**Contract 6: Support for children and young people with autism**

**Reference:** CSEC (SEND) 17-18/06: Support for children and young people with autism

**Title:** Contract to improve support and inclusion of children and young people with autism.

**Contact Details**:

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**Background and description of the services required**

On 1 September 2014, Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 took effect, offering simpler, improved and more consistent help for children and young people in England with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The new system is:

* replacing statements of SEN and learning disability assessments with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans - setting out in one place all the support families will receive;
* requiring councils to publish a ‘local offer’ showing the support available in the area to all children and young people who have disabilities or SEN;
* requiring better co-operation between councils and health services to make sure services for children and young people with SEN and disabilities are jointly planned and commissioned;
* giving parents and young people with EHC plans the offer of a personal budget;
* introducing mediation for disputes; and
* introducing a legal right for children and young people with an EHC plan to express a preference for state academies, free schools and further education colleges.

On 26 January 2016, the Children’s Minister Edward Timpson, announced a package of additional support for implementation of the SEND reforms in England during 2016-17. This included:

* £35.8 million in [implementation funding for local authorities in 2016 to 2017](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-reform-funding-for-local-authorities-2016-to-2017), recognising the additional duties placed on them as a result of the transition to EHC plans
* £27.3 million for the [Family Fund Trust](http://www.familyfund.org.uk/) to support low income families with disabled children
* £15 million to fund the [independent supporters programme](http://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/independentsupport), helping to support families and young people to navigate the system, and creating positive experiences for them
* £2.3 million for [Parent Carer Forums](http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/), which bring parents together to provide invaluable support and advice for families

To complement this programme of delivery support, the Government is now seeking applications for a new contract in 2017-18 to increase awareness and understanding of autism among education staff in early years settings, schools and colleges in order to improve inclusion, support children and young people with autism in transitions and to help them achieve better outcomes.

Some of the key requirements for the contract are provided at Annex A. Further information is contained within the Invitation to Tender documentation. To request a copy of the documentation, please e mail the contracts mailbox at: Contracts2017-18.SEND@education.gov.uk, quoting the contract title and reference number. In the subject line of your e mail, please include the words ‘Request for ITT documentation’.

**Estimated Contract Start Date (subject to change): 1 April 2017**

**Contract End Date: 31 March 2018**

**Estimated value or range of values**:

The maximum estimated value of this contract is up to £750,000 inclusive of VAT.

**Deadline for receipt of tenders (time and date)**:

Three hard copies of all completed tenders must be received by Angela Overington no later than 10.00am on Monday 30 January 2017 at:

The Department for Education

0-25 SEND Unit

Level 1, Sanctuary Buildings

Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

An electronic PDF version must also be submitted no later than 10.00am on

Monday 30 January 2017 to the contracts mailbox at:

Contracts2017-18.SEND@education.gov.uk

**Attachments**

At Annex A are some of the key contract requirements for this tender.

**Whether suitable for SMEs**: Yes

**Whether suitable for VCS**: Yes

**Any other info**:

There may be an option to extend this contract for up to two years depending on the contractor’s performance, the availability of funds and an ongoing need for the services provided.

**The estimated date for award is Tuesday 21 March 2017.**

**Annex A: Key Contract Requirements**

**Contract 06: CSEC (SEND)16-17/06: SUPPORT for children and young people with autism**

**The purpose of this contract is to:** Increase awareness and understanding of autism among education staff in early years settings, schools and colleges in order to improve support and inclusion of children and young people with autism, to support them in transitions and to help them achieve better outcomes. We believe investment in continuing Professional development (CPD) and wider capacity-building can secure very real improvement in both the educational experiences and outcomes of children and young people with autism.

This contract aims to build upon work which has previously been carried out to:

* develop the competence and skills of early years settings, schools, colleges and other staff in providing for children with autism
* develop standards for self-evaluation
* support parents and professionals to prevent the exclusion of children and young people with autism
* design and deliver a cost-effective strategy for disseminating the resources produced
* support a panel of young people to provide input to all the strands of work in this programme, and to
* develop new work on exam accommodations available to pupils with autism for schools, teachers and exam officers.

The Department is looking for innovative and creative proposals. We would expect bids to include proposals which, as a minimum:

* support the effective provision of good quality training for early years, school, college and other staff
* are based on widely-recognised principles of good practice in autism provision and training
* play a key role in maintaining momentum on the spreading of knowledge and understanding of, and training in, autism
* develop a revenue stream from as many of the products created as possible, and
* involve parents and autistic young people in the work carried out.

We recommend the supplier builds upon work or uses materials developed by previous contracts in this area, including the Autism Education Trust in partnership with the National Autism Society and Ambitious About Autism.

Bidders will need to fulfil the following requirements:

* Contract Requirement 1: To have a good knowledge and understanding of autism and the sector
* Contract Requirement 2: To develop and run a package of autism training programmes for staff in education settings
* Contract requirement 3: To support parents and professionals to prevent the exclusion of children and young people with autism.
* Contract requirement 4: To develop a pilot to deliver training to social workers
* Contract requirement 5: To support a panel of young people to provide input to all the strands of work in this programme.
* Contract Requirement 6: To develop and trial specific guidance for schools, teachers and exam officers on exam accommodations available to pupils with autism
* Contract requirement 7: To develop and maintain a progression framework to track pupil outcomes
* Contract requirement 8: To design and deliver cost-effective methods of disseminating the resources produced under this contract
* Contract requirement 9: Quality assurance and programme evaluation
* Contract requirement 10: Security of Data
* Contract requirement 11: Overall delivery and project management
* Contract requirement 12: Costs and value for money

**1.1 Contract Requirement 1 – To have a good knowledge and understanding of autism and the sector**

A good knowledge and understanding of autism and how it affects children and young people, as well as strategies that can be used to help them learn, are vital to this contract.

The successful bidder must have a good understanding of autism policy, national and international activity, education and practice and the evidence which supports it. The successful bidder must have a good knowledge of the statutory duties under the SEND Code of Practice that apply to education settings. The successful bidder will also demonstrate the ability to translate such information into practical advice for practitioners.

The successful bidder must have a good understanding of early years, school and post-16 settings and their capacity to buy in programmes and services. They must demonstrate their knowledge of the needs of early years providers, schools, Further Education (FE) colleges, local authorities and others and understand which are the most suitable and best performing products and support to offer. The successful bidder must have a good understanding of what training material and information is already available to practitioners and of work which has previously been done in this area.

We envisage that the successful bidder will:

* have wide acceptance amongst the autism sector as a source of professional guidance and training which is impartial and not wedded to any one particular approach
* be able to speak on behalf of the autism education community
* be able to develop good quality training and information materials which are attractive to early years, school, college and other staff, local authority professionals, parents and young people, and
* be able to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

It is important that any materials that are developed or used in fulfilling this contract meet the needs of practitioners, parents and young people. Bidders should set out how they envisage working with others, the types of organisation from whom they will seek support and materials, and how they will ensure they are fit for purpose.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* Their understanding of autism, how it affects children and young people and the strategies that can be used to support them in their learning
* Their understanding of the SEND Code of Practice and the statutory duties placed on early years settings, schools and colleges
* Their understanding of the current context of autism education provision in terms of national and international activity and schools’ and others’ capacity to buy-in programmes and services
* Their understanding of what training material and information is already available to practitioners and work which has previously been done in this area
* Their reputation amongst the autism sector as a source of professional guidance and training
* Their experience of developing good quality training materials and sharing knowledge and expertise
* How they will engage with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure the needs of autism education practitioners are being met, and
* How contributions and materials from experts in the sector will be harnessed.

**1.2 Contract Requirement 2 – Develop and run a package of autism training programmes for staff in education settings**

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Develop and run regional training hubs that offer autism training programmes for the early years, school and post-16 sectors, especially focusing on early years and post-16, where take-up has previously been slower. For post-16 this include a focus on supporting the transition between school and post-16 education.
* Provide tiered training: awareness-raising for all those who will meet children and young people with autism; good practice training to enhance the practice of staff working directly with children and young people with autism; and leading good practice training for those who lead or train other staff and have responsibility for the development of good autism practice.
* Ensure the hubs run on a model that can become self-sustaining.
* Establish regional networks that promote the training, standards and competency framework (see below) so that schools can share issues and strategies and can support and learn from each other.
* Develop an online resource on how education settings can identify and meet the particular needs of girls with autism.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* How they will build on good practice and complement existing provision
* How support will be differentiated between early years providers, schools, colleges, local authorities, and others, including looking at regional and local differences
* How support will be provided and accessed and how they will ensure they reach their target audience
* How they will develop tiered autism training programmes for the early years, school and post-16 sectors, being mindful of value for money
* How they will establish regional networks and regional hubs
* How they will develop an online resource to help meet the needs of girls with autism

**1.3 – Contract requirement 3: Supporting parents and professionals to prevent the exclusion of children and young people with autism.**

Children and young people with autism are more likely than other pupils to be excluded from school or college.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Provide an information and advice service to parents and education professionals to help support children who are at risk of exclusion to stay in school, supporting 1,400 parents per year.
* Develop resources to help parents understand their rights, and school governors to understand their duties, under the Equality Act 2010.
* Produce a training module on the different behaviours exhibited by children and young people with autism at home and at school, their potential to refuse school attendance and the impact of the school day on home life.
* Produce a resource on successful reintegration of pupils following exclusion.
* Produce a resource for practitioners for children and young people who have autism and require additional support but do not meet the criteria for an Education, Health and Care plan (those on School Support).

The bidder should demonstrate:

* Their understanding of the reasons why children with autism are often excluded from school or college
* Their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and how it applies to schools and colleges
* How they plan to provide an information and advice service to parents and education professionals
* How they plan to produce the required resources and training modules to support the prevention of exclusions

**1.4 – Contract requirement 4: Develop a pilot to deliver training to social workers**

Around 60% of looked after children have SEND and 13% of all children in need have a disability (50,800 out of 391,000). Of this group, 30.5% have autism. In addition, many families where there is a child with autism are supported by social workers.

We want to ensure social workers have access to an offer of continuing professional development (CPD) on working with children and young people with autism and their families. Some social workers could benefit from training on the specific issues children with autism face and how to support their particular needs and want to introduce a pilot to train social workers.

We would therefore like the successful bidder to:

* Scope and run a pilot to trial optional CPD training on working with children and young people with autism and their families, for social workers across a number of local authorities, including in particular possible ‘train the trainer’ approaches.
* Review current materials and/or develop new materials to ensure they are relevant and accessible to social workers.
* Trial the approach with a minimum of 100 social worker participants, working with the Department for Education to agree appropriate targeting depending on the proposed model.
* Promote and publicise the trial to ensure take-up.
* Engage with key sector organisations and social workers when developing materials and the model, whilst testing out the model and when promoting the trial.
* Ensure the trial is offering value for money and is evaluated effectively. The bidder would produce a report on recommendations to inform future policy.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* How they plan to develop a model of CPD training for social workers on how to work with children and young people and their families and how this aligns with the training to education staff
* How they plan to develop materials that are relevant and accessible to social workers
* How they plan to promote the training programme and communicate with users
* How they plan to engage with key sector organisations and social workers when developing and delivering the trial
* How they will measure the success of the trial, evaluate its effectiveness and provide recommendations.

**1.5 – Contract requirement 5: Support a panel of young people to provide input to all the strands of work in this programme.**

It is important that young people are involved in and influence all strands of this programme.

We would like the successful bidder to set up and facilitate a panel of young people to input into the programme of work.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* How they plan to set up the panel of young people
* How they plan to involve the panel in the development of each strand of work

**1.6 Contract Requirement 6 – Development and trialling of specific guidance on exam accommodations available to pupils with autism for schools, teachers and exam officers.**

Exams and the environment in which they are held can cause pupils with autism to experience particular difficulties that cannot always be alleviated by the standard adjustments such as writing aids or extra time. The conditions of the exam room itself and the way exam questions are written can be problematic for them.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Develop specific guidance on exam accommodations available to pupils with autism for education providers, teachers and exam officers. This might include the use of an enhanced pupil profile that details the exam accommodations the pupil needs.
* Look at examples of mathematics and English exam papers to identify question structures, alternative wording and ways of testing knowledge that create barriers for pupils with autism and explore how those barriers can be removed, without reducing the subject challenge involved.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* Their understanding of challenges faced by pupils with autism when sitting exams.
* How they will engage with relevant organisations such as exam boards, Ofqual and the Exam Officers Association to develop the guidance and suggest alternative ways of structuring and wording questions, and how they intend to use this to effect change in the system.

**1.7 Contract Requirement 7 – Integrate the use of self-evaluation standards with accreditation processes, in order to align internal and external quality assurance processes. Develop and maintain a progression framework to track pupil outcomes.**

The contractor must have a good understanding of current standards for self-evaluation and any well-established accreditation programmes. We would like the successful bidder to:

* Develop a set of self-evaluation standards and a competency framework for early years, school and post-16 providers, to enable settings to audit their practice and skills and develop action plans to identify gaps and training needs.
* Align standards with well-established accreditation programmes so that the use of the standards becomes a good foundation from which organisations can pursue accreditation, if required.
* Consult with Ofsted to ensure that the resulting standards and processes align with inspection requirements, where possible.
* Develop and maintain a progression framework to track outcomes for pupils with autism and adapt it for use in other contexts, such as the early years and post-16 phase.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* Their understanding of current standards for self-evaluation and accreditation programmes
* How they will align self-evaluation standards with accreditation programmes
* How they will consult with Ofsted to ensure that standards and processes align with inspection requirements

**1.8 – Contract requirement 8:** **Provide access for families and education professionals to the resources produced under this contract**

It is important that resources produced under this contract are easily available to the families and education professionals they are aimed at.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Develop a communications strategy and delivery mechanisms to ensure that the resources produced under this contract are available to families and education professionals.
* Develop a means of signposting families and education professionals to the training programmes and further information.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* How they plan to develop a communication strategy and delivery mechanisms for resources.
* How they plan to signpost families and professionals to the training and further information.

**1.9 – Contract requirement 9:** **Quality Assurance and Programme Evaluation.**

It is important that the programme is quality assured and evaluated and that feedback is incorporated in delivery.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Undertake quality assurance monitoring and commission an independent evaluation of the programme, its delivery, outcomes and impact
* Develop and maintain electronic systems for the collection, management and presentation of key programme statistical data
* Undertake periodic review and update of all programme content to ensure it is reflective of the latest research and wider environment

The bidder should demonstrate:

* How they will evaluate their effectiveness and measure the impact of activities under each contract requirement
* How they plan to quality assure and monitor the programme
* How they plan to ensure the programme content is reflective of the latest research and wider environment

**1.10 – Contract requirement 10:** **Security of Data**

Please submit a security plan that explains how you will ensure that departmental or personal data will be protected.

**1.11 – Contract requirement 11: Overall delivery and project management**

Bidders should describe the staffing and management structure of the team required to deliver the contract and how they plan to engage with representatives from across the sector, academics, practitioners, parents and autistic children.

Bidders should think about any specific risks and issues they foresee. They should describe what contingencies and countermeasures they might put in place to mitigate these risks. They should also describe the structures and governance arrangements required to keep oversight of the scheme and proposed reporting mechanisms and measures.

Bidders should detail:

* proposed staffing and management structure (if bidding as a consortium, including the responsibilities of different consortium members and how they will work together, including who leads the consortium)
* key staff and their roles (CVs can be attached as an annex)
* how they will co-ordinate the different strands of work within the contract to provide a coherent package of support
* how they plan to engage with representatives from across the sector, academics, practitioners, parents and autistic children
* specific risks or issues in delivering the proposal and describe the contingencies they would put in place to mitigate them
* how the independence and impartiality of any advice will be maintained, particularly to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.
* key performance indicators for the contract: what they would look like, examples of what they might include and how the contract’s success will be measured
* how the Department for Education will be provided with management and performance information, including co-ordinated reporting to show the support provided to local authorities and their partners across all strands of the contract (whether or not provided as a consortium) and how links will be maintained with the Department for Education, including who would provide day-to-day contact; and
* how the overall contract will be managed to ensure coordination and achieve economies of scale (whether or not provided as a consortium), including realistic project management arrangements and a high level project/delivery plan.

Bidders will be expected to demonstrate how the skills and experience of key staff will ensure the successful delivery of the contract.

The bidder should provide details of the proposed staffing structure that will be employed to deliver the outcomes, including key roles identified to lead the activity as well as other roles to support delivery.

The bidder should indicate: whether staff are already in place, or would need to be recruited, what they will be responsible for, how much time they are expected to dedicate to the activity (on a Full Time Equivalent basis) and how, if at all, this will change during the contract.

**1.12 Contract requirement 12: Costs and value for money**

The Department expects to award a contract to run for one year commencing 1 April 2017 and ending on 31 March 2018.

The proposed budget will be £750,000 over the one-year period. This funding is inclusive of all VAT that may be chargeable.

The contract may be extended for up to two years should it continue to align with Government priorities and should funding be available.

The scope of this contract may be extended up to a further value of 30% of the contract. Any changes, including the revised costs, would be agreed with the contractor.

Bidders will need to demonstrate that proposed costs are based on efficient models of delivery and provide good value for public money. You must ensure that all estimated costs are real, auditable and can be justified. Be sure you separately identify and include all expenditure that you expect to incur in relation to proposed activities, i.e. costs associated with:

* overheads i.e. premises/facilities/licences; and
* staffing i.e. management, delivery and administration.

There are restrictions on all paid for communications and marketing activities funded by the Department. You should set out any planned expenditure on these activities with supporting information on the nature of the planned activities.

We would expect quarterly reporting against spending. Please note that the contract is intended to be inclusive of VAT costs and that further amounts will not be available should a vatable supply claim be made at any later stage. No additional costs will be charged to the Department unless agreed with the contract manager prior to expenditure.

It is the responsibility of tenderers to check the VAT position with HMRC before submitting a bid.

Payments of costs to the supplier will be made quarterly by BACS transfer following receipt of a valid invoice.

Bidders should detail:

* a complete breakdown of all costs for the year i.e. 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018, including clear costs for all overheads, including recruitment, accommodation, etc and (if applicable) what VAT will be charged. Where bidders are intending to charge VAT this should be clearly set out in the costs breakdown, including what rate of VAT and an estimate of the total cost of VAT to be charged for the work in question.
* as a memorandum, any planned expenditure on communications and marketing activities and information on the nature of the planned activities
* accounting and finance provisions; and
* how the overall contract will be managed to ensure co-ordination and achieve economies of scale (whether or not provided as a consortium).