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Not applicable

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

NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board

F14: Notice for changes or additional information

Notice identifier: 2026/S 000-012665

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

Published 12 February 2026, 8:44am

Section I: Contracting authority/entity

I.1) Name and addresses

NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board

PO Box 6483

Basildon

SS14 0UG

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/>

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

- 85100000 - Health services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

This Corrigendum Notice is published to correct an inaccuracy in terminology used in the Intention to Award Notice published on 27 January 2026 in relation to NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board's intention 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.

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.6) Original notice reference

Notice number: [2026/S 000-007340](#)

Section VII. Changes

VII.1.2) Text to be corrected in the original notice

Section number

Section II: Object

Place of text to be modified

II.1.4) Short description

Instead of

Text

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.

Read

Text

NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (the Authority) intends to award, following a Most Suitable Provider process under the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023, an Integrator Service to support the Special Educational Settings (SES) Sight Testing Programme for children and young people across Essex.

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.

The SES Programme will operate through two interdependent contractual arrangements with the same Provider:

- 1) an NHS Standard Contract for Provision of Non Clinical Services (the “Integrator Contract”) covering mobilisation, coordination, governance and oversight, digital infrastructure, performance reporting and system integration functions; and
- 2) a separate General Ophthalmic Services contract and associated directions (the “GOS Contract”) governing the clinical sight testing and dispensing service delivered in special educational settings in accordance with the NHS England national commissioning standard and service specification.

The Integrator Contract covers non clinical programme management and operational infrastructure, including school engagement and session scheduling, consent workflow administration and audit trail support (the Service operates an opt in consent approach in line with the national specification; clinical responsibility for consent remains under the GOS Contract), provision/management of a secure digital platform for booking, consent status tracking and reporting dashboards, subcontractor network coordination and assurance (including workforce assurance evidence required by the GOS Contract), incident/near miss reporting routes and complaints coordination/escalation, KPI reporting, activity and financial reconciliation, and continuous improvement.

The Integrator Contract expressly excludes clinical assessment, examination, diagnosis, prescribing, clinical decision making and clinical record content, dispensing decisions, clinical equipment standards and clinical referral decision making (although the Integrator may coordinate operational aspects of referral communications and tracking for reporting).

The Authority will fund the Integrator Service via a block payment under the Integrator Contract. The block payment funds (a) integrator functions and (b) agreed pass through

amounts used by the Provider to remunerate itself and/or delivery partners engaged under the GOS Contract. The Provider will submit claims under the GOS Contract as the agreed mechanism for evidencing clinical activity and administering payments to delivery partners from within the block funded envelope, with transparent reconciliation separating integrator costs from clinical remuneration.

The Integrator Service is operationally dependent on the GOS Contract being in place and functioning. If the GOS arrangements are not in force, are suspended, or cannot be delivered at the required scale, the Provider must notify the Authority and implement mitigation. The two contracts will interface through an agreed responsibility matrix / Integrator Overlay Specification covering governance, reporting and escalation.

Section number

Section II: Object

Place of text to be modified

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Instead of

Text

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:
 - o Partnerships with local accredited optometry practices.
 - o Collaboration with independent and national opticians.
 - o Working with the Local Optical Committee (LOC).
 - o 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.

Read

Text

NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (the Authority) intends to award, following a Most Suitable Provider process under the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023, an Integrator Service to support the Special Educational Settings (SES) Sight Testing Programme for children and young people across Essex.

The contract arrangement is intended to commence on by 28th February 2026 latest and run for 24 months, with permitted modifications managed through NHS change control, including a known potential future modification for geographic expansion to the wider Essex ICB footprint.

The estimated lifetime value of the contract arrangement (i.e., the combined capped service envelope across both complementary contracts, including known modifications) is £570,000 (excluding VAT).

For avoidance of doubt, the Capped Envelope is a single financial cap for the overall service model; the two contracts dovetail operationally through an agreed responsibility matrix which sets out governance, reporting, escalation and interfaces between the integrator functions within the NHS Provision of Services Contract and the GOS clinical delivery contract.

The Authority only considered organisations that:

- Met the basic selection criteria (Regulation 19).
- Were not excluded or excludable (Regulation 20).
- Demonstrated capability against the five key criteria (Regulation 5).

Basic selection criteria:[AW1.1]

Providers were required 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:
 - o Partnerships with local accredited optometry practices.
 - o Collaboration with independent and national opticians.
 - o Working with the Local Optical Committee (LOC).
 - o Commissioning and managing NHS eye care services, including managing multi provider delivery networks and associated contractual / engagement arrangement
 - o Ensure compliance with specification and contract requirements across locally engaged practitioners and delivery partners.
 - o Demonstrate an approach to delivering the required activity within the overall capped envelope, including the provider's internal assumptions for per test remuneration to locally engaged practitioners and delivery partners (as applicable).
- Show strong experience of and understanding of the GOS contract and governance.

Key criteria assessment:

Providers were required to demonstrate capability across five areas:

1. Quality and Innovation (20%)

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- o Proven model integrating independent and multiple practices with robust assurance.
- o Innovative digital platforms for referral and coordination.
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- o Delivery of enhanced services (e.g., MECS, post-cataract care, glaucoma monitoring).

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- o Financial model reinvesting into NHS eye care.

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- o Governance structures to sustain delivery across diverse networks.

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5. Social Value (20%)

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- o Funded clinical training for subcontractors.
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