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Planning

What Works Centre for Children and Families

Department for Education

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-060399

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-04fbf4 ([view related notices](#))

Published 29 September 2025, 10:49am

Scope

Description

This is a Preliminary Market Engagement Notice for the continuation of the What Works Centre for Children and Families.

All information in this notice will be subject to ministerial agreement and internal approval.

Reforming children's social care to keep children safe and give them the best start in life is an important part of the Government's opportunity mission. Improving the evidence base on interventions that work is vital to the success of the reform programme. We would want this service to generate and champion actionable evidence that improves services to support family relationships. This should include:

- Becoming a What Works Network member, operating independently and setting a strategy alongside DfE
- Having a team of experts in conducting high quality evaluations, translating and disseminating evidence.
- Establishing relationships with policy makers and local leaders to establish and support delivery of interventions that work based on high quality evidence.

We are seeking views on our high level service requirements and strategy which would deliver this objective:

- collating existing evidence on the effectiveness of programmes and practices
- producing high-quality synthesis reports and systematic reviews in areas where they do not currently exist
- assessing the effectiveness of policies and practices against an agreed set of outcomes
- filling gaps in the evidence base by commissioning new trials and evaluations
- sharing findings in an accessible way
- supporting practitioners, commissioners and policymakers to use these findings to inform their decisions

We would expect that Cabinet Office's requirement of What Works Centre membership to be met in full:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-works-network-membership-requirements>

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2037
- 10 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 73110000 - Research services
- 73210000 - Research consultancy services

- 73300000 - Design and execution of research and development
- 85311300 - Welfare services for children and young people
- 79419000 - Evaluation consultancy services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Engagement

Engagement deadline

10 October 2025

Engagement process description

The purpose of this Preliminary market engagement notice is to inform the market on the progress towards the competition for the continuation of the What Works Centre for Children and Families and gather feedback on the proposed specification and service. It is not being used as a call for competition.

The Preliminary market engagement notice is intended to:

1. Raise awareness with the market of a potential future competition process and to enable time for organisations to begin early discussions with the Department and each other as to how they may be able to deliver any future grant.
2. To share with the market early drafts of the service specification and invite suppliers to discuss with DfE the any thoughts on the service, length, funding model, or any other aspects they feel to be relevant to the service.
3. A set of questions will be shared after the session and we would encourage suppliers to respond to these to allow the opportunity for them to feedback after the session is

completed.

Market engagement will consist of a virtual event via MS Teams with the opportunity to also feedback to the department via a follow up questionnaire. This session will give an opportunity to discuss any clarifications you may need and highlight what aspects of the competition may be most attractive to you, or anything that you feel might be a barrier to bidding.

We aim for the MS Teams event to take place Friday 3rd October 2025, 10am - 11am. If you are interested, please contact emilie.wilkinson@education.gov.uk to arrange an invitation to the event. We intend to share Q&A from the main session with all interested suppliers following the event.

Participation

Particular suitability

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

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

5 January 2026

Contracting authority

Department for Education

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PDZG-3487-DPVD

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