



Market Engagement

(Soft Market Testing)

Targeted support for delivery of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Services in local areas



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Section 1: Introduction and Background

Soft Market Testing (SMT) in this case is where the Department for Education (DfE), at an early stage in development of its proposals but prior to formulating any formal procurement opportunity, seeks input from the market as to what might be the most potentially attractive way of packaging and scoping a future procurement opportunity.

This exercise will also provide an opportunity for the DfE to obtain insight into how potential providers might approach the delivery of the service in question. It also gives useful early insight into the likely level of interest in a proposed project from the market.

Potential participants will not be prejudiced by any response or failure to respond to the soft market testing or attend any intended meetings either face-to-face or electronically. Potential participants must also note that a response to this request does not guarantee an invitation to participate in this or any future procurement the DfE may conduct, nor that the DfE will procure any services or accept any proposals offered.

Background to targeted support for delivery of SEND services

Our vision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is the same as for all children and young people – that they achieve well in their early years, at school and in college, that they find employment; lead happy and fulfilled lives; and experience choice and control.

In 2014, we made significant changes to the way the SEND system works. Those reforms were designed to put children and young people with SEND at the heart of the process, by joining up services for 0-25 year olds across local authorities, schools and colleges, and health and social care, and by focusing on positive outcomes in terms of employment, independent living, health, and community participation.

The reforms involved significant changes to the ways in which that local agencies work together to commission and provide services for children and young people with SEND. Whilst encouraging progress has been made in the way that local authorities and health partners are delivering services, there is still some way to go before the reforms and associated cultural changes are fully embedded across the education, health and care sectors.

Through our targeted delivery support contracts, we want to build on our current programme of focused support for local areas to help them embed the reforms and improve their SEND service performance. Our priority is those local areas with the most significant issues in delivering their statutory SEND duties including, but not limited to, those with a Written Statement of Action following their Ofsted/CQC inspection, those which have not made sufficient progress after a revisit and those needing support to effectively manage their High Needs budget.

We expect bidders to capitalise on the success of work delivered to date by the Delivering Better Outcomes Together (DBOT) consortium whilst proposing innovative measures to increase the pace of improvement and maximise the impact of the support provided to local areas.

Targeted support for delivery of SEND services - objectives

The functions of the targeted support for delivery of SEND services contracts will include, but not be limited to the requirements set out below. Participants are invited to populate Section 3 below, however as previously specified the requirement, objectives and structure of the potential opportunity going forward may be subject to change.



Table 1: Outlined Provisional Objectives

TARGETED			
Content	Objectives	Outcomes	Funding Estimate
<p>One or more contracts for targeted delivery support to improve local area SEND service performance focused on those areas with the most significant issues. Comprising:</p> <p>(i) SEND adviser service providing professional advice to understand issues and appropriate expertise to make recommendations, support development of area improvement plan and deliver timely and relevant support to implement that plan.</p> <p>(ii) Delivery support to provide local, regional or national training/development programmes and bespoke support packages to local areas who have performed poorly at inspection or are at risk of a poor inspection outcome, with the aim of improving systems</p>	<p>(i) To provide effective, professional support, challenge and monitoring of local area SEND performance, particularly those with a Written Statement of Action and those at risk of underperformance.</p> <p>(i) To contribute to developing a coordinated and complementary offer of support between the SEND adviser service and activities provided by other SEND delivery contractors by sharing information about local area performance and by contributing to the development of learning programmes and training materials.</p> <p>(i) To work with local authorities to understand high needs budget pressures and support them in developing effective DSG deficit recovery plans and effective strategic service planning and management for use of high needs funding.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased pace of improvement in local area SEND performance with fewer LAs receiving WSOA on their first Ofsted/CQC inspection, identifiable progress after 6 months in those areas with WSOA and more areas making sufficient progress when revisited (i, ii, iii) 2. Local areas deliver better value for money for their SEND services by improving joint commissioning and making sensible efficiencies with reduction in number of LAs with unjustified DSG overspends. (i, ii, iii) 3. DSCO role embedded with % increase in number DSCOs year on year and improved engagement from social care practitioners in the SEND system. (ii, iii) 	<p>(i) SEND Adviser Contract/Strand: £760,000 per year - £2,280,000 total contract value</p> <p>(ii) Delivery Support Contract/Strand: £1,015,000 per year - £3,045,000 contract value</p> <p>(iii) Learning Systems and Effective Practice Contract/Strand: £640,000 per year - £1,920,000 contract value</p> <p>Total Programme Cost per year - £2,415,000</p> <p>Total Programme</p>



<p>and structures essential to delivery of statutory SEND duties and addressing high needs funding pressures.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Learning systems and effective practice</u> to facilitate peer to peer learning and enable innovation and the development, dissemination (scale and spread) and embedding of effective practice.</p>	<p>(ii) To improve multi-agency working on delivery of SEND reforms at local level including to strengthen the role of social care in SEND systems delivery and developing integrated service provision across education health and care.</p> <p>(ii) To improve how local areas engage parents, children and young people on matters relating to disability, education, health and social care and to embed co-production in strategic service development and delivery.</p> <p>(ii) To enable LAs to strengthen strategic leadership and governance of their SEND services and to develop their workforce through focused training and development programmes which improve capability of caseworkers, operational SEND leaders and senior leaders.</p> <p>(ii) To support LAs to improve their understanding of progress and outcomes for CYP with SEND and</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Local areas are able to develop effective pathways from children’s health and social care services to adult health and social care services, including transition arrangements for individual young people (i, ii) 5. The SEND workforce in local areas is more confident and capability with improved recruitment and retention at all levels (ii) 6. Measurable improvement in academic outcomes, improved attendance and reduction in exclusions for CYP with SEND in areas where support is provided. (i, ii, iii) 7. The majority of children and young people with SEND are identified early and have their needs met well in mainstream schools with improvement in quality and timeliness in LAs 	<p>Cost - £7,245,000</p>
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their strategic role in driving improvement in education institutions, including facilitating greater links between mainstream and special schools. To focus on areas where the WSOA identifies the need for improvements in educational provision for CYP with SEND.

(iii) To develop sector-led support and facilitate local authorities in learning from each other about ‘what good looks like’ and how to drive sustainable improvement in their SEND services and provision.

(iii) To assist with the sharing of best practice within and across regions and ensuring the wider delivery support offer is driven by regional improvement priorities.

(iii) To extend the current SEND peer review process to enable practical peer to peer support to drive identified improvements.

(iii) To embed regional peer support networks with effective

where support is provided. (i, ii, iii)

8. All regions have established and sustainable peer support and improvement networks with communities of practice at workforce level e.g. in social care enabling learning and development and creating supportive and sustainable long-term links between practitioners (iii)

9. Increased understanding of ‘what works’ to deliver high quality and good value for money in SEND services and improved mechanisms for sharing this within and between regions. (iii)



	communities of practice bringing together workforce/leaders across education, health and care to drive and oversee sector led improvement.		
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Section 2: Response request

The purpose of the SMT is for the department to gain a clear understanding of the current market to potentially deliver later down the line pending findings in this activity the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) for the justification identified above. Participants are invited to populate and complete Section 3: questionnaire for the department (DfE) to include but not limited to prospective risks, challenges and opportunities and predominantly gain intelligence to assist the development of prospective opportunities going forward. The following may be subject to change.

As explained above, the exercise is intended to allow interested organisations to outline their views and ideas about the future provision of these specified services. The responses will inform the decision-making process and understanding if there is appetite and potential for the services to be commissioned / transferred to an external organisation and if so, whether the services should be tendered for as one contract or several smaller contracts

As a natural progressive step of collating the information and gaining further findings, we may wish to contact you to discuss further, however if you do not wish to engage in any further activity please specify and notify us accordingly.

Your responses should be brief and to the point. There is no maximum word count imposed, but please do not use brochures or marketing material (if required add as an additional attachment) as an answer to any question.

The Department for Education thanks you for taking the time and effort in completing/ populating all questions addressed in Section:3 below. Please can we request that all submissions are completed by 21st August 2020 and emailed to:

Adam Green Commercial Practitioner - Category Manager
CommercialQueries.SCMD@education.gov.uk



Section 3: Questionnaire

Soft Market Testing (SMT) SMT in this case is where the Department for Education (DfE), at an early stage in development of its proposals but prior to formulating any formal procurement opportunity, seeks input from the market as to what might be the most potentially attractive way of packaging and scoping a future procurement opportunity.

3.1 General Information

3.1.1 Full name, address and website:

Organisation name	
Address	
Town/city	
Postcode	
Country	
Website	

3.1.2 Main contact for correspondence about this questionnaire:

Name	
Position	
Telephone number	
Mobile phone number	
Fax number	
email address	

3.1.3 Company description / Consortium description

<p>Brief Description of primary business activities and main products and services. Please state if a single operation or provides details of any proposed consortium (if yet known).</p>	
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3.1.4 Please tick the correct box to indicate whether you are a:

Sole Trader	
Partnership	
Limited Liability Partnership	
Public Limited Company	
Private Limited Company	
Industrial and Provident Society	
Registered Charity	
Social Enterprise	
Other (please state)	

NB: "Other" would include co-operatives, other departmental authority organisations (suppliers or direct labour organisations), nationalised industries (which are incorporated under specific acts of parliament), or other public sector organisations.

3.2 Key Questions

3.2.1 Benefits of the services

<p>Other than the specified outcomes, what requirements relating to any potential social and economic benefits from this work do you think could be stipulated in the specification?</p>	
	[no max word count]

3.2.2 Expressions of interest

<p>We are looking for informal expressions of interest in the specified service elements at this stage to establish an anticipated level of market interest. At this stage would your organisation be interested in bidding for these services?</p> <p>Yes/ No</p> <p>If no – please explain why you would not be interested in bidding for these services.</p>	
	[no max word count]



3.2.3 Working with others

<p>Would you expect to submit a tender as a single supplier, consortium, framework, lots, managed services or any other appropriate vehicle?</p> <p>If a conso</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.4 Contract scope, scale and complexity

<p>Do you think the proposed services covers the broad range of activity needed to provide targeted support to improve SEND provision in local areas?</p> <p>What is your view on whether separate contracts across these services are appropriate and workable or is a combined contract likely to be more attractive to the market?</p> <p>Can you suggest other ways of grouping the services in order to maximise competition or improve deliverability?</p> <p>What is your view whether a contract is the appropriate vehicle for delivering services relating to learning systems and effective practice?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.5 Risks and challenges

<p>What will be the key challenges and risks in delivering this programme?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.6 Costs

<p>What is your view on whether the estimated costings given are sufficient to manage the services and achieve the outcomes specified?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.7 Deliverability

<p>What is your view on whether the services are deliverable, the objectives achievable and the outcomes measurable?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.8 Capacity and capability

<p>Does your organisation have the capacity and capability to successfully manage this potential opportunity?</p> <p>How would you build that capacity and capability in order to manage this opportunity?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.9 Regional delivery

<p>Do you have the infrastructure in place to facilitate regional delivery of the services?</p> <p>Do you have the capability to put in place a regional infrastructure?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.10 Innovation

<p>Can you see any opportunities for innovation in how the specified services could be delivered?</p> <p>Are there other requirements that the department could consider including in the the specified services in order to better drive improvement in SEND services in local areas?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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The Department for Education would like to thank you for your time, effort and willingness in completing this market

engagement activity, which will allow us to gain further insight and development within the specified sector.

Should you have any questions or if you would like to provide further information please attach them along with your rationale for why the department should consider it.

Section 4: Confidentiality and information sharing

If a participant (you) identifies information as being confidential and/or commercially sensitive, the department (DfE) will endeavour to maintain the confidentiality of that information, and will, where practicable, consult with the participant before information relating to that participant is disclosed pursuant to a request for information under FOIA and/or EIR to establish whether an exemption from disclosure may apply.

Participants and potential tenderers going forward should be aware that the Government has set out the need for greater transparency in public sector procurement and that if they are awarded a Contract going forward, the potential tender documents and Contract will be published on the Contracts Finder website: www.gov.uk/contracts-finder. In some circumstances, limited redactions may be made to some contracts before they are published.

Section 5: Appendix 1: Criteria for further discussion between DfE and potential supplier(s).

Criteria for further discussion	Question Type
Section 3.1: General Information	Yes/No
Provider details provided	
Section 3.2: Key Questions	Yes/No
All questions completed	