**SUPPORTING STRATEGIC PARTICIPATION BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) AND PARENTS**

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:

* has replaced 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;
* requires councils to publish a ‘local offer’ showing the support they expect to be available in the area to all children and young people who have disabilities or SEN;
* requires better co-operation between councils and health services to make sure that services for children and young people with SEN and disabilities are jointly planned and commissioned;
* gives parents and young people with EHC plans the offer of a personal budget;
* has introduced mediation for disputes; and
* has introduced 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 30 November 2017 the Minister for Children and Families, Robert Goodwill, announced a package of additional support for embedding the SEND reforms in England during 2018-19. This included:

* £29 million to support councils and their local partners with implementation of the reforms;
* £9.7 million to establish local supported internship forums; creating work placements for young people with SEND and training job coaches, who are vital to the success of supporting those with learning difficulties into paid work; and
* £4.6 million for Parent Carer Forums, which bring parents together with local decision-makers and help to provide them with a voice in the process.

To complement this programme of ongoing delivery support, the Government is now seeking applications for a new contract in 2018-19 and 2019-20 to

* provide support to local parent groups (Parent Carer Forums), and their nationally representative body (the National Network of Parent Carer Forums or NNPCF), in influencing local SEND policy and service delivery through improved parental participation;
* support the establishment of new Parent Carer Forums in areas where existing Forums have closed;
* further develop capacity in local areas to improve participation by children and young people in local SEND policy service and delivery; and
* provide a national forum for young people with SEND to influence Government policy.

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: Contracts2018-19.SEND@education.gov.uk, quoting the contract reference number, LDSG (SEND) 18-19/02. In the subject line of your e mail, please include the words ‘Request for ITT documentation’.

**Contract Start Date: 2 April 2018**

**Contract End Date: 31 March 2020**

**Estimated value or range of values**:

The estimated value of this contract is up to £1.9m in 2018-19; and up to £1.9m in 2019-20. Funding is inclusive of all VAT that may be chargeable.

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

Three hard copies of all completed tenders must be received by Angela Overington no later than 10.00am on 29 January 2018 at:

The Department for Education

0-25 SEND Unit

Level 2, Sanctuary Buildings

Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

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

29 January 2018 to the contracts mailbox at:

Contracts2018-19.SEND@education.gov.uk

There may be an option to extend this contract for up to two further 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 5 March 2018.**

**Annex A: Key Requirements For The Contract**

**1.1 Contract Requirement 1 – Provide support to 152 local Parent Carer Forums to enable them to provide effective strategic input into local and national SEND policy and delivery**. This includes defining policy, implementing and reviewing arrangements by:

* + Supporting the management of the £2.3m PCF grant programme – including quality assurance, monitoring and auditing
	+ Developing and delivering an effective training programme for Forums, including support to help them to reach ‘hard to reach’ communities and ensure they are representative of their local area;
	+ Providing networking, mutual support, good practice sharing opportunities;
	+ Ensure they provide appropriate support to the NNPCF, to enable it to effectively to work closely with national Government and provide leadership to local Forums

The bidder should demonstrate:

* strong knowledge and understanding parent participation in a SEND context, including the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice
* that they have first-hand experience of working with parents, particularly in the context of strategic parent participation
* examples of approaches they have employed that have led to improvements in local parental participation, including case studies, training and other support offered
* that they have sound proposals for ensuring Parent Carer Forums can extend their reach into their local communities and enhance their membership
* that they are able to manage a grant programme on this scale, as agents for the Department for Education – including sound financial management, understanding risks, tackling and preventing fraud of organisations which offer families who have children and young people with SEND information, advice and support
* that they, working in coproduction with the NNPCF, can provide support to the NNPCF to enable it to offer leadership to local Forums and so that it can, independently, seek to influence Government policy.

**1.2 Contract Requirement 2 – Ensure that parent participation activity is promoted and developed in areas where Forums cease operating or are struggling to operate effectively.**

It is critical that effective parental participation exists in every area. The successful bidder will be required to have suitably qualified resources in place to support Forums who may be struggling to maintain effective local arrangements, to kick-start activity in the event that an existing Forum ceases to exist, and to help Forums that are just starting out to develop robust and sustainable arrangements. The bidder should have processes in place to flag up ‘early warning’ signs so they can react quickly and effectively to ensure local participation momentum is not lost, and that issues that severely impact a Forum’s ability to continue to operate effectively are addressed and, as far as possible, resolved successfully.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* A clear process for ensuring that parental participation is maintained, or recovered, in the event that a Forum ceases to exist, or where Forums are struggling to maintain effective participation arrangements. Ideally, this would be backed up by real life case studies
* An effective ‘early warning’ system that allows Forums to reach out to them before issues become critical. Again, if possible, backed up by one or two case studies
* That they have the expertise, or can quickly recruit for it, to provide the kind of support local areas will need to develop and repair local participation arrangements, and to prevent them from reaching a crisis point.

**1.3 Contract requirement 3: Maintain a national Young People’s group which can provide input into national policy and make recommendations for future policy direction.**

The Government currently funds a national group of young people with SEND to offer advice and comment on national SEND policy - the FLARE Group, established in 2016. We need the successful bidder to maintain this group and consider ways in which it can continue to influence national SEND policy, and to offer advice and support to young people with SEND to enable them to effectively participate in their local areas.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* A track record of working with groups of young people with SEND, in the context of strategic participation
* Innovative proposals for how the group can be developed and supported to further improve their impact.
* Evidence of the effectiveness of similar approaches they have previously taken.

**1.4 Contract requirement 4: Building on existing materials, deliver support to local areas to enable them to put in place effective arrangements for coproduction with, and gathering views from, children and young people.**

The Government has gathered evidence about the state of children and young people’s participation through surveys of local authorities and parent carer forums, and from the Council for Disabled Children and KIDS through the current children and young people’s participation contract. While progress is being made, there is a significant amount of work to be done to get to a point where all local areas in England have at least basic arrangements for ensuring children and young people are effectively involved in the design, delivery and review of local SEND services. Building on existing approaches, and learning gathered through the current contract, we would like the successful bidder to:

* + Continue to raise awareness in local areas about the importance of participation by children and young people
	+ Continue to provide support to local areas to improve participation by children and young people
	+ Continue to develop materials, guidance, training and other tools to support improvements in participation by children and young people

The bidder should demonstrate:

* Innovative and cost effective approaches to raising awareness, among professionals and young people, about the importance of strategic participation by children and young people with SEND – and to be able to provide evidence that the approaches they are proposing would work
* How they would design solutions and packages to support local areas to improve participation, and ensure that these are attractive, affordable, and effective
* Based on existing examples of effective good practice guides and tools, what additional materials would most effectively improve participation and offer best value for money.

**1.5 Contract requirement 5: Improve synergy between parent participation and children and young people’s participation.**

Under existing arrangements, work has already begun to help improve the synergy between parental participation and participation by children and young people. There is more that can be done to allow the considerable learning from parental participation to support the development of participation for children and young people. We recognise that there are a range of different approaches, and that different groups respond to different approaches, we would like the successful bidder to consider how best each of the current programmes can learn from each other, look at common elements and differences and offer innovative proposals for how we might move forward to ensure participation among children, young people and parents can be improved overall.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* A broad understanding of a range of approaches that lead to successful strategic participation by children, young people and parents
* An approach to gathering learning, identifying common themes and differences.

**1.6 Contract requirement 6:** **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 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.

**1.7 Contract requirement 7: Costs and value for money**

The proposed budget will be up to £1.9m in 2018-19; and up to £1.9m in 2019-20. 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.

We will require monthly reporting against spending and achievement of KPIs and quarterly reviews. 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.

The successful bidder is required to ensure that Value for Money is achieved through this contract and wherever possible seek economies of scale.

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.

All payments are to be triggered by the Department’s acceptance of milestone deliverables.   Bidders are required to propose a series of milestone deliverables in their bid.  An invoice for each milestone deliverable – which may actually comprise various goods and services - may be submitted after the Department has communicated its acceptance of that milestone deliverable to the successful contractor.  The payment profile proposed must be spread over the entire contract term, and be fair and reasonable to both the successful contractor and the Department.  No advance payments will be made.  We would expect no more than one invoice a month to be submitted.  The final invoice, to be submitted after the Department’s acceptance of the final milestone deliverable, must be in the region of 10% to 20% of the contract value. The payment profile suggested will be evaluated as part of each bidder’s score in *Contract requirement 7 – costs*.  As part of each proposed milestone deliverable that the Department itself will not directly examine or test, bidders must state what independent evidence they could provide to the Department to demonstrate that they have discharged their contractual obligations successfully.

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 monthly by BACS transfer following receipt of a valid invoice.

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| Bidders should detail:* within their bid a draft table 1 to go in schedule 3 Financials of the contract which will specify the delivery milestones outputs or outcomes together with their associated costs.
* a complete breakdown of all costs for the year i.e.2 April 2018 – 31 March 2020, 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. Please express this information as a draft table 2 to go in schedule 3 Financials of the contract.
* as a memorandum, any planned expenditure on communications and marketing activities and information on the nature of the planned activities
* any KPIs they can offer in respect of the performance of their obligations under the proposed contract and to confirm that they can accept the service levels set out in schedule 4 of the contract, listing any changes they wish to propose to the service levels.
* how the overall contract will be managed to ensure co-ordination and achieve economies of scale (whether or not provided as a consortium).
* Effective accounting and financial governance
* Effective management of potential conflicts of interest
* how value for money will be achieved
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**1.8 Contract requirement 8: Security of data**

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| The bidder should demonstrate:* Their security plan for ensuring that departmental or personal data will be protected
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**1.9 Contract requirement 9: Overall delivery and programme management**

Bidders should describe the staffing and management structure of the team required to deliver the contract.

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 contract and proposed reporting mechanisms and measures.

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| The bidder should demonstrate:* Their proposed staffing and management structures, including key personnel, roles and responsibilities
* Identification of risks or issues with delivering the proposal and how they will be mitigated
* Sufficient, clear and robust plans for delivery of the contract
* An appropriate set of key performance indicators for the contract and information on how the contract’s success will be measured.
* How the bidder will provide co-ordinated reporting to the department
* Realistic project management arrangements
* A high level project/ delivery plan
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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.