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| Title: | SEND FPS: Provider FAQs |
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# Providers: Frequently asked questions

How will parental preference be taken into account?

Each local authority will still be responsible for working with parents and ensuring parental preference is considered.

The NW SEND FPS is a contract which will streamline commissioning and procurement processes, for both commissioners and providers. It will not mandate how local authorities work with parents.

Local Authorities will retain their existing decision-making processes and paperwork.

Is the North West SEND FPS linked to the North West Residential FPS? How?

Yes - the NW SEND FPS and the NW Residential FPS are linked. Any provider that is requested to deliver residential care as part of a package, will have to meet the requirements of the NW Residential FPS for this part of the placement.

Ofsted have suspended making inspection judgements (for residential services) and this is expected to continue until April 2021? How will this be managed – will providers with a rating less than ‘good’ (for residential element of provision) be taken into account?

As above, the NW SEND FPS and the NW Residential FPS contracts are linked.

Each of the regional contracts has a Governance Group. The NW Residential Governance is considering the options for how to manage the suspension of Ofsted inspection judgement on residential services.

For information, the minimum requirement to join the NW Residential FPS is ‘requires improvement’.

Will 52-week residential school placements be education led placements, or residential led placements?

All placements made under the NW SEND FPS will be education led placements

Is the contract only for schools?

Initially, the tender is only for schools because the 3 lots on the contract are all for different types of school placement – day placements or residential school placements.

If a provider has more than one school, will they be required to submit separate tenders for each school?

Providers with multiple schools will only have to submit one tender. However, some elements of the tender will have to be filled in multiple times for each school (or multiple documents / pieces of evidence supplied for each school)

Can more time be given for providers to submit tenders?

All providers must submit their tenders by the deadlines advertised.

The SEND Working Group may change deadlines in response to provider feedback. If this happens all providers would be kept informed

How many local authorities are signed up to using the North West SEND FPS?

This is unknown at this stage. All Local Authorities in the North West are currently going through sign off processes.

All 23 Local Authorities in the North West are able to sign up to use the FPS

Will the National Schools Contract still be used?

No – the North West SEND FPS is a different contract which will be used instead of the national contract. It has been tailored to the needs of commissioners in this region

How will transparency in pricing be achieved?

All providers must submit their standard pricing at point of tender – this is a pass/ fail requirement. This information will be collated and sent to Placing Local Authorities. They can use this information as a benchmark to negotiate prices with providers at point of placement.

Additional services can be added to placements to tailor them to the needs of the child. This would include additional payments for those extra services.

Can providers inform Placements North West of their school vacancies, so this can be shared with Local Authorities making placements?

Placements North West cannot collate vacancy information from providers as it changes too frequently to keep it accurate.

We do not have the technology available for providers to upload the information to a website.

What is the quality and price split?

There is no quality / price split because this is a tender process for entry onto a Flexible Purchasing System.

Placing Authorities (at point of placement) may use a quality / price split.

Are local authorities compelled to use the North West SEND FPS, or can they make off framework placements?

Local Authorities signed up to using the North West SEND FPS will use it as their first option to make placements. They can also make off framework placements if they have a need to do so.

Can providers that have multiple schools add and remove them from the FPS?

Yes, schools can be removed from the contract. Schools can be added, but providers must apply to add them and they must meet the tender criteria to be accepted onto the FPS.

Are there any timescales for further development of the FPS? When can FE providers or Alternative Provision join?

We do not have timescales for the phases of further development. Although we would like to add further service types / lots as soon as possible, the contract needs to become established first. When we develop future lots we will engage providers in the process to ensure they input into the service specification