**Contract reference**: CSEC (SEND)16-17/02

**Contract title:** Workforce support – schools

**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 2016-17 to support the schools workforce.

A summary of key requirements for this contract is provided at Annex A to this document. Further information is contained within the Invitation to Tender documentation.

To request a copy of the documentation, please e mail the contracts mailbox at: SENDcontracts2016-17@education.gsi.gov.uk, quoting the contract title and reference number above. In the subject line of your e mail, please include the words ‘Request for ITT documentation’.

**Estimated Contract Start Dates (subject to change): 9 May 2016**

**Contract End Dates:** 31 March 2017

**Estimated value or range of values**:

The maximum estimated value of the contract covered by this notification is up to £850k 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 31 March 2016 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

31 March 2016 to the contracts mailbox at:

**Contracts2016-17.SEND@education.gsi.gov.uk**.

Late tenders will not be considered.

**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 a second year depending on the contractor’s performance, the availability of funds and an ongoing need for the services provided.

**The estimated date for award is** 5 May 2016.

**Annex A: Key Contract Requirements**

**Contract 02: CSEC (SEND)16-17/02: Schools Workforce**

We want all phases and types of schools to be able to identify special educational needs and promptly make suitable provision to meet those needs. This is just as important for children and young people in receipt of SEN support as it is for those who have an EHC plan. Meeting children’s special educational needs includes having a strong focus on outcomes and preparing them for adulthood, and to be informed by a clear understanding of effective practice.

Schools have become increasingly autonomous and the system for supporting improvement is increasingly led by schools themselves. To improve in this changing system, schools need to be able to access school-to-school support and tap into sources of SEND sector expertise and system leadership. An effective approach in the classroom depends on effective systems across the school, and on strong and inclusive leadership. Schools need to share innovation and ensure they embed good SEND practice across all elements of school practice and policy – creating a truly inclusive environment. They also need to be able to access good quality and robust evidence about what works for all children with SEND and for particular groups.

1. **Contract requirement 1: supporting schools to identify SEND and access the right support**

School staff need to be able to accurately identify special educational needs. This should happen as early as possible in a pupil’s school career but, as some pupils’ needs will be missed early on, and others will emerge over time, staff working in all phases need to be able to identify special educational needs effectively. Once a pupil’s needs have been identified, staff need to be able to know how to put in place good provision and where necessary how to access the right support.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Support schools of all phases and all types to better identify SEND.
* Support schools to feel skilled and confident in accessing and putting in place the right support; including working with parents and pupils to make these decisions.
* Understand: the challenges schools face in delivering support for children with SEND; the aims of the SEND reforms; what works in schools in supporting those with SEND; the benefits of, and how to deliver, early intervention; and, the vital role of parents and pupils in determining the right support.
* Help schools access the practical support they need to identify SEN indicators, and deliver SEN support through the graduated response.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* How they would support schools to better identify SEN.
* How they would support schools to understand their roles and responsibilities and where they can find the right provisions.
* They understand the evidence from the first 18 months of the SEN reforms, and explain how they will use this to understand the potential gaps in support for schools.
* How they will help schools to review how the progress of pupils with SEND is monitored and appropriate targets set.
* Their understanding of early identification and the SEN indicators schools need to understand to assess whether a pupil has a SEN.
* The range and number of schools they would expect to work with, the regions these schools would be in, and how they could develop their approach to have national reach.
* How they would use models of school-to-school support to provide training, sharing of practice and other peer-learning approaches across schools in delivering advice and guidance on SEN support and early identification. We are particularly looking for innovative approaches in this area.

**1.2 Contract requirement 2: supporting the development and sharing of good quality and robust evidence and well-evaluated interventions**

There are a lot of resources and interventions available to schools and deciding which to use can be difficult; especially as the evidence behind each approach can sometimes be unclear or unavailable. Not all effective approaches will have a strong evidence base already, so schools need to be able to use their professional judgement and knowledge of the pupil they are working with and take into account parental preference when deciding what approach to use. For all interventions, but especially those with less clear evidence, schools need the skills to evaluate the interventions they have put in place to know if they are being effective or need revising.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Be aware of what works in relation to high quality teaching for children with SEND, both those on SEN Support, and with EHC plans, and support already available to schools.
* Work with others in the sector to develop and spread the use of interventions which have been identified as having good quality and robust evidence supporting them.
* Support schools to evaluate the quality and impact of interventions they have put in place.
* Be able to critique approaches to SEN support and support schools to make decisions based on the evidence, or an acknowledged lack of evidence.
* When working with others, challenge where evidence seems weak or claims unsubstantiated to encourage the sector to move further towards evidence-based practice.
* Enable SENCOs, school leaders, teachers and other school staff to assess which advice, guidance and support will help to improve pupil outcomes.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* Their understanding of the support available for those with SEN and be able to discern that which has a good evidence base or which is showing promise.
* How they will support schools to evaluate the interventions they have in place.
* How they will support and challenge schools and others in the sector to show they are using, or supporting the development of, evidence-based practice.
* Their understanding of what good SEN support looks like for pupils, and of the graduated approach that teachers are expected to use.
* How they will evaluate their effectiveness and measure their impact
* How they will help schools to consider their deployment of support staff, especially teaching assistants, and the role they play in fostering pupils’ independent learning.
	1. **Contract requirement 3: Partnership working and accessing expertise**

In an increasingly autonomous school system, it is vital that contractors work with the school-led model and engage teaching schools, system leaders, Multi-Academy Trusts and other school-led bodies in delivering support for the SEND reforms to schools.

Contractors also need to be aware of the need to ensure value for money including understanding pressures on school and Local Authority budgets and making the best use of the extensive resources and expertise in the SEND sector.

It is vital that support for schools from specialist agencies and organisations is joined up, and that schools are clear how to engage such support when needed.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Work in the context of an autonomous school sector including work with teaching schools and multi-academy trusts.
* Make any products developed as part of the contact freely and publically available to all.
* Work openly with other organisations, including those with contracts with the DfE and Departmental delivery partners, who have SEND expertise.
* Enable schools to more effectively commission external expertise where needed, and understand the Local Authority joint commissioning role.
* Ensure that special schools work collaboratively with mainstream and other settings to develop and share expertise and approaches.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* Their understanding of the expertise that exists for schools to draw on in supporting pupils with SEND, and of the local authority joint commissioning role.
* Their understanding of the current school-led system, and how they would harness the support of system leaders, teaching school alliances, multi-academy trusts and others in delivering support to schools.
* Their understanding of wider challenges facing schools in terms of changes to school policies (for example in regards to curriculum and assessment) and how this may impact on successful delivery of the SEND reforms.
* How they will work with other organisations (including departmental delivery partners and organisations with SEND expertise) which are supporting the school workforce, and their plans for making any products developed as part of the contract freely and publically available to all.
	1. **Contract requirement 4: inclusive schools which prepare young people for adulthood**

Leaders need to be able to articulate their vision for pupils with SEND, and create an inclusive environment which prepares all pupils for life beyond school. Chapter 8 of the SEND Code of Practice is clear that Preparing for Adulthood should feature in EHC plan reviews from Year 9, ensuring that outcomes place a firm emphasis on preparing the pupil for life outside of education. Many post-16 providers already have a strong emphasis on PfA within study programmes, and it is important that schools and post-16 providers are able to work together on this agenda. Pupils without EHC plans but who are identified as needing SEN support also need to be supported to plan their transition into adult life.

It is essential that school leaders are able to critique their own policies and procedures in relation to all pupils with SEND, keep them under review and commit to continuous improvement of them. SEND must be seen as integral to all school practices and policies.

**We would like successful bidders to:**

* Develop an approach which helps school leaders to take a strategic overview of their provision for pupils with SEND, and to identify areas for improvement, as well as actions which could be taken.
* Assess and support schools to improve: the extent to which schools usefully cover the PfA outcomes in Y9 reviews and how these are embedded in the EHC plan going forward; and, how they are preparing all pupils with identified SEN for adult life.
* Enable mainstream, special schools and post-16 providers to share good practice in relation to Preparing for Adulthood
* Support schools to integrate SEN reforms and the delivery of wider schools policies – for example, changes to curriculum and assessment.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* How they will work with school leaders in developing an approach which enables them to take a strategic overview of their SEND provision.
* How they will work with school leaders to review how well they are delivering effective SEND practice and how well their procedures and practices support all pupils with SEND to progress.
* Their knowledge of Preparation for Adulthood, and why it is important for schools to include PfA as part of their support for pupils with SEND.
* How they would work with schools to assess how PfA is being included within the Year 9 review and embedded within approaches to pupils going forwards from that review.
* How they would review the effectiveness of careers advice being given to all pupils with SEND, building on existing evidence in this area, and make recommendations for improvements.
* How they would enable mainstream and special schools and post-16 providers to work together to share best practice in relation to PfA, and build up local knowledge of what works.
* How they will support schools to integrate SEND reforms and other schools policies.