



## Market Engagement

(Soft Market Testing)

**Improving SEND provision in schools and colleges, leading to better outcomes and sustained employment for young people with SEND.**



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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 accepts any proposals offered.



**Background to “Improving SEND provision in schools and colleges, leading to better outcomes and sustained employment for young people with SEND.”**

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.

Since 2014, school leaders, SENCOs and teaching staff have been working to realise the vision of these reforms in their schools and colleges to ensure that children and young people with SEN have their needs identified and met as early as possible. We have seen many examples of good practice, but the experiences of children and their parents is clearly still inconsistent across the country. That is why the SEND system is being reviewed to deliver lasting improvements to the way that we identify and support need across education, health and care.

The new contract will focus on improving SEND provision in education settings, including for children and young people without statutory Education Health and Care (EHC) plans to improve outcomes . We aim to do this through one single contract focused on early identification of need and support for staff in meeting that need, effective intervention and preparation for adulthood, in particular for sustained employment, within both mainstream and special sector providers.

Bringing together activity aimed at schools and colleges, will enable us to better share best practice and learning between the sectors, whilst recognising the distinct needs of the sectors. This approach will be more efficient in that it will drive performance, impact and value of activity.

We expect bidders to build upon the successes of work delivered to date by the Whole School SEND Consortium, the Autism Education Trust, the Education Training Foundation (ETF) and the National Development Team for inclusion (NDTi ); whilst also proposing a refreshed strategic approach to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

**Objectives to “Improving SEND provision in schools and colleges, leading to better outcomes and sustained employment for young people with SEND.”**

The functions of the contract for “Improving SEND provision in schools and colleges, leading to better outcomes and sustained employment for young people with SEND” 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.

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## Section 1: Introduction and Background



Table 1: Outlined Provisional Objectives

Improving SEND provision in schools and colleges, leading to better outcomes and sustained employment for young people with SEND.			
Content	Objectives	Outcomes	Funding Estimate
<p>One contract to improve <b>early identification of need, effective intervention and preparation for adulthood (in particular sustained employment), within both mainstream and specialist sector education providers.</b></p> <p>The contract activity will be aimed at the school and college workforce. Activity should include help for schools to work with early years and childcare providers to support transition into reception, and help for staff to understand and meet the presenting needs of their pupils and students. It should also include work to help both schools and post 16 providers engage with employers to help</p>	<p>To equip school and college leadership teams, including governors, in both mainstream and special schools and colleges, to review and improve SEND provision.</p> <p>To improve the skills of the schools/college workforce (including both teachers and Teaching Assistants) to improve outcomes for pupils and students with SEND in both mainstream and specialist provision for example through accredited training, webinars, seminars, and expert consultancy helplines.</p> <p>To help schools and colleges access specialist expertise when needed in</p>	<p>Improvements to SEND provision demonstrated by school and area Ofsted inspection reports in mainstream and special provision leading to positive defined outcomes for pupils and students, for example improvements in attendance and attainment of those with SEND as measured by regional and national data.</p> <p>Teachers and college staff are more confident to support pupils and students with SEND in mainstream (as measured through DfE teacher confidence survey) and are better equipped to identify need(s) and put in place/implement effective intervention leading to improvements in provision at SEN Support level / SEN without</p>	<p>£4,070,000 per year</p> <p>£12,210,000 for whole programme</p>



<p>prepare young people systematically for adulthood and move into sustained employment.</p> <p>This contract should deliver support to improve SEND provision (including a focus on those at SEN support level / those without EHC plans) both in schools and colleges, and in employment-related area-based support. This will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Support to schools and colleges</b> that can be delivered flexibly, and accessed locally or regionally, to upskill the workforce in mainstream and special schools and colleges so they can understand and meet the presenting needs of children and young people in their classes / courses and support them into adulthood and paid work.</li> <li><b>2. Easily accessible online</b> strategies, training, materials, research, what</li> </ol>	<p>order to deliver high quality provision for children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>To help schools and colleges engage and work with parents and young people to improve confidence in support for those with SEND without EHC plans.</p> <p>To increase awareness (learners, parents and teaching staff) of pathways into employment and help local agencies to work with education providers and employers to support transition into and sustaining of employment.</p>	<p>EHC plans, and a reduction of the number of pupils and students requiring an EHCP to access the support they need.</p> <p>Teachers and college staff and other supporting expert staff (eg job coaches) know how they can access local or regional support, training and advice in relation to the specific needs of their pupils and students, leading to less reliance on SENCOs, who can then focus on strategic SEN leadership.</p> <p>Parents have confidence that mainstream schools and colleges can meet their child’s need leading to fewer EHCP applications and fewer complaints and appeals to LAs.</p> <p>Supported Internship/employer forum coverage to extend across England, with a diverse range of employers engaged leading to an increased number of young people who had EHC plans who are in sustainable employment 6 months post-transition.</p>	
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<p>works interventions, and networking forums.</p> <p><b>3. A training/consultancy strategy or framework</b> to ensure the training and consultancy offer addresses the needs of school and college staff and meets the Department's CPD standards. It should include autism specific training across all settings in response to the Government's upcoming Autism Strategy.</p> <p><b>4. The development of networks</b> between education providers, specialist organisations and SEN experts to help schools and colleges access specialist expertise at the point of need.</p> <p><b>5. Support for transition into employment</b> in different labour market contexts, focused on paid work. This</p>			
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should include employer network forums being established to share information and join up approaches, and increasing the use and success of supported internships.			
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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.

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 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020 and emailed to:

Adam Green Commercial Practitioner - Category Manager  
[CommercialQueries.SCMD@education.gov.uk](mailto: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.</p> <p>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>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 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>[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 scope, scale and complexity

<p>Do you believe a combined contract of this scale is workable? Would competition increase if it were broken down into smaller constituent parts? If so, how would you suggest breaking it down?</p> <p>Do you think the scope should be wider to include all childcare and education providers across the 0-25 age range?</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 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 and that the outcomes are measurable?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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### 3.2.8 Scope

<p>Do you think the proposed content covers the broad range of activity needed to improve SEND provision in schools and colleges, with better support available to young people with SEND to secure sustained employment?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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### 3.2.9 Prioritisation

<p>What information would you need from the Department to enable you to identify and prioritise the training needs of schools and colleges?</p>	<p>[no max word count]</p>
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### 3.2.10 Capacity and expertise

<p>Do you have the capacity and expertise to successfully manage this potential opportunity?</p> <p>Do you have a strong regional presence or the infrastructure to quickly create one?</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 provide it here 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](http://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).

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