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Planning

Mini Bus Assisted Home To School Travel

Middlesbrough Council

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

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Scope

Reference

ESC072/2025

Description

Overview: Middlesbrough Council is conducting a Pre-Market Engagement Activity to inform the potential future procurement of a Specialist Minibus Managed Service for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as well as for social care establishments. This engagement seeks to gather information and expressions of interest from experienced and capable transport providers who can deliver a fully managed, high-quality, reliable, and safe daily transport service using a fleet of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) and non-WAV minibuses.

Current Service Provision: The Council currently provides daily assisted travel for approximately 370 children and young people, transporting them from their home address

or a designated central pick-up point to their educational setting and returning them at the end of the school day. The number of service users may fluctuate daily based on individual needs and service area requirements. While a portion of this cohort is transported via taxis (for those able to travel in cars), a significant number require minibus transport due to their specific needs.

Scope of Future Requirements: We are seeking to engage with providers who can demonstrate the capacity and capability to:

Deliver a contracted, specialist minibus managed service for SEND pupils and social care users.

Operate a fleet of WAV and non-WAV vehicles suitable for transporting children and young people with a range of physical, emotional, and cognitive needs.

Manage a multi-route network across various schools and establishments within Middlesbrough and potentially surrounding areas.

Provide trained and experienced drivers and passenger assistants, ensuring safeguarding, dignity, and comfort for all passengers.

Offer flexibility and responsiveness to accommodate changing service demands.

Deliver a comprehensive management solution, including scheduling, route planning, compliance monitoring, and performance reporting.

Objectives of the Pre-Market Engagement: This engagement aims to:

Understand the current market capacity and interest.

Identify innovative approaches and best practices in SEND transport.

Inform the development of a future procurement strategy and service specification.

Ensure the Council's commissioning approach is aligned with market capabilities and user needs.

Who Should Respond: We welcome responses from:

Established transport providers with experience in SEND or social care transport.

Operators with a fleet of compliant and well-maintained WAV and non-WAV minibuses.

Providers who can demonstrate robust safeguarding, health and safety, and quality

assurance processes.

Organisations capable of delivering a fully managed transport service, including operational oversight and strategic coordination.

How to Participate: Interested parties are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) including:

Company profile and relevant experience.

Fleet details (vehicle types, capacities, WAV availability).

Additional Information:

We have 45 external minibuses running daily with an average of 10.62 passengers on board.

We have 7x 8-seater vehicles also running, which have an average of 5.71 passengers on board.

If all of the routes are combined, the average becomes 9.96 on 52 external routes.

Total value (estimated)

- £0.01 excluding VAT
- £0.01 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 5 January 2026 to 29 December 2028
- 2 years, 11 months, 25 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 34114400 - Minibuses
- 60112000 - Public road transport services
- 60120000 - Taxi services
- 60130000 - Special-purpose road passenger-transport services
- 60170000 - Hire of passenger transport vehicles with driver

Contract locations

- UKC - North East (England)

Engagement

Engagement deadline

23 July 2025

Engagement process description

Overview: Middlesbrough Council is conducting a Pre-Market Engagement Activity to inform the potential future procurement of a Specialist Minibus Managed Service for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as well as for social care establishments. We are seeking interested suppliers to respond to this Pre-Market Engagement by providing detailed information about their company and fleet, along with additional requested information.

Steps to Respond:

Review the Pre-Market Engagement Notice:

Carefully read the Pre-Market Engagement Notice to understand the scope of the opportunity, the current service provision, and the future requirements.

Complete the Company Information:

Provide a comprehensive profile of your company, including your experience in SEND and social care transport.

Include details about your compliance and safety certifications, as well as your quality assurance processes.

Provide Fleet Details:

List the types of vehicles in your fleet, specifying the number of each type.

Indicate whether each vehicle is wheelchair accessible (WAV) or non-WAV.

Provide the average number of passengers per vehicle and the current routes operated.

Submit Additional Information:

Include any other relevant information that demonstrates your capability to deliver a fully managed transport service.

Highlight your experience in managing a multi-route network and your ability to provide trained and experienced drivers and passenger assistants.

Submit Your Expression of Interest (EOI):

Compile all the requested information into a single document.

Ensure that all sections are completed accurately and thoroughly.

Review and Submission:

Double-check your submission for completeness and accuracy.

Submit your Expression of Interest (EOI) by the specified deadline.

Post-Submission Process:

Review of Responses:

Middlesbrough Council will review all submitted EOIs to assess the capacity and capability of interested suppliers.

The responses will be used to inform the development of a future procurement strategy and service specification.

Feedback and Further Engagement:

Suppliers may be contacted for further information or clarification if needed.

Feedback may be provided to suppliers based on the review of their submissions.

Future Procurement Planning:

The information gathered from the Pre-Market Engagement will help scope the future procurement route.

It will also assist in defining the requirements of the service proposal to ensure alignment with market capabilities and user needs.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Contracting authority

Middlesbrough Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PLJH-5252-HJDM

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Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government