**The supply of services to drive delivery of 30 hours free childcare through local authorities**

**Description**

In June 2015 the government announced its intention to provide working parents with 30 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds from September 2017. In the Childcare Bill policy statement dated December 2015 it was announced that the ‘The Secretary of State for Education will discharge her duty to secure 30 hours of free childcare for working parents by working through all local authorities in England’.

The Department announced early implementation in eight local authorities to deliver childcare places to approx. 5,000 children from September 2016, a year ahead of national rollout. The aims of the early implementation phase are (i) to test provider capacity to deliver the entitlement in a way that suits working parents’ employment patterns and helps more parents to return to work or work more hours and (ii) to test market innovation around sufficiency and flexibility of provision, and partnership working.

The government is also grant funding all early implementation LAs and 24 additional LAs to develop and share innovative approaches (but not deliver the additional 15 hours) to issues that currently create barriers to parents accessing free childcare.  All 32 local authorities (8 early implementers and 24 early implementer innovators) will provide valuable learning to support roll-out of the 30 hours offer from September 2017.

We want to ensure that parents are able to access their entitlement quickly and conveniently in a way that supports their working patterns and the needs of their child. The implementation of this new programme will create several challenges and we will need LAs and providers to work closely together to ensure sufficiency of places. We also want to provide business support for childcare providers in areas in which sufficiency is a significant risk, where such support would target particular local sufficiency issues, ensuring business models are sustainable and provide maximum value for money for parents and taxpayers.

We propose to tender for a national organisation to support 152 local authorities in England to implement 30 hours free childcare for working parents. The contract will commence from 1 August 2016 for 2 years with the option to extend the contract by one year (please note the extension is not guaranteed at this stage and will be dependent on government priorities at the time). The value of the contract will be approximately £3m up to August 2018 (please note these figures will include any VAT that may be applicable).

We would anticipate that our preferred supplier would:

1. Monitor how local authorities selected as early implementers from September 2016 and all other local authorities are reviewing their childcare markets to provide the number of places necessary to meet parental demand. Share analysed monitoring data with the Department, with proposed next steps;
2. Monitor how local authorities are helping their providers to identify efficient ways of working to maximise the funding given them and maintain a viable and sustainable business;
3. Target level and type of support to local authorities based on their specific sufficiency challenges including sharing data and information with the Department on progress with capital strategy planning
4. Support local authorities to provide suitable access to the programme for children with SEND;
5. Monitor the progress of local authorities in providing flexible childcare to meet the demands and working patterns of parents;
6. Share knowledge and spread key messages to LAs quickly in order to support implementation of the programme;
7. Support LAs in developing their approaches to checking the eligibility of children for the additional hours for working parents;
8. Support and encourage LAs to work in collaboration with a separately procured IT support contractor, who will be responsible for ensuring that LAs have automated IT systems for as much of the eligibility checking / application process as possible; and
9. Monitor the progress of the way in which local authorities are spreading the message about 30 hours free childcare to working parents and childcare providers.

We aim to start the procurement process on 6 June. The procurement process will follow the timetable below (please note this may be subject to change).

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| Date | Event |
| W/C 16 May | Publish PIN (21 days) |
| W/C 30 May | Supplier event |
| 6th June | Issue the ITT (Invitation to tender) |
| Monday 13th June | Supplier conference call |
| Friday 17th June | Deadline for ITT clarification questions |
| Wednesday 22nd June | Deadline for response to ITT  clarification questions |
| Friday 1st July | Bids returned by 2pm |
|  | Evaluation Period |
| Thursday 22nd July | Notify winning bidder |
| 1st August | 10 day standstill period ends |
| W/C 1st August | Contract award |

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

DfE intends to hold a **Supplier Event** on **W/C 30 May 2016** in central London. This event will provide an opportunity for all interested suppliers to be informed about the further details of the requirements, enable dialogue with potential suppliers and to provide a Q&A forum. Information will also be available on the proposed procurement process and timetable and suppliers will be able to meet key members of the DfE project team involved in this procurement. (Further details below.)

DfE intends to contract with either a supplier who proposes to offer the whole service (with or without subcontractors) or a consortium of suppliers who have joined together to offer the whole service. At the bidding stage a consortium must be either a legal entity or have a lead organisation which is authorised to act on behalf of its members with which DfE can contract. Suitably qualified Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who consider that they have the necessary skills and experience to support the programme are encouraged to attend the Supplier Engagement Event.

The contract will be advertised in the Contracts Finder under the Light Touch regime. It is anticipated that the OJEU Contract notice will be advertised on **6 June 2016** and details about the supplier conference call will be included in that document.

Disclaimers and conditions: No information provided by the DfE, contained in this notice or in any communication made between DfE and any party in connection with the National Maths Education Centre contract shall be relied upon as constituting a contract, or representation that any contract will necessarily be offered.

DfE reserves the right to change without notice any documents and communications, in whole or in part, during the procurement process for the National Maths Education Centre contract. Under no circumstances shall DfE incur any liability in respect of any documentation issued as part of this process nor shall DfE reimburse any costs incurred by any parties in connection with attendance or participation at the planned Supplier Engagement Event on **W/C 30 May 2016.**

Suppliers need to pre-register to attend the Supplier Engagement Event by emailing: [Will.Plange@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Will.Plange@education.gsi.gov.uk) **by 27 May 2016.** Suppliers must send their attendees names (no more than two per organisation attending) and the organisation name. This information will be shared with all other attendees unless you expressly inform the Department that you do not wish so. Venue details will be emailed to all attendees.

The supplier event will be used to help finalise requirements. It is intended that those who join the supplier event will be able to give their thoughts on the specification above and on particular issues that we will raise on the day.