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Planning

## Fit-Testing Solutions - Early Market Engagement

Department of Health & Social Care

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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## Scope

## Description

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is looking to engage stakeholders to explore how the UK can strengthen capacity for respirator fit testing across health and adult social care, namely for “Filtering Facepiece Class 3” (FFP3) masks. FFP3 masks offer high levels of protection, removing at least 99% of airborne particles such as viruses, toxic dusts, and aerosols. To ensure this level of protection is achieved, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) requires in-person fit testing by a trained tester.

There’s an ongoing shortage of respirator fit-testing capacity across the health and care sector. During business as usual, adult social care and the NHS can have limited need for tight-fitting respirators. However, changes in demand (such as during a pandemic) could significantly constrain access to appropriate protection without sufficient fit-testing capability. DHSC is therefore seeking input from stakeholders with relevant experience and expertise to identify challenges and potential solutions.

This engagement is seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders that have direct or indirect involvement in delivering fit testing across health and social care, with a focus on longer-term, innovative approaches to improving fit-testing capacity, including digital or artificial intelligence (AI) solutions. In a separate engagement exercise, DHSC is planning to engage exclusively with fit-testing providers, specifically to gain further understanding

of the current fit-testing market and landscape, and implications for associated surge capacity to delivering fit testing in a future pandemic. Thus, this other exercise will aim to deliver increased resilience and preparedness for a future pandemic, if required, in the near term, while longer-term initiatives are defined and pursued.

This could be a significant opportunity to contribute towards developing a solution for fit testing across health and social care, helping to address a need that is currently not being met. In England, there were a total of 1.71 million workforce posts in adult social care in 2024/25 (plus unpaid carers and personal assistants) and a further 1.5 million in the NHS (August 2025).

### **Total value (estimated)**

- £0 excluding VAT
- £0 including VAT

### **Contract dates (estimated)**

- 3 February 2026 to 2 March 2026
- 1 month

### **Main procurement category**

Services

### **CPV classifications**

- 85000000 - Health and social work services
- 38540000 - Machines and apparatus for testing and measuring
- 72212180 - Medical software development services

- 48180000 - Medical software package
- 33190000 - Miscellaneous medical devices and products
- 33141000 - Disposable non-chemical medical consumables and haematological consumables
- 18100000 - Occupational clothing, special workwear and accessories

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## **Engagement**

### **Engagement deadline**

2 March 2026

### **Engagement process description**

For this engagement, DHSC will be holding three roundtable discussions, scheduled for:

- Tuesday 24 February 2026, 10am-12pm
- Wednesday 25 February 2026, 11am-1pm
- Thursday 26 February 2026, 1pm-3pm

The roundtables will discuss:

- the current status and problems with fit testing within the health and adult social care sector,
- the solutions that exist within industry or elsewhere to effectively fit test, and
- the potential development of a technological solution, such as a solution involving digital or AI tools, to improve access to fit testing within health and social care.

DHSC is keen to hear your ideas and feedback, particularly on the feasibility of innovative solutions, the practicalities, and the potential for procuring services/products. We want this

to be an open discussion, allowing you to tell us what the potential solutions are.

Please register your interest for a roundtable using this form:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=MIwnYaiRMUyMH-9N6Jc6HOQJ-J-YaKaRHkRg1bw3qXIZUQldUQjJWNUhFNTM3VTJaSEw0VkJTQTxMS4u>

The deadline to register interest is 11:59 pm on Tuesday 17 February 2026.

DHSC welcomes interest from:

- Adult social care providers
- NHS organisations (primary, secondary, community, and social care)
- Local authorities
- Manufacturers or sole distributors of respirators, especially FFP3 masks
- Manufacturers or sole distributors of quantitative fit testing machines
- Manufacturers or sole distributors of qualitative fit testing kits
- Fit testing providers, trainers, or individual fit testers
- Relevant industry bodies and trade associations
- Regulatory or accreditation bodies
- Other users of respirators and fit testing services
- Solution designers (including digital/AI innovators)

DHSC may adjust the number or timing of roundtables depending on demand. If interest exceeds capacity (25 participants per roundtable), DHSC may not be able to invite all eligible stakeholders. In this case, DHSC will select roundtable participants based on the below criteria:

- Ensuring a balanced mix of stakeholder groups for each roundtable
- Ensuring a balanced representation across regions.

Alongside this, all stakeholders are encouraged to complete an accompanying survey. All stakeholders are invited to complete this survey, regardless of whether they are attending

a roundtable. All individual responses will be kept confidential within DHSC and used solely to gather insights on challenges and potential solutions in fit-testing capacity. Only aggregated and anonymised insights may be shared wider.

Complete the survey here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=MIwnYaiRMUyMH-9N6Jc6HD5FeWMrqfNMII-J0y-poM1UM0k4NVIzMExSMFo2NzFPNk1PS0FXUVRTOS4u>

Survey deadline: 11:59 pm, Monday 2 March 2026

(This engagement is neither a procurement exercise nor a call for competition. DHSC does not commit to any specific action at this stage. The roundtables and survey are for information gathering only. Further engagement may follow as required.)

For any questions about this opportunity, please contact [fit-testing@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:fit-testing@dhsc.gov.uk).

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## Contracting authority

### Department of Health & Social Care

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PMQG-9965-CHZR

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London

SW1H 0EU

United Kingdom

Email: [fit-testing@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:fit-testing@dhsc.gov.uk)

Website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care>

Region: UKI32 - Westminster

Organisation type: Public authority - central government