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| Title: | North West Flexible Purchasing System for SEND |
| Date: | August 2020 |
| For: | Bulletin for Providers |

# Introduction

# This is another bulletin to keep you up to date with the development of the North West Flexible Purchasing System for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school places.

# Background

# The local authorities in the North West are developing a contract to be able to source SEND school placements (called a ‘Flexible Purchasing System’) for children and young people up to the age of 25 that have an education, health and care plan.

# The Flexible Purchasing System will support placement finding for the following types of schools:

# • Independent and non-maintained special schools

# • Special Post-16 Institutions

# The aim is to establish a regional SEND FPS which will provide consistent quality standards, streamline processes, improve communication and encourage innovation.

Phase two of the FPS will look to introduce General Further Education and Individual Learning Providers to the new purchasing system.

# Progress so far

# From December onwards, the North West SEND Working Group has been writing the service specification and the contract. Where possible, feedback from parents, young people, providers and local authorities has been used to inform the contract.

# Three types of service will be included in the purchasing system: -

# • Day placements

# • 38 week residential placements

# • 52 week residential placements

# Extra services (lots) can be added to the purchasing system in the future to enable innovation. This would be based on feedback on need and demand from commissioners, parents and providers.

# Provider engagement

# We will be holding virtual engagement sessions for providers in October 2020 to give you some guidance and support on the tender process, outline the content of the service specification and give you the chance to ask any questions.

# Please look out for a save the date notice which will be circulated shortly.

# Timescales

# Due to Covid-19 there have been delays in the project. We had intended for the contract to go out to tender in the spring, so it could be used to support placement finding for September 2020.

# We are now working to the timescales below:

# • September 2020 – October 2020: finalise contract

# • October 2020: training for local authorities on the purchasing system and provider workshops on the tender process

# • November 2020 – January 2021: tender process

# • February 2021: contract goes live

# For more information

# If you would like more information, please contact [**placementsnorthwest@bolton.gov.uk**](mailto:placementsnorthwest@bolton.gov.uk)

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