

Invitation to Tender: Padlock Pad Mobile App Development (iOS MVP)

Introduction

[Padlock Pad](#) is a physical sports journal designed to support young football to self-reflect on their performance and promote positive mental health through structured journaling, goal setting, and performance tracking.

This tender is an open invitation for software developers to submit proposals for the design and development of Padlock Pad's transition to a mobile platform. This work will begin with a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) in Phase 1, later progressing to a full commercial release in Phase 2. The project is privately funded by the owner of Padlock Pad, who will retain full intellectual property rights over the finished product and its codebase.

Background

Young football players often lack the tools to meaningfully reflect on their matches and personal development outside of coaching environments. With the successful delivery of its physical journal, Padlock Pad now aims to expand its offering by providing an accessible mobile platform where players aged 8 to 16 can journal their experiences, set and review personal goals, and monitor key performance metrics over time. The concept draws inspiration from existing consumer health and fitness applications, with particular reference to the journalling and habit-tracking experience offered by products such as the Oura Ring.

The initial target audience for the MVP will be spread across four age groups, conforming to age brackets found in many youth football organisations: under 10, under 12, under 14, and under 16, with some further separation based on player skill level. The branding and visual tone of the app should appeal to a younger audience and reflect the existing identity established through the Padlock Pad Instagram page and printed materials. The product owner will supply design files and brand assets to support this, but further development from a UI/UX designer will be required.

The intended business model is subscription-based, with parents paying monthly or annually for their child's access. There is also potential for commercial licences sold directly to clubs or academies to pay for player seats. The subscription payment infrastructure should support both Stripe and PayPal as payment gateways.

The Project

We are seeking a skilled software developer or development team to build Padlock Pad's MVP as a mobile application. The project requires both backend and frontend development, supported by a database infrastructure capable of storing all user-generated content and producing analytical insights for the product owner (Padlock Pad's owner). These insights should include demographic breakdowns such as male versus female users, age ranges, and the competitive level at which players are participating. The owner intends to use this data for ongoing product development and to present to potential stakeholders and investors.

The selected provider will work collaboratively with the owner, who will supply design files, brand guidelines, and creative direction. The developer should also be prepared to contribute to UI/UX design work where needed. The owner has expressed a strong preference for regular and transparent communication throughout the project, including bi-weekly check-ins with the developer and ongoing access to a UX designer, ideally coordinated through a project manager, though this cadence and arrangement of contact is open for negotiation depending on the circumstances and recommendations of the applicant.

The developer must also research and ensure compliance with relevant child data privacy legislation, given the target user base of children aged 8 to 16. The services of this MVP be tested and sold to a global audience, so needs to be adherent to global law on children's data protection, most notably: GDPR, The Data Protection Act (2018), Californian state law (CCPA 2018/ CPRA 2023) and US federal regulations.

Phase 1

Phase 1 covers the development of the Minimum Viable Product, targeted for completion between August and September 2026 to coincide with the beginning of the new football season. The limit to scope of the MVP it should initially be built for iOS devices, supporting both phones and tablets. An android or desktop version is not required at this stage.

The MVP must include the following core functionality:

Journalling: Players should be able to reflect on sessions and games through either free-form journalling or pre-written templates that pose guided questions or are organised under subject headers. Journal entries should be creatable at any time within the app via a prominent "+" icon. Input methods should include both typed text and voice dictation (speech-to-text), with the overall journalling experience modelled on the native iOS Notes app, where files and photos can also be attached. The app should incorporate a categorisation system allowing players to organise their entries by topic, alongside visual elements such as smiley faces for logging emotions and fuel-style indicators for energy levels. Habit logging would be a welcome addition but is considered a nice-to-have rather than a requirement for the MVP.

Goal Setting: Players should be able to access and update their personal goals at any time within a user profile dashboard. Goal-setting functionality should feed into a pre-fabricated monthly review template that is automatically populated and updated based on the player's journal entries, post-match reports, and session reflections.

Tracking: The app should allow players to log and track the following performance data:

- Injuries
- Goals, assists, and clean sheets
- Playing minutes
- Workout and gym records (such as 5km run times, weights lifted in kg, and repetitions completed)
- Playing positions on the field

This tracked data should contribute to a user profile or dashboard displaying the player's key metrics over time and should generate a monthly report. The owner has described this as a "Strava-ification" of player performance and tracking, where players can see meaningful patterns and progress from their own inputs over time.

Backend and Analytics: The app requires a database backend capable of storing all user-generated content. A simple data dashboard should be included for the product owner to access user analytics, covering demographic and usage data that can be used to inform product decisions and stakeholder conversations.

Payment Integration: Subscription payment functionality should be built into the MVP via Stripe and PayPal, supporting both monthly and annual billing cycles.

Design and User Experience: The visual design should align closely with the existing Padlock Pad Instagram page and printed materials. The copywriting and interface language must be geared towards a younger audience. The owner will provide design files to support this work. There are no specific accessibility requirements for the MVP. Design inspirations include the native iPhone Notes app (for attachment and file handling), and the Oura Ring app (for its categorised logging via a "+" icon).

Prototype: The owner would like to receive a working prototype or demo of the product before final delivery for review and feedback purposes.

Testing: Formal testing (such as unit testing, integration testing, or user acceptance testing) is not required for the MVP. However, the developer's involvement in a subsequent beta testing phase would be considered beneficial.

Post-Launch Support: The selected provider should include provision for a post-launch retainer covering ongoing maintenance and support following the launch of the MVP. The provider must also supply technical documentation to support any future handover to other developers, as the owner may wish to transition the codebase to in-house management at a later stage.

Phase 2

Phase 2 will cover the full commercial release of Padlock Pad and is contingent on the success of Phase 1. This phase will expand the app to support both iOS and Android operating systems and will include submission to the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. Scalability considerations for Phase 2 are primarily focused on supporting a significantly larger number of users beyond the initial MVP cohort. A Spanish language version of the app may also be developed during this phase to serve Californian-based teams where this would be beneficial.

Applications are encouraged to outline their anticipated approach and provide indicative costs for Phase 2 within their proposals, though detailed scoping and budgeting for this phase will take place following the successful completion of and evaluation of Phase 1.

How to respond

Interested applicants should submit their proposal to Nathan Rowland at nathan.rowland@sunderlandsoftwarecity.com by no later than **24th March 2026**.

Proposals may be submitted in the format of the applicant's choosing, whether that be a slide deck, PDF, or Word document. All submissions must, however, include the following:

- A detailed cost breakdown for Phase 1, with indicative costs for Phase 2 where possible. Ideally costed on the basis of project milestones.
- Relevant case studies demonstrating previous mobile app development experience
- A proposed timeline for delivery of the MVP
- An outline of the team or individual who would be working on the project
- References from previous clients

Following the submission deadline, Nathan will conduct a shortlisting process in collaboration with the owner of Padlock Pad, after which all applicants will be contacted regarding the outcome. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a remote interview before a final selection is made.

How we will select a provider

We will use the following criteria to select a provider for this work:

Criteria	Weighting
Knowledge and experience in mobile app development	35%
Proof of customer service, communication and availability of regular check-ins	30%
Demonstration of contemporary UI/UX design capabilities and modern front-end development practices	25%
Value for money	10%

Due Diligence you will be required to:

- All applicants must provide case studies of previous mobile app development work as part of their submission, along with references from past clients. Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend a remote interview as part of the final selection process.
- The selected provider should be aware that full intellectual property of the codebase will transfer to the owner of Padlock Pad upon completion of each project phase. The provider must also supply technical documentation to support future development handovers.

