**Contract 4: Strategic Reform Partner for SEND**

**Reference:** CSEC (SEND) 17-18/04: Strategic Reform Partner for SEND

**Title:** Contract to provide strategic support to the Department for Education in embedding reforms to the special educational needs and disability (SEND) system.

**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 provide strategic support to the Department for Education in embedding the SEND reforms.

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 £400,000 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 additional 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 04: CSEC (SEND)16-17/04: STRATEGIC REFORM PArtner for send**

The purpose of this contract is to provide strategic support to the Department for Education in implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms. Specifically, we would like the contractor to support culture change around the SEND reforms, particularly in Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, to ensure that they deliver the best possible outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The contractor will do this through:

* Providing expert policy and practice advice and support to the Department for Education and key stakeholders.
* Identifying and promoting positive change and responding to emerging issues.
* Delivering effective, accurate information from emerging evidence and practice to all key audiences.
* Leading on the development of bespoke resources that support and promote best practice to ensure national consistency.
* Ensuring that all partners working on the SEND reform programme across statutory and VCS organisations are clear about their roles and have coordinated access to emerging evidence and policy.
* Bringing together other contract holders appointed to embed the SEND reforms
* Representing the English perspective on SEND as a member of the European Agency.
* Providing leadership to the sector by valuing the roles of all partners in the process, including parents and young people, and ensuring their voice influences every level of practice.

**1.1 Contract Requirement 1 – PROVIDING EXPERT ADVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION**

**Intended impact**:

* DfE policy development and implementation is informed by high-quality expertise on SEND.

Contract bidders will need excellent all round knowledge of the SEND reforms and a proven record of engaging in policy development and implementation support with the SEND sector at all levels.

In year 1 of the contract, we would like the successful bidder to:

1. Provide up to 30 expert staff days to support consolidation of the SEND reforms and respond to developments in related policy areas. Priorities will be agreed throughout the course of the contract but may include a focus on the implications for SEND policy of:
* Social mobility / equality of opportunity
* Joint commissioning
* SEN support
* Early years workforce support
* Changes in Further Education and skills
* Changes to high needs funding
* Outcomes planning
* Role of the local authority
* Other priorities as they arise
1. Provide capacity to bring together stakeholders to discuss key policy and implementation issues. Expenditure will be agreed with the Department in advance but may include any of the following as required:
* venue bookings
* meeting costs
* facilitation
* any additional expenses that arise out of the contract which cannot be covered by the expert staff allocation.
1. Develop, design and disseminate six targeted online resources, each being a maximum of six pages in length, to meet identified needs for advice and information. The focus of these resources would be agreed with the Department for Education.
2. Bring together and manage a cross-sector external SEND Advisory Board made up of key stakeholders (including parents and carers) and delivery partners across education, health and social care, including provision of all secretariat services.
3. Attend regular meetings with Department for Education senior responsible officers to flag emerging issues that require immediate attention and work with the Department to identify solutions.
4. Provide relevant expert staff to contribute to meetings between Departmental policy leads and key external partners (including the Department of Health) to support development of policy areas.

The bidder should demonstrate:

Their knowledge of SEND and the relevant SEND reforms introduced via Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the relevant regulations.

Their understanding of the wider context of the reforms - including changes in education, social care and health policy and challenging environments for local authorities.

Their experience of working collaboratively with government bodies and their agencies to support policy development and implementation.

Their experience of working with the voluntary and community sector to support delivery or implementation of a national policy or service.

Their understanding of the potential gaps in support and how gaps may be filled.

How they will provide a channel to and from government for provision of expert views and evidence on key elements of the SEND reforms and related issues.

How they will collect and promote their own and other good practice resources and case studies for a range of audiences.

How they will work with other providers, contractors and charities that work in this area.

**1.2 Contract Requirement 2 – PROVIDING EXPERT ADVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION ON THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL CARE OF THE SEND REFORMS**

**Intended impacts:**

* Policy development and implementation is informed by high-quality expertise on SEND related to social care.
* Social care practitioners understand their role in relation to delivery of the SEND reforms and have examples of emerging good practice from which to learn.

To achieve the culture change envisaged by the SEND reforms, it is important that policy development and implementation are informed by high-quality expertise related to social care; that social care practitioners understand their role in relation to delivery of the SEND reforms; and that they have examples of emerging good practice from which they can learn.

In year 1 of the contract we would like to the successful bidder to:

1. Provide up to 20 expert staff days to support consolidation of the SEND reforms in the social care sector. Priorities will be agreed throughout the course of the contract but may include a focus on:
* Health and social care pathways for children and young people with complex needs
* Law Commission’s review of section 17 of the Children Act 1989
* Deprivation of Liberty standards
* Residential special schools
* Assessment and Treatment Units
* Safeguarding
* Review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards
* Social work reform
* Children in Care – including how care plan provision for Looked After children aligns with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans
* Short breaks for disabled children – including regulation of holiday schemes
* Other priorities as they arise
1. Carry out targeted communications to local areas, focusing on enhancing reach to social care professionals. Provide quarterly updates to the Department for Education through contract reporting.
2. Develop, design and disseminate six targeted online resources, each being a maximum of six pages in length, to meet identified needs for advice and information in the area of social care. The focus of these resources would be agreed with the Department for Education.

The bidder should demonstrate:

Their experience of working with social care professionals to support delivery or implementation of a national policy or service.

How they will gather feedback, views, opinions and concerns from the social care sector about implementation of the SEND reforms.

How they will build a body of best practice from the ideas and intervention which are emerging and being tried and tested in the sector.

How they will identify which areas of social care policy or practice in relation to the SEND reforms are most in need of their and the Department’s focused attention.

**1.3 Contract Requirement 3 – COMMUNICATIONS**

**Intended impacts:**

* The SEND sector has a single point of contact to access information related to the SEND reforms to support understanding of roles, responsibilities and good practice.
* Funded contract holders are provided with support for joined up approaches and collaborative working.

The Department for Education recognises that improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND relies on clear and consistent messaging, the building of trust at all levels and effective stakeholder engagement.

In year 1 of the contract we would like to the successful bidder to:

1. Carry out targeted development of communications to stakeholders not yet fully engaged with the SEND reforms, focusing on enhancing reach to early years, social care and health professionals.
2. Provide quarterly updates to the Department for Education through contract reporting.
3. Based on needs analysis, widely disseminate on a quarterly basis relevant news, updates, best practice and case studies from partners, the Department for Education and the wider sector. Report on reach of digital communication in quarterly contract reports.
4. Support local authorities and key stakeholders in understanding emerging case law by:
* Providing a case law service so that stakeholders are made aware of emerging Tribunal judgements
* Sharing learning on a quarterly basis through written communications, members’ meetings, training events and other relevant meetings.
1. Add to existing guidance and websites to address any gaps in understanding and know-how. Produce regular good quality communications for sector professionals on key policy developments in the areas of education, health and social care and what these could mean for the professionals working in the system and for young people with SEND.
2. Support dissemination of the delivery support offer and resources provided by the Department for Education’s other delivery support contractors.
3. Report on the dissemination to key stakeholders of resources and materials supporting the SEND reforms, including those produced by the Department’s other delivery support contractors.

The bidder should demonstrate:

How they will gather feedback, views, opinions and concerns from key stakeholders, including parents and children and young people.

How they will engage busy professionals and build a body of best practice from the ideas and interventions which are emerging and being tried and tested in the sector.

How they will identify which areas of policy or practice are most in need of their and the Department’s focused communications.

How they will root out sources of incorrect information and reiterate key messages and emerging case law to bring clarity and understanding.

How they will promote resources, materials practice guides and reports and training packs – introducing new ways of communicating alongside tried and tested methods.

In line with the Government’s commitment to efficiency controls and restrictions on paid-for communications, how they will take a low-cost, no-cost approach to achieving the communications objectives set out in this Invitation to Tender.

How they will assess the impact of communications activity.

**1.4 – Contract requirement 4 – FEEDBACK FROM THE Voluntary and Community Sector**

**Intended impact:**

* The Department enjoys a productive relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector which supports the implementation of the SEND reforms. The Voluntary and Community Sector feels confident raising issues with departmental officials.

A key role for the successful contractor will be to collect and channel feedback from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) about how the reforms are being delivered, including any quality issues.

We would like the successful bidder to:

1. Support the Department for Education’s communication and engagement with the VCS by:
* providing a route for VCS organisations to share intelligence and feedback regarding engagement and delivery of reforms to the Department
* providing 1:1 support to VCS organisations on a responsive basis to address strategic concerns related to the reforms and prevent escalation to the Department where it is not necessary
* organising speaking opportunities forDepartment for Education officials at VCS events
* supporting Department for Education officials in preparing for events and meetings with the VCS
* supporting Department for Education officials in responding to concerns from the VCS as they arise.
1. Gather intelligence from across the VCS sector and generate advice and feedback on quality assurance measures and issues emerging.
2. Bring together the Department’s other delivery contractors on a termly basis to support improved coordination and communication across their work strands.

The bidder should demonstrate:

How they will ensure strong working relationships and the active participation of the Voluntary and Community Sectors.

How they will seek out and report on concerns about implementation or quality issues that are raised by the Voluntary and Community Sectors.

How they will ensure joined up working and communications across the delivery contractors.

How they will support dissemination of the delivery support offer and resources provided by the Department for Education’s delivery support contractors.

How they will clarify lines of communication, roles and responsibilities across the various delivery partners.

How they will clarify high level messages, aims and objectives that all delivery contractors can agree and work towards.

**1.5 – Contract requirement 5 – European Agency Work**

**Intended impact:**

* Key learning regarding emerging practice in Europe is shared with policy and practice leads and the English perspective is shared across Europe.

The Department for Education is a member of the European Agency for SEN and Inclusive Education, representing UK (England). The Agency is not a European Union body and does not require its members to be a part of the EU.

UK (England‘s) membership of the Agency is reviewed on an annual basis and currently runs from January to December 2017. Further information about the agency is available at <https://www.european-agency.org/>.

Between 1 April 2017 and 30 December 2017, we would like the contractor to:

* Represent the English perspective in Europe and collect and disseminate evidence of emerging practice in support of SEN and disability elsewhere in Europe
* Carry out the role of national coordinator for UK (England)
* Prepare for and attend up to four European Agency meetings (three days each)
* Prepare for and attend the Annual Five Nations meeting
* Provide best advice to the European Agency as required
* Deliver two articles per year on SEND developments across Europe, shared through trade press
* Advise the Department on participation in European Agency projects and share minutes of European Agency meetings.

We would expect the contractor to fulfil a similar role between 1 January 2018 and 31 March 2018, subject to separate decisions on continued membership of the European Agency.

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| The bidder should demonstrate:Their international expertise on issues of SEND policy and practice.Their capacity to identify a suitable lead officer to carry out work at this level.  |

**1.6 – Contract requirement 6 Overall delivery and project management**

**Intended impact:**

* A single point of contact, accurate reporting and smooth operating of the delivery of the contract against KPIs. Risks are identified and managed and a robust exit strategy to support sustainability is developed.

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 scheme and proposed reporting mechanisms and measures.

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.

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, particularly regarding key cross-cutting themes including: local offer, co-ordinated assessment and EHC plans, focusing on outcomes, personal budgets, joint commissioning, preparation for adulthood and participation of children, young people and parents

Demonstrate that they have a detailed understanding of the processes and systems affecting disabled children and young people, and those with SEN, including a good working knowledge of the SEND reforms

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.

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

**Intended impacts:**

* Budgets are managed efficiently, value for money is achieved and accurate records are kept.

The Department expects to award a contract to run for one year commencing 1 April 2017 with the possibility of two further one year extensions depending on performance, the availability of funds and an ongoing need for the services provided.

The proposed budget will be up to £400,000 in year one of the contract. This funding is inclusive of all VAT that may be chargeable. Funding for any subsequent years would be subject to negotiation.

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 first year of the contract, i.e. 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018. This should include clear costs for all overheads such as 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).

**1.8 – Contract requirement 8 – SECURITY OF DATA**

**Intended impact:**

* Departmental or personal data is protected.

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