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Contract

Special Educational Setting (SES) Sight Test Service for Children and Young People

NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board

F03: Contract award notice

Notice identifier: 2026/S 000-007340

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-06006d

Published 27 January 2026, 8:07pm

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board

Unit 10 Phoenix Court, Christopher Martin Road

Basildon

SS14 3HG

Email

amy.wilson@attain.co.uk

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKH3 - Essex

National registration number

QH8

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/>

Buyer's address

<https://attain.ukp.app.jaggaer.com/web/login.html>

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

Health

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Special Educational Setting (SES) Sight Test Service for Children and Young People

Reference number

ACE-0849-MSE-SES Optical

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 85000000 - Health and social work services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (the Authority) intends to award an Integrator contract to deliver the Special Educational Setting (SES) Sight Test Service for

children and young people through local accredited optometry practices, following a Most Suitable Provider (MSP) process under the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023.

Children under 16 (or up to 19 in full-time education) are entitled to free NHS eye tests, but pupils in special education schools face barriers to access. A successful NHS England pilot demonstrated benefits of delivering sight tests and advice in school settings. The NHS Long Term Plan committed to this service for residential settings, extended in 2023 to day schools. Funding is now recurrently allocated to ICBs from 2025/26.

The ICB considered an integrator model most suitable, where a lead organisation coordinates and performance-manages local optometrists rather than the ICB holding multiple contracts. This approach supports Essex-specific partnerships, supply chain accountability, integration, measurable value, and social impact. In applying the Process, the Authority has assessed the five Key Criteria and reviewed NHSE pre-market engagement data to confirm provider capability and local connections. Based on this, the Authority believed it can identify the MSP without a competitive process.

The scope of the service is to deliver sight tests for pupils attending special education schools across Essex (including activity associated with the Authority's successor Essex ICB's geographical footprint which covers North East Essex and West Essex also). There are an estimated 4,400 pupils in total across Essex within these schools and the service is based on an assumed uptake of 80%, equating to approximately 3520 sight tests per year.

Further details are available in sections II.2.4), II.2.14), and VI.3).

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.1.7) Total value of the procurement (excluding VAT)

Value excluding VAT: £570,000

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 85000000 - Health and social work services
- 85120000 - Medical practice and related services
- 85121000 - Medical practice services

- 85121200 - Medical specialist services
- 85140000 - Miscellaneous health services
- 85141000 - Services provided by medical personnel
- 85323000 - Community health services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKH3 - Essex

Main site or place of performance

Mid and South Essex, West Essex and North East Essex

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This notice is an intention to award a contract under the most suitable provider process in accordance with the Provider Selection Regime 2023 (PSR). The contract will be a block contract commencing 10 February 2026 - 9 February 2028. This is a new service, and a new provider of such service in Mid and South Essex.

Scope and Responsibilities

The Integrator will:

- Validate pupil numbers and financial assumptions during mobilisation.
- Establish IT systems and reporting mechanisms.
- Engage schools to promote service uptake.
- Recruit and train subcontractors (optometrists).
- Ensure delivery of annual sight tests for pupils in special education schools across Essex.

Contractual Framework

- The Integrator contract will use the Standard NHS Contract (short form), covering all performance and risk requirements.
- Subcontractor agreements will be governed by the General Ophthalmic Services (GOS)

Contract, per the national model.

- Delivered under a block funding model, capped at NHS England allocation. Activity above the cap is at the Integrator's risk; underspend will be reinvested into service improvement.
- Provisions allow permitted modifications under Regulations and NHS Standard Contract change control. Known future modification: geographic expansion beyond Mid and South Essex to the wider Essex ICB footprint.

Estimated Value

The estimated lifetime value (including known modifications) of the contract is £570,000.

The Authority only considered organisations that:

- Met basic selection criteria (Reg 19).
- Are not excluded or excludable (Reg 20).
- Demonstrated capability across the five key criteria (Reg 5).

Basic Selection Criteria

Providers needed to:

- Have a General Optical Council (GOC)-registered optometrist in senior leadership.
- Hold an existing local contract for ease of mobilisation.
- Demonstrate a proven track record in:
 - Partnerships with local accredited optometry practices.
 - Collaboration with independent and national opticians.
 - Working with the Local Optical Committee (LOC).
 - Commissioning and managing NHS eye care services, including subcontracting.
- Ensure compliance with specification and contract terms across subcontractors, operating within the fixed tariff of at least £85 per sight test.
- Show strong experience of and understanding of the GOS contract and governance.

Key Criteria Assessment

Providers needed to demonstrate capability across five areas:

1. Quality and Innovation (20%)

- o Experience delivering large-scale community eye care.
- o Proven model integrating independent and multiple practices with robust assurance.
- o Innovative digital platforms for referral and coordination.
- o Integration with hospital ophthalmology services.
- o Delivery of enhanced services (e.g., MECS, post-cataract care, glaucoma monitoring).

2. Value (20%)

- o Financial model reinvesting into NHS eye care.
- o Leveraging local infrastructure to minimise costs.
- o Centralised contracting and IT systems for efficiency.
- o Evidence of cost savings through reduced hospital reliance.

3. Integration, Collaboration, Sustainability (20%)

- o Strong relationships with local services and LOC.
- o Governance structures to sustain delivery across diverse networks.

4. Access and Health Inequalities (20%)

- o Accessible care close to home, including rural areas.
- o Contracting with independent and multiple practices.
- o Enhanced services for vulnerable groups.

5. Social Value (20%)

- o Commitment to reinvestment, workforce development, and local economic resilience.

- o Funded clinical training for subcontractors.
- o Subcontracting model supporting local economies and sustainable employment.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Most suitable provider process with regard to the key criteria /
Weighting: 100

Price - Weighting: 0

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

II.2.14) Additional information

Further details can be found at sections VI.3.

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Award of a contract without prior publication of a call for competition in the cases listed below

- The procurement falls outside the scope of application of the regulations

Explanation:

This is a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) intention to award notice. The awarding of this contract is subject to the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023. For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 do not apply to this award. The publication of this notice marks the start of the standstill period. Representations by providers must be made to decision makers by midnight on 9th February 2026. This contract has not yet formally been awarded; this notice serves as an intention to award under the PSR.

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

IV.2) Administrative information

IV.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure

Notice number: [2026/S 000-000831](#)

Section V. Award of contract

Title

Special Educational Setting (SES) Sight Test Service for Children and Young People

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

27 January 2026

V.2.2) Information about tenders

Number of tenders received: 1

Number of tenders received from tenderers from non-EU Member States: 1

Number of tenders received by electronic means: 1

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor

PRIMARY EYECARE SERVICES LIMITED

Waulk Mill (2.2) 51 Bengal Street

Manchester

M4 6LN

Email

info@primaryeyecare.co.uk

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UKD33 - Manchester

National registration number

06722353

Internet address

<https://primaryeyecare.co.uk/>

The contractor is an SME

Yes

V.2.4) Information on value of contract/lot (excluding VAT)

Total value of the contract/lot: £570,000

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.3) Additional information

The Authority published a Transparency Notice announcing its intention to follow the MSP process, based on the output of its MSP assessment, on 06/01/2026. The Authority observed a 14-day period to ensure suitably qualified and experienced providers could make themselves known in writing to the Authority. The Authority's MSP Process indicated its initial analysis was correct and the Authority is able to identify the most suitable provider without competition, and therefore will proceed to award the contract.

The Authority only considered organisations that:

- Met the basic selection criteria (Reg 19) as described at II.2.4) Description of the procurement
- Is not excluded or excludable (Reg 20).
- Demonstrated capability across the five key criteria (Reg 5) as described at II.2.4) Description of the procurement.

The decision makers for this MSP Process were NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board Executive Team.

In accordance with Regulation 21 of the PSR, the Authority has maintained a Conflicts of Interest (COI) Register throughout this Process. A perceived, indirect professional conflict was identified for one project team member who also serves on the Essex Local

Optometry Committee (LOC), which represents all Optical Contractors in Essex. This raised a potential perception of conflict should a local provider—particularly one participating in enhanced services across Essex—be awarded a contract via the MSP Process. All project team members completed COI declarations, which were duly recorded. No member of the team, including the LOC representative, had any financial interests in optical practices, held roles within provider organisations, or stood to gain any remuneration linked to procurement outcomes. The LOC representative's involvement was limited to representing practices at a local professional level. Mitigations were clearly documented, monitored throughout the Process, and updated upon receipt of MSP responses. Following review, the Authority determined that the declared interest presented a low or negligible risk. The mitigations in place were sufficient to manage any perceived conflict, and the LOC member's sector expertise and understanding of the provider landscape were considered essential to ensuring a robust and informed MSP Process.

In accordance with Regulation 13 of PSR, Modification of contracts during their term, the Authority may introduce contract modifications during the contract term, provided these changes remain proportionate, aligned with the original scope, and do not alter the contract's essential nature, risk profile, or core systems. Such changes will follow NHS Standard Contract change?control processes. A summary of the information that was available and published in the MSP Process documentation follows:

- Adding complementary services or expanding delivery within the Essex ICB area.
- Adjusting funding or tariffs in response to demand or national policy.
- Updating delivery models, including subcontracting and payment structures.
- Changes to workforce requirements, skills, and training.
- Operational flexibility at school level and KPI updates.
- Enhancements to governance, social value commitments, and regulatory compliance.
- Provisions for exit, continuity, and handling changes in organisational footprint or novation.

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

Independent Choice and Procurement Panel

Wellington House

London

SE1 8UG

Country

United Kingdom

Internet address

<https://www.england.nhs.uk>

VI.4.4) Service from which information about the review procedure may be obtained

NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board

Unit 10 Phoenix Court, Christopher Martin Road

Basildon

SS14 3HG

Email

amy.wilson@attain.co.uk

Country

United Kingdom