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Planning

## National Paediatric Critical Care Audit

Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership Ltd

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-076890

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05e869

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## Scope

## Description

The contract is expected to initially be delivered for NHS-funded care in England, for a period of 3 years, at a maximum total budget of up to £1,296,000 including VAT and £1,080,000 GBP excluding VAT. Bids exceeding this limit will be rejected. There is potential to extend the contract for up to two additional years as well as the option to include other Devolved Nations and/or Crown Dependencies, and aspirational measures (which will be defined in the service specification).

The maximum budget 'core' value is £1,296,000 including VAT and £1,080,000 GBP excluding VAT. This excludes the potential two year extension and aspirational intent which will be included in the service specification at point of tender, meaning the ceiling value has the potential to be higher.

There is also the potential that an audit of level 2 paediatric critical care services will form part of the specification, or be varied in at a later date via a funded aspirational intent mechanism. The above funding is excluding this workstream; however, potential bidders are to keep in mind this potential.

The role of a national clinical audit is to stimulate healthcare improvement through the provision of high quality information on the organisation, delivery and outcomes of

healthcare, together with tools and support to enable healthcare providers and other audiences to make best use of this information. Outcomes are benchmarked against national guidance and standards e.g. quality standards from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), and those from other established professional and patient sources. Successful national audits are those where the individuals providing the data are also in a position to improve the system, and there is a shared understanding of what good care looks like.

The National Paediatric Critical Care Audit (referred to as NPCCA for remainder of this document for brevity), was established in 2001 with the aim of providing a secure and confidential high quality clinical database of paediatric critical care activity. It is now part of the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP) and is recognised as the definitive source for paediatric critical care data in England. NPCCA collects data from NHS Paediatric Critical Care (PCC) providing paediatric Level 3 Critical Care and Specialist Paediatric Critical Care Transport Services. There are on average around 20,000 new admissions per year. NPCCA audits the quality of care delivered against the Paediatric Critical Care Society (PCCS) standards and key quality metrics adopted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which cover the whole patient pathway from the initial referral to paediatric critical care, specialist transport and then inpatient care.

The overarching aim is to stimulate improvements in care for patients by measuring variations in quality, experience and outcomes. During this contract period, the successful tenderer will need to build on the achievements of the audit to date and enhance the ability for the audit to be used for healthcare improvement. Data is most useful locally for healthcare improvement when its provision to clinical teams is timely, the data is refreshed regularly and appropriate tools, support and guidance accompany the data outputs. The intent is for all of these features of the audit to be implemented and improved during the period of this contract.

The audit supplier will work with commissioners, funders, specialised commissioning and operational delivery networks (ODNs) to create a coherent strategy for how the improvement goals will be achieved. By way of example, the current contract specification includes these goals

- Reduce:
  - The risk of dying
  - Unplanned extubation rates
  - Specialist PCC transport service refusals for urgent transfer
  - The number of children transferred to a unit more than two hours (travel by road) away

- o The central line infection rate
- o The length of stay for children with complex medical needs
- o The number of unnecessary cardiac surgery admissions to PCC level 3
- o Emergency readmission rates
- Increase the proportion of parents and families who have excellent care experiences (with a baseline measure)

This audit programme is expected to:

- a) Develop a robust, high quality audit designed around key quality indicators likely to best support local and national quality improvement;
- b) Achieve, articulate and maintain close alignment with relevant NICE national guidance and quality standards throughout the audit, as appropriate;
- c) Enable improvements through the provision of timely, high quality data that compares providers of healthcare, and comprises an integrated mixture of named Trust, commissioner, MDT, possibly consultant or clinical team level and other levels of reporting;
- d) Engage parents, carers and families in a meaningful way, achieving a strong patient voice which informs and contributes to the design, functioning, outputs and direction of the audit;
- e) Consider the value and feasibility of additional data linkage, at an individual patient level, to other relevant national datasets either from the outset or in the future, and plan for these linkages from the inception of the contract;
- f) Ensure robust methodological and statistical input at all stages of the audit;
- g) Identify from the outset the full range of audiences for the results and other audit outputs, and plan and tailor them accordingly;
- h) Provide audit results in a timely, accessible and meaningful manner to support quality improvements, minimising the reporting delay and providing continual access to each unit for their own data;
- i) Utilise strong and effective project and programme management to deliver audit outputs on time and within budget; and

j) Develop and maintain strong engagement with local clinicians, networks, commissioners, patients and their families and carers and charity and community support groups in order to drive improvements in services.

Further details of the existing audit can be found at: <https://www.picanet.org.uk/>

For more information about this opportunity, please visit the Delta eSourcing portal at:

<https://www.delta-esourcing.com/tenders/UK-UK-London:-Health-services./555BG3NZH4>

To respond to this opportunity, please click here:

<https://www.delta-esourcing.com/respond/555BG3NZH4>

### **Total value (estimated)**

- £1,080,000 excluding VAT
- £1,296,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

### **Contract dates (estimated)**

- 1 April 2027 to 1 April 2030
- Possible extension to 31 March 2032
- 5 years

### **Main procurement category**

Services

### **CPV classifications**

- 85100000 - Health services

## **Contract locations**

- UK - United Kingdom

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## **Engagement**

### **Engagement deadline**

23 December 2025

### **Engagement process description**

Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) is seeking to engage with the market on the recommissioning of the National Paediatric Critical Care Audit (PICANet).

The Authority is looking to build on the successes of the existing audit currently contracted with the University of Leeds.

Further information as well as details of the current audit can be found at:  
<https://www.picanet.org.uk/>

HQIP will be holding a pre-market engagement session with potential suppliers on Wednesday 7th January 2026 2.00pm-3.45pm.

Also in attendance will be system partners and service specialists including charities.

The aim of the pre market engagement session is for interested parties to hear and contribute to discussions with system experts and patient groups that will feed in to HQIP's final decisions on the scope of the audit during this next contract period, and the anticipated outcomes over the 3-5 years of the audit.

The existing specification is available for review by any interested parties and whilst it will provide information on how the current audit was scoped, it is important to understand

that the recommissioning of this audit may amend the requirements.

At this point, the Authority is planning to run this procurement under an open tender.

The proposed dates (subject to change solely at the Authorities discretion) are as follows:

- 7th January 2026 - Pre Market Engagement Session
- Publication of tender opportunity - April 2026
- Evaluation of submitted bids - May - June 2026
- Award - September 2026
- Contract start - 1st April 2027

Whilst the Authority intends to stick to the timeline, it may deviate away from it at any time.

The expected value of the contract will be subject to increase under aspirational intent measures which will be defined in the service specification at point of tender. There is also a potential that an audit of level 2 paediatric critical care services will be a funded inclusion either at point of tender, or a potential under aspirational intent.

The authority cannot commit to this work at this stage, but it may become a requirement between the premarket engagement event and the tender opportunity going live.

The aspirational intent will cover the value range and mechanisms for invoking each element of it.

If you would like to join this premarket engagement event, please email [procurement@hqp.org.uk](mailto:procurement@hqp.org.uk) stating your name, position and organisation by close of business Tuesday 23rd December 2025 with 'Paediatric Critical Care Pre Market Engagement Event' as the subject line.

The Authority is publishing this notice a month in advance of the holiday period, to account for the break, and would encourage early expressions of interest to participate.

You may also use this opportunity to request a copy of the existing project specification.

## Submission

### Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

6 April 2026

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### Contracting authority

#### Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership Ltd

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Region: UKI43 - Haringey and Islington

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government