

**Service Specification – Promotional Merchandise**

Weston College Group are inviting tenders for the following services:

Contract Name: **Weston College Group Promotional Merchandise**

Service Description	Term of contract
<p>The successful provider will be required to supply a broad range of branded merchandise for promotional purposes across the Weston College Group.</p> <p>Estimated contract value up to circa.£25k</p>	<p><b>3 years + 1 year</b></p>

**Timeframe for tender process:**

Process stage:	Proposed dates:
Specification Published	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
Expression of Interest and Clarification period	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2026 12pm
Tender submission deadline	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2026 12pm
Evaluation period	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> April – Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Provisional scores & Invitations to Presentations issued.	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Presentations	Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Formal feedback issued and successful supplier notified.	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
10-Day stand still period	Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> May – Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
Contract Award Notification	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2026
Contract commencement date	Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2026

**\*Note:** These dates are subject to change.

**Specification**

## 1. Organisation Overview

Weston College Group is a college of further and higher education providing education and vocational training to nearly 30,000 learners across the country. The college puts the learner first and is entrepreneurial in its approach and innovative in its thinking. The college is ambitious and aspirational and is responsive to the needs of students, staff, businesses, and the community.

The contract will commence on **29/06/2026** for a term of **3 years + 1 year**.

The successful contractor will be required to supply branded promotional merchandise in line with the specification from the contract commencement.

We invite bidders to submit comprehensive proposals that outline their goods and services including a pricing model basis that provides transparent, itemised costs, allowing the college to effectively plan and manage expenditure while ensuring flexibility in service provision. ITT documentation will only be issued to suppliers who **formally express an interest** in this opportunity by emailing **wcgtender@weston.ac.uk**.

The Contractor may, from time to time, be requested to carry out additional works or services that fall outside the scope of this Specification. Any such ad-hoc services must be pre-approved, with associated costs agreed in advance. The Contractor will be required to obtain a valid purchase order (PO) prior to commencing the work, as invoices submitted without an authorised PO will not be processed for payment.

The tender seeks to appoint a Provider who will be integral to the delivery of quality promotional merchandise across the college. The appointed provider will be expected to demonstrate a strong track record of services, offering proactive and solution-focused support. The successful contractor should also bring forward proposals that reflect a commitment to innovation, continuous improvement, and the adoption of environmentally responsible practices.

In line with Weston College's sustainability objectives, bidders are encouraged to outline how their service delivery model and organisational operations will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and supporting the College's environmental policies throughout the contract term.

Weston College is committed to securing a Contractor that can demonstrate not only quality but also a clear commitment to delivering added value, social value, and meaningful opportunities for learners. As part of this tender, the College encourages bidders to outline how they will contribute to the wider college community such as student development through workshops or guest lectures, creating work experience or mentoring opportunities, supporting community initiatives, and aligning with the College's social impact and inclusion goals. Proposals that clearly reflect how the supplier's work will go beyond the core contract to positively impact learners, staff, and the local community will be viewed favourably.

Full details in relation to Weston College may be obtained by visiting:

<https://www.weston.ac.uk/>

## 2. Requirements:

The contractor shall provide high quality, ethically sourced, and cost effective- products that reflect the College's brand identity and sustainability commitments.

The required product categories may include, but are not limited to:

- Stationery items (pens, notebooks, pencils, rulers)
- Branded apparel (t-shirts-, hoodies, lanyards)
- Event materials (bags, banners, tablecloths)
- Technology accessories (USBs, chargers, webcams)
- Sustainable and eco-friendly items (recycled materials, reusable products)
- Seasonal or campaign specific- products (e.g., welcome packs, employer engagement merchandise)

The contractor must:

- Offer a catalogue of options with customisation and branding capabilities.
- Provide design support where required.
- Guarantee product consistency, colour accuracy, and quality.
- Meet agreed delivery timescales for both standard and urgent orders.

## 3. Service Standards

The Contractor shall deliver all goods and services to a consistently high standard, ensuring quality, reliability, and adherence to the Weston College Group's brand values. The following Service Standards will apply throughout the contract period

### 3.1 Product Quality and Specification Compliance:

All promotional goods supplied must meet the agreed product specifications, including size, colour, materials, branding placement, and durability. Items must be free from defects, damage, manufacturing inconsistencies, or poor print quality. All products must comply with relevant UK safety, consumer, and environmental regulations. Samples must be provided upon request before full production begins to ensure suitability and obtain necessary approvals. The Contractor must also maintain batch to- -batch consistency and communicate any changes in materials or production processes in advance.

### 3.2 Branding and Artwork Standards:

All branding, print work, and design application must strictly adhere to the Weston College Group brand guidelines, which will be provided at the start of the contract. The Contractor must ensure accurate colour matching across all printed items and supply artwork proofs prior to production, with final approval to be obtained in writing from the College. No unauthorised alterations to logos, straplines, or other brand elements are permitted. The Contractor must store approved artwork securely and ensure its consistent application across all projects

### **3.3 Delivery and Logistics Standards**

Standard delivery lead times must be met as agreed in the contract, and clear delivery schedules must be communicated at the point of order. Urgent or time sensitive orders, such as those associated with open days or employer events, must be prioritised wherever possible. Deliveries must be packaged securely and clearly labelled to prevent damage, loss, or confusion, and must include complete packing lists that match the order specification. Any delays, shortages, or logistical issues must be communicated to the College immediately, along with revised timelines and appropriate contingency- options.

### **3.4 Customer Service and Communication:**

A dedicated account manager shall be assigned to handle relationship management, order coordination, problem resolution, and routine reporting. All queries must be acknowledged within one working day and responded to with clear, accurate information. The Contractor must maintain open, proactive communication regarding lead times, stock issues, risks, or proposed product changes. Clear escalation procedures must also be in place for urgent or unresolved matters.

### **3.5 Sustainability and Ethical Standard:**

The Contractor must demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability by offering environmentally responsible alternatives across major product categories. Products should, wherever possible, be sourced from recycled, recyclable, biodegradable, or responsibly certified materials. The Contractor shall ensure full compliance with Modern Slavery legislation, ethical manufacturing standards, and fair labour- practices across its supply chain. Packaging should be minimised and focused on recyclable or reusable materials. The Contractor is encouraged to propose sustainable innovations and continually seek opportunities to improve environmental performance throughout the contract

### **3.6 Performance and Continuous Improvement**

The Contractor must adhere to all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out in the contract and actively participate in performance review meetings. Any service failures must be addressed promptly through corrective actions agreed with the College. The Contractor is expected to proactively suggest new products, cost saving- measures, sustainability enhancements, and service improvements. Benchmarking against market standards should be carried out regularly to ensure competitive pricing and quality.

### **3.7 Data Protection and Confidentiality**

All customer files, artwork assets, and project information must be stored securely and managed in accordance with UK GDPR requirements. No branding assets, project information, or College data may be shared with external parties without explicit written approval. The Contractor must comply fully with the College's expectations for privacy, security, and confidentiality throughout the duration of the contract

### **3.8 Social Value**

The Weston College Group expects the Contractor to deliver meaningful social value throughout the contract, supporting learners, communities, and sustainability goals. Bidders should outline any student opportunities, environmental social value initiatives and any community impact.

## **4. Contractor's Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Product Supply and Quality**

The Contractor shall supply promotional goods that fully meet the agreed specifications, including material quality, durability, and branding accuracy. All items must comply with relevant UK regulatory, safety, and environmental standards, ensuring they are safe and suitable for use. The Contractor is responsible for maintaining consistent quality across repeated orders and proactively managing any product variations to avoid discrepancies. Product samples or prototypes must be provided when requested, enabling the College to approve designs and materials prior to large-scale production.

### **4.2 Branding, Artwork, and Design**

The Contractor shall produce accurate artwork proofs and obtain written approval from the College before any production begins. They must ensure full compliance with the College's branding guidelines, including correct colour matching, placement, scale, and logo usage. All approved artwork must be stored securely and used consistently across all product types to maintain brand integrity.

### **4.3 Order Management and Fulfilment**

The Contractor shall maintain an efficient ordering and fulfilment process by providing timely quotations, clear lead times, and proactive updates throughout each stage of an order. They must ensure all standard and urgent orders are delivered within the agreed deadlines, supplying tracking information as soon as goods are dispatched and notifying the College immediately of any delays, risks, or supply chain disruptions. All products must be delivered in secure, appropriate packaging that protects against damage in transit and supports ease of handling upon arrival.

### **4.4 Communication and Customer Support**

The Contractor shall assign a dedicated account manager who is knowledgeable in promotional goods, sourcing, sustainability, and branding, and who will act as the primary point of contact for all enquiries. The Contractor must respond to all queries within one working day and provide clear escalation routes for urgent matters or unresolved issues. They are also expected to participate in

regular review meetings with the College to discuss performance, address any service concerns, and explore opportunities for innovation and continuous improvement

#### **4.5 Ethical, Environmental, and Social Commitments**

The Contractor shall ensure full compliance with Modern Slavery legislation, ethical sourcing practices, and relevant environmental standards throughout their operations and supply chain. They are expected to offer sustainable product options wherever possible and actively support the College's environmental objectives by prioritising low impact materials and responsible manufacturing processes. Upon request, the Contractor must also provide evidence of supply chain transparency, demonstrating- responsible procurement and ethical oversight at every stage of production.

#### **4.6 Administration and Financial Management**

The Contractor shall provide accurate, itemised invoices that clearly align with purchase orders and the goods delivered. They must maintain price stability in line with the agreed contract terms and notify the College in advance of any proposed changes. In addition, the Contractor shall provide periodic spend reports when required to support effective financial monitoring and budget management.

### **5. Weston College Group Responsibilities**

#### **5.1 Approvals and Information Provision**

The Weston College Group will provide timely approvals for artwork proofs, quotations, samples, and order confirmations to ensure that production and delivery timelines are met. The College will supply all relevant branding guidelines, logos, and design assets required for the Contractor to produce accurate and compliant materials. It will also communicate event deadlines, campaign priorities, and any specific requirements needed to support the planning and fulfilment of orders.

#### **5.2 Order Management**

The College will place orders through the agreed procurement process and ensure that all requests clearly detail the required quantities, specifications, delivery locations, and timescales. Where possible, the College will provide advance notice of peak activity periods such as open days, recruitment events, or major campaigns to enable the Contractor to prepare and plan effectively. Should any issues arise with delivered goods, the College will notify the Contractor promptly so that corrective action can be taken without delay

#### **5.3 Communication and Relationship Management**

To support effective communication, the College will allocate appropriate points of contact for day to day enquiries and escalation. College representatives will participate- in regular service review meetings, providing constructive feedback and engaging openly with the Contractor to support ongoing service improvement, innovation, and performance management. The College will also communicate any forthcoming brand changes or shifts in promotional strategy that may affect future orders or design requirements

#### **5.4 Financial Responsibilities**

The College will ensure that invoices are processed in line with agreed payment terms and that purchase order numbers are issued appropriately through internal approval processes. The College will review spend reports when required and assist in financial reconciliation activities to maintain clear and accurate financial oversight throughout the contract.

## 5.5 Supporting Social Value Delivery

The College will support the delivery of social value commitments by facilitating access to relevant curriculum teams, student groups, and events where workshops, talks, or engagement activities are to be delivered. Feedback will be provided on the impact of these activities, and the College will work collaboratively with the Contractor to identify new opportunities for future social value contributions.

## 6. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

### 6.1 Regular Performance Reviews:

- **Scheduled Account Management Meetings:** Formal review meetings will take place at agreed intervals (e.g., quarterly, or more frequently during peak periods such as enrolment campaigns). These meetings will involve the College's contract manager and the supplier's dedicated account manager.
- **Service Level Evaluation:** Each review will assess performance against agreed KPIs, including delivery accuracy, turnaround times, adherence to agreed pricing, and responsiveness to communication.
- **Pipeline and Planning Discussions:** Meetings will also cover upcoming marketing campaigns, anticipated orders, seasonal demand, and any changes in branding or compliance requirements to ensure proactive planning.
- **Issue Resolution Log:** Any issues raised since the previous review, such as missed deadlines, quality concerns, or stock discrepancies, must be documented by the supplier along with corrective actions taken and preventive measures implemented. This log will be shared before each meeting.

### 6.2 Quality Checks

- **Random Sampling of Deliveries:** The College will carry out random inspections of delivered promotional items to verify product quality, print precision, durability, colour accuracy, and alignment with brand guidelines.
- **Brand Compliance Verification:** All items must meet the College's branding standards, including approved logos, colour palettes, fonts, and layout requirements. Items failing compliance may be rejected and replaced at no cost.
- **Material and Construction Standards:** Checks will confirm that materials meet the minimum specifications outlined in the tender—e.g., gsm thresholds for print materials, stitching quality for bags, and environmental or sustainability criteria where applicable.

- **Supplier Quality Assurance Documentation:** The supplier may be required to provide quality certificates, production samples, print proofs, or test results demonstrating that goods meet required standards before large-scale production begins.
- **Non-Conformance Process:** Any substandard goods will be logged through a formal non-conformance process, requiring the supplier to investigate root causes, replace goods promptly, and implement corrective actions.

### 6.3 Customer Feedback

- **Internal Stakeholder Input:** Feedback will be actively collected from College departments using the promotional materials (e.g., Marketing, Recruitment, Student Services, Faculties) to gauge satisfaction levels, product usefulness, and any recurring issues.
- **End-User Experience Monitoring:** Where appropriate, informal feedback from prospective students, event attendees, or other recipients of promotional items may be gathered to evaluate the appeal and effectiveness of materials.
- **Feedback Channels:** The supplier must support feedback collection through agreed channels—such as post-delivery surveys, online feedback forms, or issue-reporting dashboards.
- **Continuous Improvement Process:** The supplier will be expected to analyse feedback trends and propose improvements, whether in product selection, design options, delivery processes, sustainability, or cost efficiency.
- **Responsiveness to Feedback:** Timely responses to queries, amendments, or complaints will form part of ongoing performance monitoring, with expected response times included in the service level agreement.

### 6.4 Continuous Improvement

- **Commitment to Innovation and Best Practice:**  
The Contractor must demonstrate a proactive approach to identifying and implementing improvements across all areas of service delivery. This includes adopting emerging sector best practices, new production methods, and innovative promotional product options relevant to the needs of a modern FE college.
- **Sustainability Enhancements:**  
Suppliers will be expected to make continuous progress in sustainability, such as:
  - Increasing the availability and uptake of eco-friendly and recycled materials
  - Reducing packaging waste and single-use plastics
  - Improving carbon efficiency in production and delivery processes
  - Providing transparency on environmental credentials and supply chain impactThe College may request evidence of sustainability initiatives, certifications, or annual sustainability reports.
- **Product Range Development:**  
Contractors should regularly review and refresh their product catalogues to ensure relevance, quality, and value for money. This includes proposing new, innovative merchandise suitable for student recruitment, open days, employer engagement, and community outreach. Suppliers will

also be expected to retire products that consistently underperform in terms of quality, durability, or environmental impact.

## 7. Financial Monitoring

The contractor will adhere to the following financial requirements:

- Provide transparent and itemised pricing for all goods and services.
- Maintain price stability for the duration of the contract unless otherwise agreed.
- Notify the College of any proposed price changes and obtain written approval in advance.
- Submit accurate invoices aligned to purchase orders and delivered goods.
- Support financial audits or budget reviews as required.
- Provide periodic spend reports to help the College monitor usage and forecast demand.

## 8. Insurance

The Supplier shall hold all relevant insurances including Public Liability Insurance **not less than £5 million** and Employee Liability Insurance **not less than £10 million**.

## 9. Basis of the Contract

The initial period of the contract will be **3 years + 1 year, to be reviewed annually**.

Weston College Group may from time to time, by giving notice in writing to the Contractor, amend the operational requirements. Any such variation shall be subject to a fair and reasonable price adjustment to be agreed between Weston College Group and the Contractor.

The bidder is required to confirm acceptance of the proposed contract with their return bid.

## Contract Monitoring

Weston College Group Contract manager shall meet with the suppliers Contract Manager on a quarterly basis, to discuss performance, feedback and any other aspects of the contract as required.

## Performance and KPIs:

KPI	Target	Measure
<b>KPI 1</b> <b>Product Quality</b>	Goods meet agreed quality standards and are free from defects	Defect reporting, quality checks ≥ 98% defect-free
<b>KPI 2</b>		Supplier reporting; product specs.



<b>Sustainability Compliance</b>	Use of eco-friendly materials, reduced plastics, ethical sourcing	Minimum 80% of products meeting sustainability criteria.
<b>KPI 4 Customer Satisfaction</b>	Feedback from College staff on service and product experience	Average rating $\geq$ 4/5.

## Appendix A - Eligibility and Evaluation Process

### Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility will be assessed through the SQ and ITT Evaluation stage.

Scores will be collated, only suppliers who score above XXX will receive an Invitation to presentation stage.

### Evaluation process

1. **Selection Questionnaire and ITT** will allow potential suppliers to self-declare their status against the eligibility criteria and exclusion grounds to provide preliminary evidence of their suitability to pursue a professional activity, economic and financial standing, and technical and professional ability.
2. **Invitation to Tender (ITT)** will only be issued to suppliers who **formally express an interest** in this opportunity by emailing [wcg tender@weston.ac.uk](mailto:wcg tender@weston.ac.uk). The ITT will include service-specific tender questions to enable potential suppliers to submit a comprehensive and detailed offer in response to the specification outlined in the Tender Notice.

**Supplier Presentation and Sample Review** will allow potential suppliers to present service models, innovation, finances and a selection of samples to the evaluation panel.

### Eligibility Criteria

Evaluation of tenders and presentation.

TT Scoring Matrix: [This may vary by service]

<b>Innovation, social and added value</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Account management</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>People and mobilisation</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Service specific detail</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Financial</b>	<b>20%</b>

<b>Business continuity and Disaster planning</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>10%</b>

**5. Formal notification of scoring and contact award.**

1. Every tender received is deemed to have been made subject to these conditions.
2. The bidder must obtain for themselves at their own expense all information necessary for the preparation of their tenders.
  - a. Information supplied to the bidder by Weston College Group is only for guidance in the preparation of the tender. The bidder must satisfy themselves by their own investigations of the accuracy of such information.
  - b. The bidder is required to complete and provide all information required by Weston College Group in accordance with the ITT, appendices and schedules. Failure to comply with these conditions will lead Weston College Group to reject the tender unless omissions have been expressly agreed by Weston College Group.
3. Any bidder who directly or indirectly canvasses any member or official of Weston College Group concerning the award of the contract for the provision of the services, or who directly or indirectly obtains or attempts to obtain information from any such member or official concerning any offer tender or proposed tender for the services shall be disqualified.
4. All information supplied by Weston College Group in connection with this invitation to tender shall be regarded as confidential to Weston College Group. This invitation to tender and accompanying documents are and shall remain the property of Weston College Group and shall be returned and/or deleted on demand.
5. Any bidder who fixes and adjusts the amount of this tender by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person, or in any way acts in a collusive manner shall be disqualified.
6. Tenders must be for the supply of the whole of the services upon the terms and conditions as set out.
7. The bidder shall cost the contract for 3 years from the commencement date.