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Tender

Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) Open Framework

Kent County Council

UK4: Tender notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2026/S 000-008594

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-051257 ([view related notices](#))

Published 30 January 2026, 3:39pm

Scope

Reference

CN260427

Description

Kent County Council (KCC) is establishing a new Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) Open Framework (reference CN260427) to replace the existing NMISS Dynamic Purchasing System when it expires on 31 August 2026. The Framework will support the placement of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) whose needs cannot be met in mainstream or maintained special school settings, ensuring continuity of provision and compliance with the Procurement Act 2023.

The Framework will commence on 1 September 2026 for an initial period of 4 years, with potential extensions up to another 4 years, and an estimated maximum total value of £876 million across the full term. It aims to improve outcomes, strengthen quality assurance, enhance pricing transparency, and secure better value for money while ensuring placements remain focused on children with the most complex needs.

Provision under this Framework includes Independent Special Schools (both Section 41 and non-Section 41) and Non-Maintained Special Schools. Providers must be appropriately registered with Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and must meet statutory and contractual quality, safeguarding, and compliance requirements.

The Framework uses a two-lot structure:

Lot A - Strategic Partners, for Tenderers meeting a higher quality threshold and capable of close strategic collaboration with KCC, including potential consideration for longer-term arrangements such as block contracting.

Lot B - Approved Providers, meeting the standard quality threshold.

The procurement will be conducted via a Competitive Flexible Procedure, comprising a Conditions of Participation Stage followed by an Invitation to Tender for shortlisted providers. Quality evaluation thresholds will determine allocation to Lots.

For full details, all suppliers must access the opportunity through the Kent Business Portal and download the complete document pack: <https://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk/>

Commercial tool

Establishes an open framework

A series of frameworks with substantially the same terms. Awarded suppliers are carried over and new suppliers can bid.

Total value (estimated)

- £876,000,000 excluding VAT
- £1,051,200,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2030

- Possible extension to 31 August 2034
- 8 years

Description of possible extension:

A possibility for four possible contract extension of up to 4 year(s) (12 months each)

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 80100000 - Primary education services
- 80200000 - Secondary education services

Contract locations

- UKJ4 - Kent

Lot constraints

Maximum number of lots a supplier can be awarded: 1

Lot A (was 1). Strategic Partners

Description

Tenderers achieving a high-quality threshold, expected to deliver consistently excellent outcomes and engage in strategic collaboration with the Council. This may include opportunities for longer term arrangements such as block contracting where appropriate.

Lot value (estimated)

- £876,000,000 excluding VAT
- £1,051,200,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Lot B. Approved Providers

Description

Tenderers meeting a moderate quality threshold offering suitable provision with potential for development and improvement.

Lot value (estimated)

- £876,000,000 excluding VAT
- £1,051,200,000 including VAT

Framework lot values may be shared with other lots

Same for all lots

CPV classifications, contract locations and contract dates are shown in the Scope section, because they are the same for all lots.

Framework

Open framework scheme end date (estimated)

31 August 2034

Maximum number of suppliers

Unlimited

Maximum percentage fee charged to suppliers

0%

Framework operation description

Please see Pricing Guidance in the Invitation to Tender (ITT) pack and the Call-Off Process as described in the Open Framework Agreement Pack.

Award method when using the framework

Either with or without competition

Contracting authorities that may use the framework

Establishing party only

Participation

Particular suitability

Lot A (was 1). Strategic Partners

Lot B. Approved Providers

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Submission

Enquiry deadline

13 February 2026, 11:59pm

Submission type

Requests to participate

Deadline for requests to participate

20 February 2026, 12:00pm

Submission address and any special instructions

<https://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk/>

To respond to this opportunity, please use the access code: D2SK4KN582 or use the following link: <https://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk/respond/D2SK4KN582>

Tenders may be submitted electronically

Yes

Languages that may be used for submission

English

Award decision date (estimated)

23 June 2026

Award criteria

Name	Type
Specialist School	Quality
Curriculum	Quality
Attendance/Placement Stability	Quality
Outcomes	Quality
Governance	Quality
Safeguarding Compliance & Behaviour Management	Quality
Environmental/Social Value	Quality

Weighting description

We have a minimum quality threshold for each Lot. All bidders who meet this threshold (and pass all due diligence checks) may be awarded a place on the Open Framework.

Other information

Applicable trade agreements

- Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

Conflicts assessment prepared/revised

Yes

Procedure

Procedure type

Competitive flexible procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Competitive flexible procedure description

The procurement process the Council is undertaking to procure the required services is a

Competitive Flexible Procedure, as permitted under Section 20 of the Procurement Act 2023. the Council may hereon refer to this planned Competitive Flexible Procedure as a 'Traditional Negotiated' Procedure.

The process will consist of multiple stages as follow:

1. Conditions of Participation Stage
2. Invitation to Tender (ITT) - Tender Questionnaire
3. Site Visits
4. Optional Negotiation Stage
5. Contract Award (including verification of Self-Certifications)

Please see the Invitation to Conditions of Participation Stage document for further details.

Documents

Associated tender documents

<https://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk/>

<https://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk/respond/D2SK4KN582>

Contracting authority

Kent County Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PLDL-8938-YGYW

County Hall

Maidstone

ME14 1XQ

United Kingdom

Email: sourcingsupportteam@kent.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/>

Region: UKJ45 - Mid Kent

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government