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Planning

The Provision of Advocacy and an Independent Visitor Scheme for Children and Young People 2024

Dorset Council

F01: Prior information notice

Prior information only

Notice identifier: 2023/S 000-021347

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-03e4e0

Published 24 July 2023, 4:18pm

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

Dorset Council

Dorset Council, County Hall, Colliton Park

Dorchester

DT1 1XJ

Contact

Commercial and Procurement

Email

dp@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Telephone

+44 1305221264

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKK25 - Dorset

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk>

Buyer's address

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

I.3) Communication

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Regional or local authority

I.5) Main activity

General public services

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

The Provision of Advocacy and an Independent Visitor Scheme for Children and Young People 2024

Reference number

DN680785

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 85000000 - Health and social work services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

This PIN is for pre-tender market engagement purposes only for the Provision of Advocacy and an Independent Visitor Scheme for Children and Young People 2024

Dorset Council currently commissions an advocacy and Independent Visitors service for children and young people. This contract will end on 31 July 2024, and we will be re-tendering during 2023/24.

Introduction:

Advocacy

Our obligations to provide advocacy is rooted in the Human Rights principles adopted by the United Nations:

- Article 12, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Article 7, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

These rights are given statutory force in the law for England and Wales, as described in Advocacy for Children: Children and Young People's Advocacy in England, a report by the Children's Commissioner (2019):

'Children's entitlement to statutory advocacy is determined by virtue of their circumstances, namely their care status, physical and/or mental health needs, special educational needs and disabilities, or their position in the youth justice system'.

Advocacy empower children and young people to have a voice by speaking for them when they can't, and supporting them to speak for themselves when they can.

An advocate can help a child or young person to:

- speak up for themselves and give their views
- understand the process they are going through

- understand their rights and choices
- be part of decisions being made about them
- prepare for and take part in meetings and tribunals
- raise queries, concerns or complaints
- access services that can support them

Independent Visitors

We have a statutory duty to provide an Independent Visitor service for children in care, if it would be in the child's best interest to have one. The definition within the National Standards for the Provision of Independent Visitor Services is;

'An independent visitor is a volunteer who doesn't work for social care services, and is there to visit and befriend children and young people. Independent visitors need to be consistent and reliable in order that children can build a trusting, positive relationship with them over time. They will endeavour to become and remain a consistent adult in the child's life who doesn't change when placements or social workers change and will at all times stay child focussed. The child will have the opportunity to try new activities, and spend time with their independent visitor, away from their placement. Independent visitors are someone to 'stick up' for the child, to promote the empowerment of the child, and to make sure their rights are respected. It is important to note that independent visitors are not skilled advocates. If a child is unhappy with their care plan or they feel they're not being listened to, the independent visitor service should make a referral to an advocacy or children's rights service'.

The role of the independent visitor was first introduced as a statutory service for looked after children in the Children Act 1989, and has been updated and clarified in subsequent legislation and guidance.

Our provisional timeline for the re-procurement is:

- publish the tender towards the end of 2023
- contract awarded April 2024
- implementation between May and July, which may include a TUPE process
- service to commence 1 August 2024

To help the council shape the tender specification requirements we want to hear from

providers who are interested in delivering these services.

Please click on the link below to access the survey questionnaire:

<https://forms.office.com/e/YdvXiVzrrw>

If you experience any difficulty in accessing the link, please copy and paste the link into your browser or alternatively, inform the contracts team of issues on the following email address childrenservicescontracts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Please complete the survey by midday on 29 August 2023.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKK25 - Dorset

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

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II.3) Estimated date of publication of contract notice

20 November 2023

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes