**Contract reference:** CSEC (SEND) 16-17/03

**Contract title:** Contract to provide special educational needs and / or disabilities support for the further education sector in England

**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 to provide support for the further education sector in 2016-17.

A summary of key requirements for this contract is 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: 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 Date (subject to change): 25 April 2016**

**Contract End Date:** 31 March 2017

**Estimated value or range of values**:

The maximum estimated value of the contract covered by this notification is up to £500k 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 21 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

21 March 2016 to the contracts mailbox at:

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

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

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.

**Annex A: Key Contract Requirements**

**Contract 03: CSEC (SEND) 16-17/03: further education WORKFORCE**

The overarching aims of this contract award are to:

* Build the capacity of providers to embed support for learners with SEND, particularly those without LDAs/EHC plans, throughout curriculum areas, encouraging a ‘whole provider’ approach,
* Support providers to develop and deliver high quality, personalised study programmes, built around young people’s outcomes, and which help them to make the transition into adulthood.
* Build on the evidence gained from the first 18 months of the reforms and using this to develop approaches which support providers in areas of the SEND reforms they have identified as causing difficulties.

* Increase the understanding of, and commitment to, the SEND reforms among senior leadership and governors
* Build the capacity and capability of providers, including their teaching staff, to develop and stretch young people with SEN or disabilities and meet their individual needs and aspirations, including working with partners focusing on specific kinds of SEN in order to help providers access specialist training when needed.
* Build the capacity of learning support managers (or their equivalent) to lead on SEND and gain buy-in into the SEND reforms from other areas.
* Support providers to review their deployment of learning support assistants and whether they are being used effectively across the provider to support young people with SEND and encourage independence.

**1.1 Contract Requirement 1 – Assessing the needs of the post-16 sector**

Understanding the post-16 context, and the challenges providers face in delivering support for young people with SEND is vital to this contract, as is an understanding of the overall aims of the SEND reforms. It is essential that contractors are aware of delivery support already available to post-16 providers and where the gaps in support may be, as well as the particular issues that providers have raised during the first 18 months of the reforms.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* build on existing knowledge of the challenges and solutions in delivering the SEND reforms in the post-16 sector;
* be able to outline the particular challenges within the wider post-16 context and how any delivery support will take account of this;
* work effectively with partners who are already delivering support for the post-16 sector or who will be delivering support through future contracts.

Bidders should detail:

* How they understand the evidence from the first 18 months of the reforms, and how they will use this to understand the potential gaps in support for providers in implementing the reforms successfully.
* How they understand the evidence of what works for students aged 16-25 with SEND in a range of post-16 settings, and how they plan to use this evidence.
* Their understanding of the diversity of the post-16 sector and the types of providers involved (such as general FE colleges, specialist colleges, private training providers etc).
* How they understand the SEND reforms, including the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice, and the underlying principles of the reforms, and the challenges and opportunities they pose for post-16 providers.
* Their understanding of wider challenges facing the post-16 sector, such as Area Reviews, and how this may impact on successful delivery of the SEND reforms.
* Their understanding of the relationship between post-16 providers and local authorities
* How they understand the support already available to providers in implementing the reforms and improving provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities.

**1.2 Contract Requirement 2 – Building the capacity of the post-16 sector to effectively build on the foundations of the SEND reforms**

The Department for Education recognises that there have been particular challenges in implementing the SEND reforms in the post-16 sector, for whom the reforms represented not only a new set of statutory duties, but also some significant new processes and relationships. It is essential that strengths that have been recognised over the last 18 months are built upon, and areas of weakness are addressed, with appropriate support being offered in the most helpful way.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Provide support to FE providers in integrating the SEND reforms throughout the whole institution, modelling what a ‘whole provider’ approach looks like and advising on how this can be successfully implemented in all providers.
* Provide advice and support to FE providers on effective practice for ‘SEN Support’ students and how to maximise the impact of interventions for such students, using evidence-based practice.
* Bring groups of FE providers together to build capacity for implementing the reforms, and identify and review effective practice which can be shared.
* Support colleges to work collaboratively with local authorities to get the best outcomes for students with SEN and/or disabilities, including on the local offer, joint commissioning and EHC assessment and planning

The bidder should demonstrate:

* How they will build the capacity of providers to embed support for learners with SEND, particularly those without LDAs/EHC plans, throughout curriculum areas, encouraging a ‘whole provider’ approach which embraces inclusive teaching and learning.
* How they will support providers to develop and deliver high quality, personalised study programmes, built around young people’s outcomes, and which help them to make a successful transition into adulthood, including employment.
* How they will help providers to better identify and plan for students on SEN support and review the impact of interventions for such students, including how disadvantage funding is used to best effect.
* How support will be matched to the particular needs of post-16 providers, and how these providers will be engaged and brought together.
* How support will be provided and accessed – being mindful of any restrictions on paid-for communications and marketing.
* How they will ensure they reach their target audience and have national reach.
* How they will provide expert challenge in order to ensure post-16 providers work to an ambitious standard of SEN provision, including plans to consult with Ofsted.
* What difference they will make and how improvements in SEND provision in providers will be sustainable in the longer term.
* How they will evaluate their effectiveness and measure their impact.
* How they will build relationships between providers and local authorities, particularly over the local offer, joint commissioning, and EHC assessment and planning

**1.3 Contract Requirement 3 – Building the capacity and capability of staff within post-16 institutions to develop and stretch young people with SEN or disabilities and meet their individual needs and aspirations**

It is essential that professionals and practitioners from different areas of providers, and with different levels of expertise, are able to work together to support students with SEND in order that they can achieve successful outcomes.

We would like the successful bidder to:

* Develop innovative approaches to peer-learning and sharing good practice on SEND provision (including study programmes) which are focused on learning visits, immersion days and other forms of hands-on learning, and facilitate such events between providers on a regional and national basis. We are particularly interested in creative proposals in this area.
* Work with other organisations offering more specialist training and support around specific types of SEND in order to develop a coherent offer for post-16 providers when areas of need are identified.
* Build the capacity of learning support managers, enabling them to feel confident in their role and able to work effectively with, and potentially challenge, other staff within the provider.
* Develop an approach which helps providers to review their deployment of learning support assistants and consider whether this is being done effectively, in a way which fosters personal independence.
* Increase commitment to the reforms from senior leaders and governors.

The bidder should demonstrate:

* How they will work with organisations contracted to deliver support for specific types of SEND in order for staff to be able to easily access specialist training when required.
* How they will encourage staff to take responsibility for their own development, promoting the use of practitioner research where appropriate.
* How they will enable providers to work collaboratively on peer review and support, providing opportunities for networking and sharing of practice.
* How they will increase the understanding of, and commitment to, the SEND reforms among senior leadership and governors
* How they will build the capacity of learning support managers (or their equivalent) to lead on SEND and gain buy-in into the SEND reforms from other areas.
* How they will support providers to review their deployment of learning support assistants and whether they are being used effectively across the provider to support young people with SEND and encourage independence