



Market Engagement

(Soft Market Testing)

Participation and Family Support



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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 Participation and Family Support

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.

Effective involvement of parents and young people in the design and delivery of SEND services and provision was a fundamental principle of the Children and Families Act. Local authorities are statutorily required to ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of children and parents are taken into account when deciding what support they need, empowering them to make informed choices and supporting them to influence SEND policy at a local and national level. They are also statutorily required to ensure children and young people with SEND and parents have access to impartial information, advice and support.

The move to the new system involved significant changes in the way that local agencies work together and while encouraging progress has been made, there is still some way to go before the reforms and associated cultural changes are fully embedded across the education, health and care sectors. This project supports this continued improvement of co-production, including supporting the continued embedding of the voices of SEND stakeholders in national policy development and improving communication of national policy messages.

Participation and Family Support Objectives

The functions of the Participation and Family Support 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

PARTICIPATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT			
Content	Objectives	Outcomes	Funding Estimate
<p>A contract to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Development support to local parent carer forums (PCF), particularly to ensure co-production at a local level. (ii) Development support and training to local authorities to help grow children and young people's (CYP) participation at a local level. (iii) Development support to ensure CYP and Parental participation at a strategic national level. (iv) Payment and administration of Parent Carer Forum grants for each local authority in England. (v) Provision of a national helpline to provide advice to families of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and sharing of materials from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) To improve strategic participation with CYP and parents, at the local and national level. (i) To ensure we have input and advice at a strategic level from our partners to improve the quality of policy development and implementation (ii) To monitor and support local and national information, advice and support services for families. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved levels of CYP and parental participation at the local and national level 2. More Local Authorities draw on support available to improve CYP participation and to report positive impact of that support. 3. Improved national parental participation so Government works in co-production with parents on a broader range of SEND policies. 4. Nationally increased Parent Carer Forum (PCF) membership across all regions. 5. PCF participation improved locally with membership being more representative of local areas, including hard to reach groups. 	<p>£8,260,000 per year</p> <p>£24,780,000 total programme cost</p>



<p>that helpline to local advice services.</p> <p>(vi) Training, development and support to local authority SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS).</p> <p>(vii) Communication of national policy messages and provision of advice to government on matters relating to children and young people with SEND</p>		<p>6. Payments made to local PCFs efficiently and effectively to facilitate local working, with clear fraud prevention processes in place.</p> <p>7. The national helpline and online support service reaching more families and receiving positive feedback on advice received.</p> <p>8. Greater join up between the national helpline/online support services and local IAS services, and greater economies of scale.</p> <p>9. Local IAS services maintain their adherence to national standards with support on offer through the contract to ensure they share good practice and targeted support to local services to help them improve as necessary.</p> <p>10. Using information and data gathered from national helpline and local IAS services to feed into wider intelligence to inform</p>	
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		<p>the quality of national support and intervention.</p> <p>11. Structured strategic relationship with the Department for Education to ensure effective input into national policy.</p> <p>12. The ability for SEND Division to commission strategic partner to undertake specific projects to enhance policy development.</p> <p>13. Effective communication of key government messages with a wide range of stakeholders.</p>	
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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 in order to potentially deliver, later down the line and pending any findings, 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 intended exercise as specified is to hopefully allow interested organisations to outline their views and ideas about the future provision of these specified services. The responses will therefore help inform the decision-making process – ultimately assessing 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 broken into smaller groupings.

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 / 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 Corporate Social Responsibility

<p>What requirements relating to any potential social, economic and environmental benefits from this work do you think should be stipulated in the specification</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.2 Viable Provision Going Forward

<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>[no max word count]</p>
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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>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.4 Contract scale and complexity

<p>Do you believe a combined contract of this scale is workable, or would competition increase if it were broken down into smaller constituent parts, if so, how would you suggest breaking it down?</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>Do you feel the estimated costings given are sufficient to manage the potential provision? What are the key cost pressures?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.7 Other opportunities

<p>Are there other opportunities to improve participation and family support for CYP with SEND and their families that you consider could be included in this package?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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3.2.8 Deliverability

<p>With the DfE and all government departments driving for continual efficiencies, forward looking challenges/risks and delivering savings, do you feel these requirements are achievable?</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.

If you wish to address any queries or stipulate any question that has not been addressed above that is pertinent to this proposed provision, please highlight and give further context and justification for the department to review accordingly.



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	