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Planning

Pre Market Engagement - Provision of Catering Services

LIFT SCHOOLS

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-049940

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-058ac5

Published 19 August 2025, 4:29pm

Scope

Reference

T281 ME

Description

This is a Pre-Market Engagement Exercise for Lift Schools. The purpose of this preliminary market engagement exercise is to inform suppliers in the current market and gain information to inform a potential future procurement.

At this stage, any information gathered through this exercise will inform the Trust internal business planning and the subsequent procurement process. For the avoidance of doubt, this is the scoping phase and is not part of a formal procurement process.

The current Trust Catering Service is responsible for producing meals per day to children within nursery, primary, special, secondary schools including 6th form provision. Spend annually is currently estimated at £10million.

Lift Schools was founded in 2008 (as Academies Enterprise Trust) and we currently have

a total of 57 schools (primary, secondary and special) which is increasing to 58 from 1 January 2026 and is an exempt charitable company. Our turnover for the year 2023/24 was £290.7m. Currently the trust spans over 5 regions in England from Isle of Wight to Yorkshire.

The trust has DFE approval to increase our number of primary schools in the future and we are in active discussions at this time with a number of potential schools.

We have a total of four schools that are classed as PFI schools along with a further school which is a part PFI school where we are responsible for the soft FM services (catering and cleaning) whilst they manage hard FM services.

The current Trust Catering Service is responsible for producing meals per day to children within nursery, primary, special, secondary schools including 6th form provision. Spend per annum is currently estimated at £10million.

We as a trust experience a number of challenges of which we wish to explore for example;

The cost of production versus the school meal charge (keeping costs down)

Consistency on quality and size of meals across all our sites in meeting food standards

Full commitment to recycling/waste management

The commitment to align the food service to the curriculum goals

Encouraging Healthy Eating

Consistency of skills in catering staff

Management of a trust wide contract

Food Shortages and supply chain issues

Costs and availability of fresh produce

Reduction of food miles

Lack of applicants for catering positions

Adherence to and flexibility within school food standards

The trust wishes to look at possible other models which will address the issues currently

being experienced. We wish to discuss with suppliers how we can best meet these challenges to enhance our catering provision.

Contract dates (estimated)

- 31 August 2026 to 31 July 2031
- Possible extension to 31 July 2033
- 6 years, 11 months, 1 day

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 55524000 - School catering services

Engagement

Engagement deadline

18 September 2025

Engagement process description

In late September/Early October 2025 The Trust will be dedicating 3 free to attend regional events - London, South West and The Midlands. This will be a Presentation from Lift , an open forum and a series of 15 minute 1-2-1 slots for each supplier with a Lift

Schools team member.

We aim to involve some of our primary & secondary educators in each area where we hold the event. We would like our wider educational team to be part of the vision as we present to and speak with suppliers. We are aiming for these events to be a proactive approach to building collaborative ,transparent and mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers in the catering industry.

If you would like to be invited to one of these regional events please indicate via correspondence on the Intend Portal <https://in-tendhost.co.uk/educationportal> before Friday 19th September 2025 the following;

Company

Name(s) of attendees

Region Preferred

Y/N for 1-2-1 slot

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Contracting authority

LIFT SCHOOLS

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Region: UKI33 - Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government