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Planning

TARGETED SHORT BREAKS AND SPECIALIST PLAYSCHEME SERVICES - PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL 2026

Portsmouth City Council

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-077677

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05ea26

Published 27 November 2025, 1:05pm

Scope

Reference

P00005161

Description

Portsmouth City Council ('The Council') is seeking to commission a range of services, which will provide Specialist Holiday Playschemes and Targeted Short Breaks services for children and/or young people (CYP) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) within the city. The services will provide support for children and young people with complex health needs, as well as their families and/or carers, to ensure that the council meets its statutory duties and functions in this area by aiming to provide enjoyable, safe and inclusive opportunities to children and young people whilst offering families and carers valuable respite.

To ensure flexibility and meet the diverse needs of children and young people in the city,

the service may be split into three distinct lots, however, this is largely dependent on provider interest, participation and feedback in this early market engagement process. should responses/feedback prove to be limited, and if this market engagement is unsuccessful in identifying a healthy number of providers for this proposed procurement, then a lotting scenario may not apply.

The purpose of this market engagement exercise is to identify the level of interest from providers who may consider participating in a future procurement exercise for these proposed services and provide feedback on the current service proposal and the possibility of dividing the services into lots, dependent on preference and feasibility. Any feedback provided will inform the Council of the services that interested providers could/can offer, which aligns with this proposal. Additionally, the Council welcomes any feedback when determining how the services can be strengthened to meet service demands, in alignment with the proposed budget(s).

Following this consultation process, the Council will then consider the most appropriate route for these services and may undertake a procurement exercise, allowing the Council to identify the most appropriate provider(s) who have the capabilities of delivering these services effectively and in keeping with the service requirements.

Service Scope

The services will be delivered within the city and for Portsmouth residents only and will therefore only be applicable to post-code boundaries PO1 to PO6.

The services are to be provided for children and young people with SEND and complex health needs, who live in the city of Portsmouth and are aged from 5, up to their 18th birthday.

Services must be delivered in line with the SEND Code of Practice, safeguarding standards, and local priorities.

Targeted Short Breaks will be offered to parents and carers, children and young people living in the city of Portsmouth who meet the eligibility criteria, as set out in the Council's Short Breaks Statement.

Referrals will be received via the Council's 'Children and Families' directorate, consisting of the children's social care teams, amongst other teams. Any referrals may also be made by other professionals engaged and/or working with the families involved (such as the Council's Early Help and Prevention team). The targeted short breaks provision may offer direct access via the parents.

Providers should offer opportunities for families who are able to self-fund places for their child/children, as this will prove to be more cost effective.

Lots

The value of the contract(s) for the initial 3-year period cannot be confirmed until later into the current financial year, but a baseline figure is predicted to amount to £517,000 collectively per annum for all services involved, which may fluctuate each year, dependent on market inflation and other factors. It should be noted that there may be some flexibility in this budget.

The Council proposes that the services are to be split into three distinct lots, to meet the different levels of need of the children, young people and families within the city, and allow for flexibility, specialisation, and increased accessibility and would be divided as follows:

Lot 1

Inclusive community clubs and groups and/or layered activities for families - this might include stay and play sessions for every school holiday period and/or after school sessions, enabling and supporting families to play and interact together with the potential to meet other families. Services would also offer a series of weekly opportunities for young people to meet in age-appropriate groups, which could include playschemes and/or clubs.

Lot 2

A befriending service which involves careful matching of a CYP with a suitable and trusted adult, who will support the CYP in accessing social and community activities. Where necessary the support may take place in the home as part of a plan to encourage the CYP out of their home. This will not involve intimate care.

Lot 3

Playschemes which can provide:

- A specialist service for children requiring a higher level of staff supervision (at least one staff member for every CYP involved).
- An accessible service where CYP have additional needs but can engage with less adult/staff intervention (e.g. one staff member for every four CYP).

Funding allocation for each lot per annum, will be determined as follows, considering a potential 3% annual inflation applied over 5 years:

a) Lot 1 (£100,000 base)

- Year 1: £100,000.00

- Year 2: £103,000.00
- Year 3: £106,090.00
- Year 4: £109,272.70
- Year 5: £112,550.88
- o Total (5 years): £530,913.58

b) Lot 2 (£170,000 base)

- Year 1: £170,000.00
- Year 2: £175,100.00
- Year 3: £180,353.00
- Year 4: £185,763.59
- Year 5: £191,336.50
- o Total (5 years): £902,553.09

c) Lot 3 (£247,000 base)

- Year 1: £247,000.00
- Year 2: £254,410.00
- Year 3: £262,042.30
- Year 4: £269,903.57
- Year 5: £278,000.68
- o Total (5 years): £1,311,356.55

If all extension opportunities are implemented, collectively the service value, inclusive of all lots, could increase to IRO £2,585,000, with an upper estimation of £2,745.000, taking into consideration funding variables alongside other external factors, such as general UK inflation rates. If the inflation rate alters over the course of the contract then the total spend could exceed the figure listed above.

For full details in relation to the service requirements interested suppliers should download the Request for Information - Targeted Short Breaks And Specialist Playscheme Services via the Council's Intend portal and refer to section-

6. Service Eligibility Criteria and Referrals
7. Key Outcomes
8. Principles, Aims and Objectives
9. Communication and Partnerships
10. Specialist Holiday Playschemes
11. Targeted Short Breaks Offer
12. Child Befriending Offer
13. Transport
14. Equipment and Activities
15. Method of Operation
16. Location, Premises and Delivery of Services
17. OFSTED registration requirements
18. Policy and Safety requirements
19. Staffing and Training
20. Safeguarding
21. Contract Costs and Duration
22. Service Reviews and Monitoring

The procurement timetable below is indicative and shows the anticipated period required to initiate this procurement exercise, which is subject to sufficient market interest and engagement

Market consultation (Request for Information) -27th November - 31st December 2025 at 5pm

Tender documents available on Intend - 16th January 2026

Deadline requests for clarification - 6th February 2026 at 23:59

Tender return deadline - 27th February 2026 at 17:00

Evaluation of tenders completed - 13th March 2026

Award decision notified to providers - 27th March 2026

Standstill Period - 28th March - 10th April 2026

Contract award - 13th April 2026

Mobilisation Period -13th April 2026 - 30th June 2026

Contract Commencement - 1st July 2026

Total value (estimated)

- £2,745,000 excluding VAT
- £3,294,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2029
- Possible extension to 30 June 2031
- 5 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 85310000 - Social work services

Contract locations

- UKJ31 - Portsmouth
- UKJ35 - South Hampshire

Engagement

Engagement deadline

31 December 2025

Engagement process description

Interested suppliers should review and complete section 24. Request for Information within the Pre-Liminary Market Engagement Request for Information Targeted Short Breaks And Specialist Playscheme Services, available via the Council's E-tendering platform, Intend.

The In-tend system can be accessed free of charge via the following web link:

<https://intendhost.co.uk/portsmouthcc.aspx/home>

Suppliers who are not already registered on the In-tend system will need to register their details to access the procurement documentation, raise clarification requests and return the Conflict-of-Interest declaration.

Upon completing the simple registration process access to the system is automatically approved allowing for immediate access to the procurement information and

documentation.

Information on registration and subsequent operation of the In-tend system is included for with the Supplier Guidance document access via the Help area of the In-tend system and is also included for within the procurement documents for subsequent ease of reference.

Should Suppliers have any issues with registering or subsequently operating the In-tend system this should be raised directly with In-tend using the contact information provided within the Help area of the system.

Suppliers should maintain an auditable record of any issues and correspondence with In-tend and should inform the Council of the issues promptly via In-tend correspondence if possible or if not possible via email to procurement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

Section 24 includes a range of questions for consideration and any responses offered, would be greatly appreciated. Interested parties are advised to submit any questions they may have via the Council's sourcing system - InTend, using its 'Correspondence' function.

Providers who engage in this exercise will not receive preferential treatment in any subsequent procurement process and all communications before, during and after this pre-procurement engagement will be accurately recorded in writing and made available upon request.

Providers should note that there is no obligation to take part in this exercise and that if they do not take part, it will not prevent them from participating in any subsequent procurement exercise(s).

Please be advised that this is purely a market consultation and therefore any involvement and participation in this, is in no way an indication of the selection of your organisation, or a guarantee of any future work.

Post-survey submission clarification

The Council reserves the right (but is not obliged) to seek clarification of any aspect of a Suppliers SMT survey response, to ensure the Council fully understands the information being submitted to help inform the final options appraisal.

Suppliers are asked to respond to such requests promptly from receipt of correspondence, which will be issued via In-tend. Whilst the initial request for clarification will be via Intend Clarification, the Council reserve the right to invite representatives from the Supplier to attend a Microsoft Teams meeting with core members of the Councils project team to understand any ambiguities within a Suppliers response.

Any clarifications received shall then be added to that Suppliers SMT Survey response for

the purposes of the assessment.

Where the information included within a survey response is incomplete, inaccurate, or clarifications have not been forthcoming, the Council may determine that survey information provided may need to be disregarded from the end report. This would not subsequently stop a Supplier from submitting a formal tender response should the Council decide to outsource the service.

Award Process

Dependent on feedback and interest for this market engagement exercise, the Council's intention will be to run the procurement process using the Open Procedure under the Procurement Act 2023.

The Council will issue a Contract Tender Notice outlining the key details and requirements, including the overview of the procurement process & associated programme, value of the opportunity, scope of the contracts, lotting options & associated contractual terms, minimum levels of technical experience & accreditations and evaluation & award criteria.

The notice will provide all necessary information for potential suppliers to assess and apply for the opportunity.

In readiness for issue of the tender, any interested suppliers may register on the governments Central Digital Platform, as the Council is required to review information held there for any potential grounds for exclusion and undertake a debarment check. Guidance on accessing the Central Digital Platform can be found here -

Suppliers: How to register your organisation and first administrator on Find a Tender in three easy steps (HTML) - GOV.UK

Provider's may bid for all lots or certain lots without any limitations. If a provider secures multiple lots as a result of a bid, the Council reserves the right to combine them into a single contract.

The Council is seeking to admit a maximum of one supplier per lot, to deliver each provision, though a provider can bid for and deliver more than one lot.

The award criteria will be based on the most advantageous tender (MAT) during the procurement exercise, with the weighted criteria being split between quality and cost. This will apply to each lot, and different quality questions and pricing structures may be implemented for each lot and weighted accordingly.

If the outcome of this market engagement exercise and/or any subsequent procurement

exercise determines that the services are to be divided into lots, the service scope of each may be provided in individual service specifications and contracts.

In accordance with the Procurement Act 2023, all individuals involved in a covered procurement must act, and be seen to act, with integrity. A conflict of interest arises where there is a conflict between the personal, financial, or other interests of an individual and the impartial execution of their procurement duties.

All staff, suppliers, and stakeholders involved in the procurement process must declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest as soon as they are identified. If a supplier thinks they might have a perceived or actual conflict of interest then they should contact the Council via Intend correspondence.

Participation

Particular suitability

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

16 January 2026

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Contracting authority

Portsmouth City Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PCNL-5714-PRZV

Civic Offices, Guildhall Square

Portsmouth

PO1 2AL

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Region: UKJ31 - Portsmouth

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government