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Planning

Subcontractor for Post 16 Learners in Bristol

City of Bristol College

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-084815

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-05fa27

Published 19 December 2025, 11:37am

Scope

Reference

SC2511A

Description

Context

As reported in the Bristol JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2025/26[i] - In Bristol, 6.5% of 16-17-year-olds in 2024/25 are recorded as being either not in education, employment or training (NEET) or having an unknown status. This represents 626 young people and is broadly consistent with the previous year's figure of 6.6%. However, it remains above the national average of 5.6%, placing Bristol as the third lowest performing among the English core cities.

Looking specifically at the NEET only figure, Bristol stands at 6.0%, which is significantly higher than the national average of 3.4%. Among the English core cities, Bristol ranks third highest for NEET-only rates, with Newcastle at the top (6.9%) and Birmingham reporting the lowest rate (3.2%).

According to Bristol City Council's Insight, Performance and Intelligence Service, data from July 2025 reveals that 710 young people aged 16 to 17 were classified as 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET). The highest concentrations of NEETs are found in Hartcliffe & Withywood (17.2%), Filwood (16.0%), and Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston (13.4%)-areas that also experience significant levels of deprivation. Young people from these communities are disproportionately affected by poverty and are more likely to face complex social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) challenges, which can severely impact their ability to engage with education, training, or employment opportunities.

The Sutton Trust Opportunity Index May 2025^[ii] highlights significant social mobility challenges within Bristol, particularly in the south and east of the city. The report indicates stark disparities in opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds compared to their peers in other parts of the UK.

Low University Access: The report highlights a stark disparity in university progression among disadvantaged young people in Bristol. In Bristol South, only 4% of young people who received free school meals had obtained a degree by the age of 22 - significantly below the national average. Comparatively, 41% of low-income students in Stratford and Bow (London) go on to university. Bristol North West ranks as the lowest constituency in the country, with just 3% of disadvantaged students progressing to university by age 22.

Poor Employment Outcomes: A substantial number of 16-year-olds on free school meals in Bristol East and South did not secure a job or continue in education. Post-16, a much smaller percentage of free school meal students in Bristol East and Bristol South (53% and 59%, respectively) went on to a job or further education, compared to comparable areas in London.

Geographic Disparity: The report identified stark differences in opportunities within Bristol, with areas like South and East Bristol ranking among the worst in the country on the Opportunity Index.

[i] JSNA 2025/26 - Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or activity unknown

[ii] The Opportunity Index - The Sutton Trust

Description

The City of Bristol College is seeking to commission an inspirational and transformative alternative provision service for post-16 learners in Bristol. The vision is to offer a distinctive and high-impact subcontracted programme, delivered within community settings.

This highly specialised alternative provision must be innovative, inclusive, and impactful,

empowering young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. It will support those with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs and/or those who have faced significant disadvantage that has acted as a barrier to education. The provision will ensure that these young people thrive and successfully transition into full-time education, training, or employment.

For the academic year 2026-2027, the College intends to subcontract 70 funded places for 16-18 funded learners, with potential for growth in future years. Of these, a minimum of 50 places will be offered to students from South Bristol, with a particular focus on the areas of Hartcliffe, Withywood, and Knowle.

This notice is to inform potential providers of our intention to hold a market engagement event in January 2026. The details of the event are still to be confirmed, but the purpose would broadly be to share our high-level thinking, to overview the likely procurement process and to gather feedback on our approach from potential subcontractors.

Please be aware that registration is for the Market Engagement Event only. This event does not signify the commencement of any procurement process and does not constitute any commitment by the City of Bristol College. This is NOT an invitation to tender for a contract opportunity and any suppliers invited to the event will not have a privileged position in relation to any future contract opportunity. Any subsequent procurement(s) that the College conducts will be based on the fair and objective outcome of a procurement process.

The value of the contract noted herein is approximate. The final value will be determined through the process and will align with Department for Education funding rules.

Total value (estimated)

- £2,500,000 excluding VAT
- £3,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2029

- Possible extension to 31 July 2031
- 5 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 80000000 - Education and training services

Contract locations

- UKK11 - Bristol, City of

Engagement

Engagement deadline

16 January 2026

Engagement process description

To register interest, please contact procurement@cityofbristol.ac.uk, providing us with:

- You organisation name
- A contact name and position within the organisation
- The contact email address and phone number

We would also ask that you register as a supplier on <https://thecpc.multiquote.com> - all our College tenders are issued via this procurement portal.

Details of the event will be finalised in early January. We will likely either hold an in-person event at one of our centres in Bristol, or a webinar. All interested parties will be invited to the event.

We will contact organisations registering interest with further information as soon as it is available. Please do not contact any individual contacts you may have with the College in the interim - we will be in touch as soon as possible.

Participation

Particular suitability

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

Procedure

Special regime

Light touch

Contracting authority

City of Bristol College

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PTLX-9345-CJHJ

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Region: UKK11 - Bristol, City of

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government