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Planning

WMSC Operator

BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S TRUST COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-031809

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05475f

Published 12 June 2025, 11:04am

Scope

Reference

2804OPEABO

Description

1. Introduction

Birmingham Children's Trust are leading on a project to open a new secure children's home on behalf of the West Midlands Region. There is currently a national shortage of secure children's homes, with no provision in the West Midlands. This means the most vulnerable children from the West Midlands are waiting months for a safe placement and often being placed far from their families and communities.

Plans have been developed to build a 20 bedded secure children's home for the West Midlands at a site identified in Birmingham that will be known as the West Midlands Safe Centre (WMSC). It will consist of three residential houses, healthcare and educational facilities, with associated car parking, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), sports building, and hard and soft landscaping.

The construction of WMSC is being funded by the Department for Education. Options on the structure of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) are currently being considered, once agreed an SPV will be established and up to 14 local authorities across the West Midlands will become members. The SPV will then take on the lease of WMSC and commission a provider to be the operator ahead of its opening in 2028.

This early market engagement exercise is intended to test the market's capacity, capability, and appetite to deliver such a service, and to inform the development of any future procurement strategy.

This is not a call for competition or a pre-qualification exercise. Participation in this engagement will not prejudice any supplier's ability to participate in a future procurement process, nor will it guarantee inclusion.

2. West Midlands Safe Centre

Some secure children's homes also provide youth custody placements which will not be the case here. WMSC will provide 20 secure welfare only beds and is designed to support children with highly complex needs, often arising from severe trauma. It will operate under Section 25 of the Children Act, offering a legally compliant, therapeutic, and trauma-informed environment. NHS England will commission health services.

Whilst this is a national resource which all local authorities across the country can access, priority will be given to West Midlands children and partner members.

Initial modelling suggests that staff numbers will be in the region of 180 FTEs, including care, education, and support roles. A phased recruitment strategy is required, starting with senior leadership and building up to full staffing by year three to ensure occupancy levels are safely managed to match children's needs.

The operator will be responsible for the full operation of the building which includes both child focused requirements and all property, health & safety and business support services.

3. Objectives of the Engagement

This engagement seeks to:

- Understand the level of market interest and capability in operating a Secure Children's Home.

- Inform a make vs buy analysis as part of the development of the procurement strategy.
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4. How to Participate

Interested providers are invited to:

- Complete the short questionnaire in Appendix A.
- Submit any supporting information or case studies that demonstrate relevant experience.

Responses should be submitted by noon on 27th June to
StrategicCommissioning@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk.

5. Confidentiality and Compliance

All information provided will be treated in confidence and used solely for the purposes of informing our procurement planning. This engagement is conducted in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and relevant guidance on preliminary market engagement

Appendix A - Questionnaire

1. Company Name

2. Contact Name

3. Contact Email Address

4. Do you have experience of operating a secure children's home with welfare provision?
(Yes/No)

If "Yes" please provide details of this including:

- Location
- Contracting authority
- Number of beds
- Number of staff

- Contract type and duration

5. Do you have capability and capacity to operate WMSC? (Yes/No)

6. What are the main risks and challenges you envisage to operating a secure children's home?

7. Do you have any other comments or observations to raise at this stage?

Contract dates (estimated)

- 3 January 2028 to 2 January 2032
- Possible extension to 2 January 2034
- 6 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 85000000 - Health and social work services

Contract locations

- UKG - West Midlands (England)

Engagement

Engagement deadline

27 June 2025

Engagement process description

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Participation

Particular suitability

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

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Contracting authority

BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S TRUST COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

- Companies House: 10762047
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PCJW-7359-HTYM

1 Avenue Road

Birmingham

B6 4DU

United Kingdom

Email: ProcurementTeam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Region: UKG31 - Birmingham

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government