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Planning

Staffing For Unregistered Places

Cornwall Council

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

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Scope

Reference

DN776687

Description

Cornwall Council has statutory responsibilities to provide children in Care with somewhere appropriate to live, whether this is on a voluntary basis or via a court order as per The Children Act 1989. This includes ensuring sufficiency to meet the individual needs of children through a range of residential placements. The aim for residential placements is to narrow the gap between the general outcomes for children and the outcomes for Children in Care. These responsibilities are fulfilled through individual tailored placements both in house and with a wide range of providers within and outside of Cornwall.

An “unregistered” placement refers to a setting that meets the legal definition of a children’s home under the Care Standards Act 2000 but has not been registered with

Ofsted.

Unregistered placements for children typically arise due to a shortage of suitable, regulated care options for vulnerable children, especially those with complex needs. There is a diminishing number of registered children's homes willing or able to accommodate children with high or complex needs. This includes children with behavioural challenges, mental health issues, or those requiring secure accommodation. Local authorities may need to resort to unregistered placements in emergency situations, such as:

- Sudden placement breakdowns
- Family crises
- Immediate safeguarding concerns

In these cases, there may be no time to secure a registered placement, and authorities prioritise the child's immediate safety. Some children are placed under Deprivation of Liberty (DoL) orders, meaning they require constant supervision or restrictions for their safety. There are very few regulated settings equipped to handle such cases, leading to the use of unregistered homes.

Whilst Cornwall Council operates a Dynamic Purchase System (DPS) for children and young people placements (Fostering, Residential and SEND) we do not currently have a DPS for staffing unregistered placements. Therefore, every placement is currently via spot placement and Cornwall Council are looking to potentially, formally tender this opportunity.

Total value (estimated)

- £6,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 October 2025 to 1 October 2026
- 1 year, 1 day

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 80000000 - Education and training services
- 98000000 - Other community, social and personal services

Contract locations

- UKK3 - Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Engagement

Engagement deadline

26 June 2025

Engagement process description

Cornwall Council is conducting a soft market assessment to gain an understanding of the potential level of interest across the Voluntary, NHS, Independent and Private Sector for the provision of Parent and Child Residential Assessments across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

It is intended that the responses supplied will enable the Council to develop a business proposal prior to re-commissioning local services. Any such proposal would be subject to the development and approval of a business case, and, as such, this exercise implies no commercial commitment. This is not a formal tender document and all costings submitted

are deemed hypothetical but will support us in identifying the best option for Cornwall.

The Soft Market Test is a questionnaire requesting potential Suppliers ideas to help support and create the specification and business plan to take the project forward. The questionnaire will be open on the Supplying The South West portal until 12 noon on Wednesday 25th June.

Contracting authority

Cornwall Council

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Region: UKK30 - Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government