessible conversations about health data. This includes:

- A wide variety of content types such as animations, infographics, case studies, written guides, FAQs, downloadable PDFs and videos to support transparent communication about patient data with the public.
- Information pages covering key aspects of patient data including how it is used, safeguarded, and why its use is important.
- Research outputs on public attitudes to health data, including written reports and insights generated through our own sentiment tracking tools such as Pulsar and Kantar surveys.
- Policy explainers that condense new and notable policy initiatives into clear, relevant, and accessible summaries.
- News and commentary from UPD on current media stories and policy developments alongside downloadable resources and a media-pack of assets (graphics, posters, animations) for broader dissemination.
- To elevate our content, we use tools including Flourish design, PowerBI dashboards, and Genially to embed visual and interactive elements, although these could be better and more consistently embedded across the website.

It is currently not always clear what content is for what audience, despite their needs, motivations and requirements being quite different.

Our priorities

The scope of work for this tender includes three areas, as detailed below.

Priority 1: Website hosting and maintenance contract

The delivery of our website contract for UPD to support the maintenance, development and continuous improvement of our website, including CMS security patching and updates. The appointed agency will be responsible for managing hosting services, including code deployments, performance monitoring, security patching, and incident resolution. The agency must demonstrate experience with Drupal 10 CMS and AWS hosting and provide a clear plan for access management, backup protocols, and ongoing support.

Content is created by our web publishers using Drupal CMS and is hosted on Amazon Web Services.

As part of this contract we require:

- triaged response and timely resolution of critical and non-critical web bugs
- an account manager
- support with web design
- project management and design collaboration tools
- defined approaches for functional specifications and quality assurance
- rate card including costs for work that falls outside of contract
- details of any wider digital marketing and transformation services offered
- details of any hosting services that you offer

Priority 2: Full website redesign and redevelopment

Recent audience and UX research indicates that while the current UPD website provides strong, credible content, it is not fully realising its potential to engage and empower key audiences.

To position UPD as the leading, trusted resource on patient data in the UK, a complete redesign and redevelopment of the website is essential. This will need to include revisiting the content strategy and delivery to improve clarity, accessibility, and overall user experience – for a variety of different audiences – ensuring the platform reflects UPD's mission and future direction.

Our goal is to create a platform that delivers an exceptional user experience and supports long-term digital growth. This will involve improving search functionality through advanced filters, keyword recognition, and intelligent spelling suggestions, while enhancing SEO and AI visibility with structured metadata.

To support natural language queries, we would like to explore conversational assistants or smart search capabilities. A mobile-first approach will be needed to ensure usability across all devices, complemented by feedback mechanisms such as “Was this page helpful?” to capture user sentiment.

The site development must incorporate features that improve audience segmentation through embedded tools such as audience selection or dedicated audience areas, enabling better identification of user journeys and needs.

As the site serves a UK-wide remit across all four nations, the design should ensure appropriate differentiation of content where necessary, including parallel pages or sections to reflect variations between nations.

Advanced search, tagging, and filtering functionality is essential to support navigation and exploration of key areas, including policy explainers and resources, and to enable future enhancements such as an “Evidence Hub.” This hub will act as a searchable library of public insights, engagement reports, social listening data, surveys, secondary research, and case studies, allowing users to discover insights, compare findings, identify gaps, and explore emerging issues by theme, region, or community of interest, with potential for future user submissions.

Robust analytics tracking must be implemented to monitor user journeys and content performance, supporting continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making. In addition, the site should include download and interaction tracking, such as PDF downloads, animation replays, and engagement with interactive dashboards, to provide actionable insights into resource usage and audience engagement.

Objectives:

- **Enhance engagement:** Develop an intuitive, user-friendly platform that encourages interaction and repeat visits.
- **Improve accessibility:** Ensure compliance with WCAG 2.2 standards and deliver an inclusive experience for all users.
- **Clarify content:** Restructure and refresh content to improve clarity, relevance, and discoverability.
- **Reflect UPD’s mission:** Align design and messaging with UPD’s strategic aims and future direction.
- **Build trust:** Position UPD as the authoritative source for patient data information across the UK.

Project timeline requirement:

The website build must be completed by August 2026, as the goal is to launch the new website ahead of other planned activities. Please ensure your proposed approach and timelines reflect this deadline.

Contract period

The contract period for this tender is 18 months with a view to extend the contract by a further 18 months; we are looking to appoint a new supplier **no later than February 2026**.

Proposal document

Interested parties are asked to submit a proposal, the deadline for submission is 9 January 2026. The Proposal document should, as a minimum cover the following areas:

Company information

- Brief outline your values, structure, size and capabilities in general.
- Examples of similar tenders you have won and delivered.
- List two not for profit clients that we can contact for reference purposes (references will be taken up for firms shortlisted).
- Information regarding your environmental footprint, along with efforts to measure it and implement actions to reduce or offset your impact.
- Completion of the equalities questionnaire at schedule 1 (refer to guidance provided) – please highlight or delete as applicable).
- How your organisation is aligned with the values of the NHS Confederation – see Appendix 2.

Fee proposal

Your tender should detail the approximate fee for each area of work, exclusive of VAT.

1. **Website maintenance:** note that the budget for the website maintenance retainer is a maximum of £2,000 per month excluding VAT.
2. **Website redesign and/or rebuild**

It should also include any other relevant and ongoing costs in relation to:

- Hosting, support and maintenance of the deliverables in scope
- Migration costs from incumbent digital agency

- Monthly/annual costs for any third-party plug-in tools in your proposal.
- Any likely CMS upgrades.

Proposal scoring

The proposal documents will be scored based on the criteria and weighting below:

Criteria	% Weighting
Fit to requirements of the brief	30%
Quality and experience of the team	20%
Value for money	20%
Alignment with our values and ethical principles (See Appendix 2 and 3)	10%
Quality of engagement with management and the tender process	5%
Commitment to ongoing support and quality assurance.	15%
Total	100%

Access to management during the preparation of the proposal document

In the period up to 9 January 2026 and in order to assist in the preparation of the Proposal document, each party may meet with Charlie Wilkinson.

Tender interview panel

The formal tender interview panel will consist of:

- Charlie Wilkinson – Community and Partnership Manager
- Anna Steere - Head of Understanding Patient Data
- Caroline Smith – Digital Communications Manager, NHS Confederation

Timetable

Action	Date
Invitation to Tender (ITT) sent out	11 December 2025
Deadline for tender response documents to be submitted	9 January 2026
Shortlist finalised and notified	12 January 2026
Formal tender interviews	21 January 2026

Preferred Supplier notified	22 January 2026
Contract negotiation	TBC
Work commences	February 2026

Instructions for the return of tender submissions

Tenders should be submitted by email to charlie.wilkinson@understandingpatientdata.org.uk cc to contracting@nhsconfed.org.

Tenders must be received by the end of 9 January 2026. Tenders received after this date will not be considered. Tenders must include the completed Equalities questionnaire found in Appendix 1.

It is incumbent on tenders to ensure they have all of the information required for the preparation of their tenders.

Further information

Further information on about this tender can be obtained from:

Name	Job Title	Email Address
Charlie Wilkinson	Community and Partnership Manager	charlie.wilkinson@understandingpatientdata.org.uk

Appendix 1 - Equalities Questionnaire for completion

This questionnaire must be completed satisfactorily in order for any company to be considered to tender for this NHS Confederation contract. The NHS Confederation wants to meet the aims and commitments set out in its equality policy. This includes not discriminating under the Equality Act 2010.

1. Is it your policy as an employer and as a service provider to comply with your statutory obligations under the equality legislation, which applies to Great Britain, or equivalent legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff?

Yes No

2. Accordingly, is it your practice not to discriminate directly or indirectly in breach of equality legislation which applies in Great Britain and legislation in the countries in which your firm employs staff:

- In relation to decisions to recruit, select, remunerate, train, transfer and promote employees?

Yes No

- In relation to delivering services?

Yes No

3. Do you have a written equality policy?

Yes No

4. Does your equality policy cover:

- Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal

Yes No

- Victimisation, discrimination and harassment making it clear that these are disciplinary offences

Yes No

- Identify the senior position for responsibility for the policy and its effective implementation

Yes No

1. Is your policy on equality set out:

- In documents available and communicated to employees, managers, recognised trade unions or other representative groups?

Yes No

- In recruitment advertisements or other literature?

Yes No

- In materials promoting your services?

Yes No

Please evidence all questions.

If you answered NO to any part of questions 4 or 5 can you provide (and if so, please do) other evidence to show how you promote equalities in employment and service delivery.

6. In the last three years, has any findings of unlawful discrimination been made against your firm by the Employment Tribunal, the Employment Appeal Tribunal or any other court or in comparable proceedings in any other jurisdiction?

Yes No

In the last three years, has any contract with your organisation been terminated on grounds of your failure to comply with:

- Legislation prohibiting discrimination; or

Yes No

- Contract conditions relating to equality in the provision of services

Yes No

8. In the last three years, has your firm been the subject of formal investigations by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, The Equal Opportunities Commission or a comparable body, on grounds of alleged unlawful discrimination?

Yes No



9. If the answer to question 6 and 7 is YES, or, in relation to question 8, a finding adverse to your organisation has been made, what steps have you taken as a result of that finding? Please summarise the details below and provide full details as an attachment.

Guidance in answering the equality questionnaire

When completing the questionnaire, all companies must answer each question fully and supply any documentary evidence requested. Failure to fully answer each question or failure to submit any documentary evidence required may lead the NHS Confederation to consider the answer unsatisfactory.

Question 1 and 2

If your firm has implemented an effective equality policy, you will be able to answer yes to these questions. You will be able to confirm your answers by submitting your equality policy and supporting evidence as for as part of this section.

Question 3 and 4

You will need to submit a copy of your firm's equality policy. You will need to ensure that your policy covers:

- Recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal
- Victimisation, discrimination and harassment
- Identifies the senior position responsibly for the policy

Question 5

Documents available and method of communication to staff. You will be required to submit examples of any documents, which explain your firm's policies in respect of recruitment, selection, remuneration, training and promotion outside of the equality policy asked for in Question 3 and 4.

You will also need evidence of how your firm has communicated this document to staff i.e., notice boards or issue individual employees with a copy. There is no prescribed evidence here. You will need to submit whatever documents your firm uses for these purposes.

In recruitment advertisements or other literature. You will need to submit evidence that makes public your firm's commitment to equality in employment and service delivery.

Small firms may not have detailed procedures, but you must ensure that evidence is provided which demonstrates that personnel operate in accordance with a written equality policy that includes:

- Open recruitment practices such as using job centres and local newspapers to advertise vacancies
- Instructions about how the firm ensures that all job applicants are treated fairly.

In material promoting your services This relates to how your firm provides information in materials promoting your services e.g., in different languages, making information accessible to people with hearing and visual impairment and physical access for disabled users.

Question 6

This question's concern is whether any court or industrial tribunal has found your firm guilty of unlawful discrimination in the last three years. It is important to be honest with your answers. The NHS Confederation may check your responses. If the answer is yes, you may wish to insert additional information which details the actions your firm has undertaken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

Answering yes will not automatically mean that you do not get the contract; you need to ensure that the NHS Confederation feels confident that you have sufficient measures put in place to prevent a re-occurrence.

Question 7

This question's concern is whether your firm has ever had a contract terminated for noncompliance with equality legislation or equality contract conditions. If the answer is yes, your firm may wish to submit additional information will details the actions they have taken to prevent a repeat occurrence.

Question 8

This question asks whether your firm has had any investigation carried out, whatever the outcome. The NHS Confederation can check a contractor's answer from lists that the CRE and EOC produce, so please be honest. The NHS Confederation is aware that because a firm has been investigated does not mean that it is guilty of discrimination. The result of the investigation will be taken into account when assessing your firm's answers to the questionnaire.

Question 9

If your firm has been found guilty of unlawful discrimination, you will need to provide evidence that details the steps your firm has taken to correct the situation. The Court, Industrial Tribunal or CRE will have made recommendations about steps your firm should take to eliminate the discrimination. If no action or inadequate action has been taken in this respect, only then will your firm be considered refusal onto the tender list.

Question 10

If your firm is not subject to UK employment law, you must ensure that you supply details of equivalent legislation that you adhere to.

Appendix 2 – Understanding Patient Data values and their definitions for reference

Respect

We treat people with respect.

We recognise the diversity of views, and we listen to understand.

We believe in fairness and support one another to achieve our goals.

We demonstrate trust, respect and fairness at all levels of the organisation.

We have fair and respectful employment practices that provide individual support and nurture talent.

Inclusivity

We continuously strive to be a diverse organisation - we encourage different ideas, strengths, interests and experiences.

We have a genuine commitment to being an inclusive and welcoming employer and organisation.

Our staff should represent the NHS and wider population in terms of diversity.

All our staff feel they have a voice, are listened to and valued. We value everyone's contribution.

We respect different views and show this by listening and being authentic. We respectfully challenge back when needed.

Bold

We are innovative and creative, always striving to be our best.

We are courageous and confident when we need to respectfully challenge.

We are ambitious, aspiring to be the best in our work and encouraging it in others.

We are leading, influencing and represent our stakeholders and the NHS.

We speak for members and lead on their behalf.

Integrity

We are open in everything we do, say and role model.

We are honest with ourselves about where we need to improve.

We have pride in the work that we do, and we are proud to represent the NHS.

We are all accountable for our work and learn from our mistakes.

We have an honest and open culture.

Collaboration

We are all part of one organisation and work collaboratively with other teams.

We are a diverse organisation with a diverse membership and recognise and value each other's strengths.

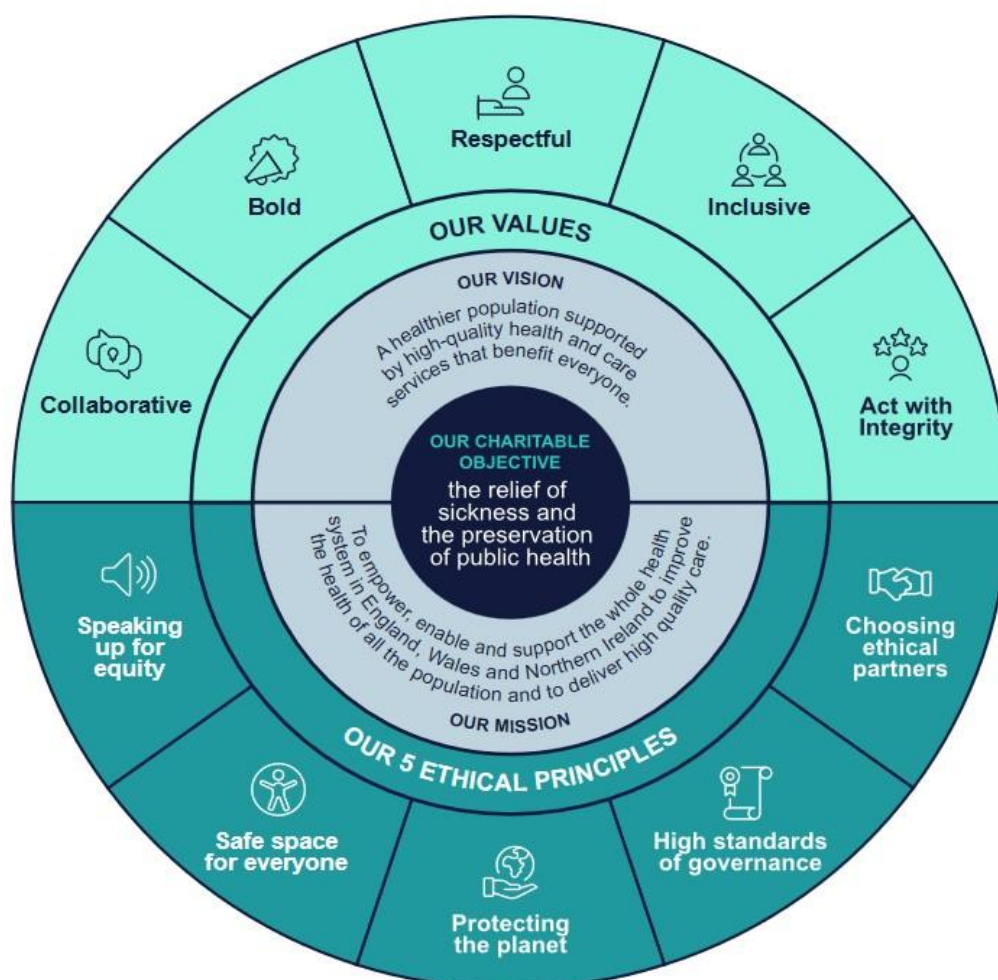
We encourage internal collaboration to share ideas across teams and external collaboration to have impact across the wider NHS and our stakeholders.

We communicate respectfully and listen to the needs of our members and stakeholders.

We work together with our members and stakeholders to improve patient care.

Appendix 3 Our Ethical Principles

As an organisation we often face certain ethical questions in our day-to-day work – from the types of organisations we want to partner with, to the broader impact our decision-making and activity has on the environment and wider society. In making those decisions, we need to have a consistent and logical approach that is directly linked to our organisational purpose.



As a charitable organisation, our purpose is to make a positive impact. Our vision is of a healthier population supported by high-quality health and care services that benefit everyone. To achieve that we need a more equitable and inclusive society and a good quality environment where we are halting the impacts of climate change.

As an organisation we have our own operational impact. Through this ethical framework we proactively champion ethical behaviour in all we do, including how we work with others, how we champion our cause and how we make decisions.

This framework empowers staff to look to achieve a greater positive impact in their work, making decisions that are inclusive, have greater social value and that take us towards our commitment to be carbon neutral. It helps us to be true to our values and charitable objective in everything we do. Our ethical principles are:

Speaking up for equity - We speak up about wider determinants of health and call for an improved and more equitable population health and healthcare for the whole population.

Safe space for everyone – we constantly strive to be an organisation that is always supportive, inclusive, equitable, safe, respectful, and fair for everyone.

Protecting the planet – we are committed to reducing our own impact on the environment, not least our carbon footprint, with our actions and of those we interact with.

Choosing ethical partners – we seek to only work with other individuals and organisations who can demonstrate active and strong alignment with our principles.

High standard of governance - We will hardwire our ethical principles into our decision making, ensure our organisation is run to highest standards of governance, with transparency and accountability.