**What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care**

**Description and additional information**

The new What Works Centre (WWC) for Children’s Social Care will focus on improving outcomes for children who are at risk of, or suffering from, abuse and/or neglect. It will identify the most effective interventions and practice systems and support their implementation by practitioners and decision makers. Its goal will be to improve outcomes for children and their families by developing a powerful evidence base, and supporting its translation into better practice on the ground.

The WWC will support the new agenda to transform children’s social work, alongside the creation of a new social work body to improve standards in the profession and the centralisation of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). It is intended to bring a fresh and innovative approach to the delivery of children’s services to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.

The WWC will be independent from government and will have four core functions:

1. Synthesis of existing evidence, including learning from the Innovation Programme and SCRs, and other research.
2. Identification of evidence gaps and commissioning of new research and evaluations to fill gaps.
3. Translation of evidence into practical guidance for practitioners, including development of an online ‘toolkit’ to compare the cost-effectiveness of different practices.
4. Dissemination of best practice and supporting practitioners in the implementation of findings into practice.

It will work closely to support and share learning with other programmes in children’s social care, including the Innovation Programme, Partners in Practice, the new centralised approach to SCRs, the Child Sexual Exploitation Response Unit and the Centre of Expertise for Child Sexual Abuse.

The WWC will join the world’s first network of What Works Centres,which support policy makers, commissioners and practitioners to make decisions based upon strong evidence of what works and to provide cost-efficient services. The existing WWCs already address issues such as educational attainment (Education Endowment Foundation), local economic growth (What Works Centre for local economic growth) and crime reduction (College of Policing What Works Centre for Crime Reduction). Information on the What Works Centre network can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network).

The WWC scope will have in range the totality of support, from the point at which children become known to social care services, through to adoption support. Its initial focus will be on improving the quality of social work practice, to complement the wider social work reform agenda. It will identify both the most effective interventions by practitioners and also the most effective ‘systems’, for example, learning from the structures of the local authorities with the most effective children’s social care systems.

We are interested in attracting the following skills and expertise to the WWC:

* robust knowledge and extensive practical experience of services in children’s social care, and particularly the social work profession;
* research and analytical skills, including experience of robust high quality evaluations and trials;
* translation of evidence into practice; and
* innovative and creative thinking around how to increase the impact and cost-effectiveness of practices in children’s social care.

We do not anticipate that any single organisation will have the combined track record and expertise we are seeking. If the Authority chooses to carry out a procurement, we would welcome bids submitted in partnership.

Up to £4m will be available per year from 2016/17 to 2019/20 to fund the WWC. More information on the precise funding will be available in due course. It is anticipated that the WWC may attract alternative funding once established.

The estimated planned date for publication of the contract notice is September 2016.

Preliminary market consultation events will be held in June 2016 to provide an opportunity for potential providers to learn about the What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care. To register your interest, please contact CSC.WhatWorksCentre@education.gsi.gov.uk and further details will be circulated as soon as they are available. Please note that places will be allocated on a first come first served basis, according to venue size.

Any information that is shared at these events will also be made publically available. Interested parties will not be prejudiced by any response or failure to respond to this preliminary market consultation and a response to this PIN does not guarantee any invitation to participate in any future public procurement. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will be published regularly on Contracts Finder. The Authority is not liable for any costs, fees or expenses incurred by any party participating in the preliminary market consultation day.

This notice does not constitute a call for competition to procure any services for the Authority. The procurement of any services will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The purpose of this PIN is to stimulate early market interest and invite interested parties to take part in preliminary market consultations, in order to improve our knowledge of the market.

**Common procurement vocabulary (CPV)**

85000000-9 Health and Social Work Services

85321000-5 Administrative Social Services

85322000-2 Community Action Programme

85320000-8 Social Services

85323000-9 Community Health Services

98000000-3 Other Community, Social and Personal Services

98113000-8 Services furnished by Specialist Organisations

**Additional Information**

This notice is for information only, and the Department reserves the right not to enter formal procurement process and not award contract(s). The information contained in this notice, including information relating to the nature and scope of the Authority’s requirements, the service classifications of the requirement or the list of CPV codes, is only indicative of the Authority’s current thinking and is neither exhaustive nor binding. The Authority reserves the right and its absolute discretion to amend it at the time of issue of any further notices or at any other time.

This notice is not a binding statement of intent, it outlines the Authority’s intention to engage with the supply market on an open and formal basis to develop potential options for this new requirement if that is what is decided.

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