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Planning

RESIDENTIAL SHORT BREAKS FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND/OR AUTISM

Westmorland and Furness Council

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-049300

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-058955 ([view related notices](#))

Published 15 August 2025, 7:47pm

Scope

Description

A short break (sometimes referred to as respite) is a short term, temporary service for people who are usually supported in their own or the family home by a family member or friend who is not paid for their caring tasks. The short break is beneficial to both individuals and carers as it enables the carer to have a break from their caring responsibilities and enables the individual to have a break without the carer.

Short breaks complement the range of services currently available to adults with a learning disability and or autism and carers and forms part of the range of options available to meet an individual's assessed needs. Short breaks can have a significant impact on an individual's independence and choice by contributing to the care and support elements which maintain people in their own homes and enable carers to continue caring.

The aim of a short break is to enable personalised and quality informal care and support arrangements to be sustained.

A key element of the short break offer is to support an individual to gain the skills they will

need for greater independence. The required short break offer is not simply a passive one of care and support, the expectation is that the Service Provider will build the service on a progression model and actively support independence.

The Council is seeking to develop a long-term strategic partnership with a provider/s that are:

- a) A sector leader in services supporting people with a learning disability and/or autism
- b) Has experience of providing accommodation based regulated short break services
- c) Has a deep understanding of the needs and wishes of people with a learning disability and/or autism (including those with high and additional needs and/or physical needs), access to significant expertise, and knowledge of evidence informed best practice.
- d) Has a reputable, responsive, and responsible employer committed to recruiting, developing, and retaining a high quality and diverse workforce.
- e) Values led with a mission, purpose, and ethos aligned to those of the wider council;
- f) Able to add value to provision to enrich the Service offer for people, through attracting additional external funding.
- g) Financially sustainable with robust governance and assurance arrangements.
- h) Are committed to developing positive partnerships at local, regional, and national level to benefit Individuals.
- i) Ecologically aware and operate in an environmentally responsible manner. This includes, but is not limited to, promoting sustainable practices, minimising waste, conserving energy and water, and using eco-friendly products and materials where possible. Providers are expected to comply with all relevant environmental legislation to support the Council's sustainability goals.

Although the Council will award the contracts to a single provider or providers, lead provider sub-contracting consortia bids are also welcomed.

The Council is seeking to commission an accessible Short Breaks service that can provide personal care and support for people with a learning disability and/or autism.

The service provider/s will be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to provide care and any subsequent regulatory body for a period of 12 months before the commencement of the contract and must maintain registration with a 'Good' rating throughout the duration of the contract. If the inspection records a 'Requires improvement'

rating, the provider/s will need to complete and implement an improvement plan within an agreed timeframe in accordance with the Council's relevant policy.

The service provider/s will shall ensure that the service provision complies with all requirements under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, and 2022 and the Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2010, or any amending legislation.

The service will support individuals with a range of needs, including those with a physical impairment and those that can exhibit behaviour that challenges how they are supported.

The service will provide a level of support which is appropriate to the needs of the individual helping to support people to live active, healthy, socially responsible, and socially inclusive lives as part of their local communities, engaging with a wide range of community organisations and developing natural support networks. This will include supporting people to identify risks and develop strategies that help them to keep safe in the community.

The service will have all necessary equipment allowing successful and safe delivery of care and support to individuals during their stay. This includes equipment required for individuals who have support needs relating to their mobility.

The service will ensure all service staff will have the relevant training to fully support all individuals accessing the service.

Communication difficulties are also prevalent amongst people with a learning disability and/or autism, including expression and comprehension. Communication needs contribute to barriers in accessing community services social and health care. The service will ensure that staff providing care and support are able to effectively communicate and advocate on behalf of the Individual. The service will ensure that Individuals are empowered to be able to receive support in the least restrictive setting possible and where appropriate support Individuals to move towards independent living or to support Individuals to sustain their independence within the accommodation they reside in.

Contract dates (estimated)

- 20 January 2026 to 19 January 2028
- Possible extension to 19 January 2029
- 3 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 85000000 - Health and social work services

Contract locations

- UKD12 - East Cumbria

Engagement

Engagement deadline

29 April 2025

The engagement was carried out before this notice was published.

Engagement process description

Westmorland and Furness Council is looking to engage with existing and potential Residential Short Breaks (overnight respite for Adults with a learning disability and/or autism) providers to discuss the forthcoming Service requirements in Westmorland and Furness. The session shall:

- Provide overview of current demand vs provision
- Discuss potential commissioning options

- Share existing feedback from service users and council staff
- Provide details of the timeline for the forthcoming tenders
- Allow providers to ask questions

Providers are not required to attend to be considered for the tender process but those attending should find the event beneficial, as it will outline the service and the proposed service specification and provide insight and information regarding the procurement process to be undertaken.

If you would like to join the meeting please send an email request for the meeting invite, by 5pm Tuesday 29th April to: commissioning@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Participation

Particular suitability

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

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

18 August 2025

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Contracting authority

Westmorland and Furness Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PYYD-1758-YNVR

South Lakeland House

Kendal

LA9 4DQ

United Kingdom

Email: Procurement.Mailbox.WAF@Cumbria.gov.uk

Region: UKD12 - East Cumbria

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government