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Planning

Youth Custody Accommodation and Services at Oakhill (Milton Keynes) Preliminary Market Engagement

Ministry of Justice

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

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Changes to notice

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

Engagement deadline extended from 05/12/2025 to 09/01/2026.

Scope

Description

What the YCS does

Established in September 2017 as a distinct part of HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), the Youth Custody Service (YCS) is responsible for the Children and Young People Secure Estate, for children and young people between 10-17 in England and Wales. This includes:

- the commissioning and management of outsourced youth custody services and sites;
- the operational running of public sector sites; and
- placing children and young people who are remanded or sentenced to custody.

The Children and Young People Secure Estate is currently made up of four Young Offender Institutions for boys aged 15-17, one Secure Training Centre, eight Secure Children's Homes and one Secure School.

The YCS is dedicated to working with a wide range of central and local government partners and other agencies to improve the life chances for young people, bringing children's voices into service design and to learning from the latest research and best practice.

Vision and priorities

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) protects the public and prevents victims by changing lives. We work with our partners to carry out the sentences given by the courts, either in custody or the community and reduce reoffending by rehabilitating people in our care.

The ambitions of the YCS match those of the wider HMPPS, however, given the distinct and often complex needs of our young cohort, we interpret these principles specifically to the children and young people in our care. The YCS' vision is: "Working together to make sure every child in our care is safe, supported and strives for a better future, to reduce reoffending and protect the public."

The YCS aims to be a provider of high-quality children's services, where skilled, enthusiastic staff have the tools and capability to work with children in order to meet their individual needs, so that they are better able to lead rewarding, constructive lives upon their release.

We want to ensure that children in custody are protected from being harmed and prevented from causing harm; that youth custody is an educational and supportive environment, helping to reduce risky behaviour and improve the life chances upon

release.

The site at Oakhill Secure Training Centre

Oakhill is currently an 80-bed Secure Training Centre in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire accommodating girls and boys aged 12-17 (and 18 year olds in certain circumstances). Oakhill was established via a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract that was set up to design, build, finance and operate the site. This contract will end in June 2029 and YCS is seeking replacement future services for children in custody at the site.

The services

The Ministry of Justice is committed to commissioning a diverse range of services to best meet the complex needs of children in custody. We welcome innovative and evidence-based proposals from potential providers, and we are open to a range of approaches and delivery models.

We are keen to hear from organisations of all sizes with specialist expertise in areas such as care, education, health, and rehabilitation, including those that may wish to deliver specific elements of the overall service offer or collaborate as part of a consortium, rather than acting as a prime contractor.

In line with the Ministry of Justice and HMPPS Third Sector Partnership Approach and the Government's SME and VCSE commitments, we strongly welcome engagement from voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). We value collaboration and are keen to explore partnership models that bring specialist knowledge, innovation, and fresh perspectives into the secure estate.

Interested parties are requested to complete and submit this questionnaire by 09 January 2026 17:00 GMT

If you have any questions, please contact: oakhillproject@justice.gov.uk

The questionnaire can be located here: <https://forms.office.com/e/eFpSiQKrqT>

Total value (estimated)

- £175,000,000 excluding VAT
- £210,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 30 June 2029 to 29 June 2035
- Possible extension to 29 June 2036
- 7 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 75231200 - Services related to the detention or rehabilitation of criminals
- 80310000 - Youth education services
- 79993000 - Building and facilities management services
- 55520000 - Catering services
- 85300000 - Social work and related services
- 85000000 - Health and social work services
- 75000000 - Administration, defence and social security services
- 98000000 - Other community, social and personal services
- 66162000 - Custody services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Engagement

Engagement deadline

9 January 2026

Engagement process description

Engagement process

Through this preliminary market engagement, we aim to understand market capacity, capability, and interest in delivering services that support improved outcomes for children in custody, while reflecting our shared commitment to partnership working, diversity, and inclusion in service delivery.

The engagement will:

- Inform the market of this potential procurement opportunity;
- Enable an understanding of the market's capacity and appetite to participate in a potential procurement process;
- Help us to understand barriers to participation and gather insight into potential solutions;
- Help us to work collaboratively with providers to understand how services for children at the Oakhill site could be best commissioned and provided; and
- Inform the consideration of options for the future commissioning and service model.

Preliminary market engagement questionnaire

Your views are important to us, and important to our next steps.

As part of the engagement process, YCS has developed this questionnaire - the insights gathered will help shape the commissioning requirements ahead of more formal market engagement activities in the near future.

This questionnaire is not a call for competition and any future procurement process will be compliant with the Procurement Act 2023.

Information submitted will be treated in confidence, will not be individually identified or revealed to third parties and will not prejudice any provider from participating in a future procurement.

Any information marked as commercially sensitive will be treated as such. Please identify any information which should not be disclosed because of its sensitivity, providing reasons and the period for which the information will remain sensitive.

Please note, issuing this questionnaire and carrying out future market engagement does not commit authorities to commence any related procurement process.

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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)

1 March 2026

Contracting authority

Ministry of Justice

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PDNN-2773-HVYN

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London

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United Kingdom

Email: oakhillproject@justice.gov.uk

Website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/procurement>

Region: UKI32 - Westminster

Organisation type: Public authority - central government