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Planning

What Works Centre for Children and Families

Department for Education

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

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-084909

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04fbf4 ([view related notices](#))

Published 19 December 2025, 1:06pm

Scope

Description

This is a Preliminary Market Engagement Notice for the continuation of the What Works Centre for Children and Families.

All information in this notice will be subject to ministerial agreement and internal approval including the estimated funding amount.

Reforming children's social care to keep children safe and give them the best start in life is an important part of the Governments opportunity mission. Improving the evidence base on interventions that work is vital to the success of the reform programme. The department anticipate this grant to be used to generate and champion actionable evidence that improves services to support family relationships. This should include:

- Becoming a What Works Network member, operating independently and setting a strategy alongside DfE
- Having a team of experts in conducting high quality evaluations, translating and disseminating evidence.
- Establishing relationships with policy makers and local leaders to establish and support

delivery of interventions that work based on high quality evidence.

We are looking to share our high level requirements and strategy which would deliver this objective:

- collating existing evidence on the effectiveness of programmes and practices
- producing high-quality synthesis reports and systematic reviews in areas where they do not currently exist
- assessing the effectiveness of policies and practices against an agreed set of outcomes
- filling gaps in the evidence base by commissioning new trials and evaluations
- sharing findings in an accessible way
- supporting practitioners, commissioners and policymakers to use these findings to inform their decisions

We would expect that Cabinet Office's requirement of What Works Centre membership to be met in full:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-works-network-membership-requirements>

Total value (estimated)

- £85,000,000 excluding VAT
- £85,000,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2037
- 10 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 73110000 - Research services
- 73210000 - Research consultancy services
- 73300000 - Design and execution of research and development
- 85311300 - Welfare services for children and young people
- 79419000 - Evaluation consultancy services

Contract locations

- UK - United Kingdom

Engagement

Engagement deadline

8 January 2026

Engagement process description

The purpose of this Preliminary market engagement notice is to inform the market on the progress towards the competition for the continuation of the What Works Centre for Children and Families. It is not being used as a call for competition.

The Preliminary market engagement notice is intended to:

1. Raise awareness with the market of a potential future competition process, share provisional timelines and to enable organisations to begin early discussions with the Department and each other as to how they may be able to deliver any future grant.
2. To share with the market early drafts of the grant Statement of Outcomes and invite suppliers to discuss with DfE any thoughts on the grant, set up costs, hand over period or any other aspects relevant to the grant period.
3. A set of focused questions will be shared during the session and we would encourage suppliers to respond to feedback their thoughts either during, or shortly after the session is completed.

Market engagement will consist of a virtual event via MS Teams. This session will give an opportunity to discuss, clarify and highlight what aspects of the competition may be most attractive as well as anything that might be a barrier to bidding.

An MS Teams event will take place Thursday 8th January 2026, 13:00 - 14:00pm. If you are interested in attending, please contact emilie.wilkinson@education.gov.uk and james.drew@education.gov.uk to arrange an invitation to the event.

Participation

Particular suitability

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

Submission

Publication date of tender notice (estimated)

19 January 2026

Contracting authority

Department for Education

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PDZG-3487-DPVD

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