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Planning

Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) Contract - CN260427

Kent County Council

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-071637

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-051257 ([view related notices](#))

Published 6 November 2025, 1:24pm

Changes to notice

This notice has been edited. The [previous version](#) is still available.

Amendments have been made to the Scope section to include additional dates for market engagement activities.

Additionally, the instructions for requesting an invitation have been updated in the Scope and Engagement sections. Kent County Council has transitioned to a new eTendering portal, rendering previous instructions inaccurate. Interested providers should now email Inclusion@kent.gov.uk to request an invite.

Finally, the period for engagement has been updated to reflect the additional sessions.

Scope

Reference

CN260427

Description

Market Engagement Notice

Overview

The law requires local authorities to make provision for the education of school-age children, up to age 25 for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). As part of this provision, Kent County Council places children and young people with Education Health Care Plans, with significant and/or complex needs, in independent and non-maintained special schools (INMSS). The Council currently has a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework contract for such placements to monitor the quality of provision against a benchmark of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

This framework contract will expire at the end of August 2026, and the Council is looking to procure a new contract from September 2026, pending completion of formal governance. Therefore, our intention is to publish the Tender opportunity in January 2026, with anticipated contract award by July 2026. Please note these timelines are indicative.

Context

The context of SEND education provision in Kent is similar to the national picture in terms of an increasing demand for specialist provision for children and young people with more significant and/or complex profiles of special educational needs.

There are gaps and inequities in the types of provision available for Kent families, with some children and young people placed a distance away from their homes and even in other local authority areas. As part of re-procuring a new contract, Kent County Council seeks to address these issues and ensure quality provision together with effective and efficient use of resources, particularly in a challenging financial climate.

The Council is undertaking a series of stakeholder engagement activities with families,

children, and young people who attend Kent-funded Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS). In addition, virtual whole-market engagement events are being organised. One session took place on Friday, 13 June 2025, another on 14 October 2025, and a further session is scheduled for Tuesday, 3 December 2025, to which INMSS providers are invited. To request an invite, please see the section below.

Aims

- Ensuring learners attend the provision, with effective measures to ensure high attendance.
- Maintaining a focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Developing positive working relationships with parents and carers so that they are confident in the effectiveness of the educational provision for their child and know that their children are valued and safe.
- Increasing and maintaining parental confidence in the local authority's providers of choice.
- Better management of demand and capacity as part of a whole SEN system, with highly specialist provision only for children and young people with the most significant and/or complex needs.
- More responsive provision to pupils' fluctuating needs, reducing placement breakdown, and minimising transitions to other schools throughout a child's education journey.
- Providing education provision as close to where children live as possible, and identifying gaps in provision to meet pupil need types.

Invitation to Providers

We invite all interested suppliers to register on the Kent Business Portal
(<https://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk/>)

Once registered, providers can express their interest by emailing inclusion@kent.gov.uk and the invitation will be shared.

Commercial tool

Establishes a framework

Total value (estimated)

- £70,000,000 excluding VAT
- £84,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2029
- Possible extension to 31 August 2030
- 4 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 80000000 - Education and training services

Contract locations

- UKJ - South East (England)

Engagement

Engagement deadline

4 December 2025

Engagement process description

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Participation

Particular suitability

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

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

31 January 2026

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Contracting authority

Kent County Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PLDL-8938-YGYW

County Hall

Maidstone

ME14 1XQ

United Kingdom

Contact name: Jordan Gurr

Email: jordan.gurr@kent.gov.uk

Region: UKJ45 - Mid Kent

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government