

Alternative Education Provision New Business Information and Guidance

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide information for a new business who are interested in becoming a provider on Nottinghamshire County Council's alternative education framework.

What is the alternative education service?

Nottinghamshire County Council is seeking to commission alternative education for those children and young people for whom it has statutory responsibility, who are without a school place; or where a maintained school or academy has been unable to fully provide an appropriate individualised education package.

This service will offer a wide range of alternative education provision, supporting wherever appropriate, transition back into school.

It is envisaged that the following groups of children and young people may require access to alternative provision:

- Those children/young people who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools
- Those children/young people without a school place
- Children and young people who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan and whose needs cannot be met in Contracting Authority maintained or academy provision
- Children and young people who have an identified Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) need
- Children and young people who are disengaged from school and who are at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- Juvenile, young offenders and ex-offenders
- Pregnant teenagers and teenage parents
- Children/young people who are unable to attend school due to a medical condition

The Council is currently looking at commissioning placements through providers who can meet the specific gaps in existing provision:

- Increased provision for primary years and post 16
- Increased provision in the north (Bassetlaw), and south of the county (Rushcliffe, Broxtowe) in general
- Providers who can offer accredited ICT as a core offer
- Vocational opportunities in the north of the county
- Providers with registered exam centre status

- Increased access to progression destinations e.g., college or employment
- Demand for providers who can offer sensory and therapeutic provision

Specialist education market position statement

This is a key business intelligence document, which includes current supply and demand, and the Council's commissioning intentions around alternative education:

Read our market position statement below:

[specialisteducationmarketpositionstatementdocx.pdf \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Alternative education tender

East Midlands Tenders Portal

There is a procurement process in place and Nottinghamshire County Council operate a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), which enables providers the opportunity to submit their application at any point in time whilst the list is in operation. The provider list will operate electronically through the East Midlands Tender Portal at <https://www.eastmidstenders.org/> for a period of 10 years until 1st January 2027.

You will first need to register on the site before you will be able to access the tender. The name of the tender is 'Alternative (Education) Provision in Nottinghamshire' and the tender reference is **DN112705**. You will be able to access the process overview and short breaks service specification documents on the portal.

Read our supplier guide, which provides instructions on registering an interest and completing a tender response:

[simplified-supplier-system-user-guide.pdf \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)

If you have any queries about using the East Midlands Tenders Portal, you can contact the Council's Procurement Team by emailing:

corporate.procurement@nottsc.gov.uk

IMPORTANT UPDATE NOTICE MARCH 2025: Alternative education provision in Nottinghamshire is currently being reviewed as part of a recommissioning process and the current tender will only be opened in response to service demand.

This process is expected to be completed in 2025. As soon as the new models of commissioning are agreed this guidance will be updated.

If you wish to discuss this or require further information, please email Phil Smith philip.smith@nottsc.gov.uk and Abbie Harrop abbie.harrop@nottsc.gov.uk

Information and advice on the tender application and process

You will need to complete a questionnaire, which has a set of standard questions, including financial, that are scored as pass/fail to ensure compliance with procurement regulations.

When completing your tender application there are a set of project specific questions to assess your technical and professional ability. Providers will need to score 60% or higher to pass. These questions include the description of your provision, qualifications offered, achievement and progression.

PLEASE NOTE: Council staff are unable to offer specific guidance and advice on answering the tender questions. Please refer to the tips below on completing your application.

Top tips and advice when answering project specific questions:

- **DO** read each question carefully and answer them accurately and precisely – there may be additional prompts to outline specific information that is required from your answers
- **DO** relate your answers to the service specification. The spec outlines exactly what the service requirements are, and your answers should demonstrate you have read and have a clear understanding of it. The service you propose should mirror the requirements of the specification.
- **DO** keep your answers concise and focused on the question as there will be a limited word count
- **DO** use examples where possible to support your answers
- **DO** double-check your answers before submitting for spelling errors, omissions/areas of confusion and clarity etc
- **DO NOT** cut and paste answers from another tender application
- **DO NOT** make any assumptions about what the Council may or may not know about you or your company. Each tender is scored on its own merits and the Council can only evaluate what you have submitted. The Council cannot refer to any previous knowledge or experience it has had with a supplier when scoring a tender application.
- **DO NOT** use a preface in your answers to put things into context as this is not necessary and will only use up your word count

All tender applications will only be scored once the round has closed and you will be notified of the outcome of your application by the Procurement Team.

If you are successful with your tender application, an essential checklist process will be undertaken to check that you have the relevant policies, procedures, and documentation in place before you will be accepted on the framework and can receive referrals.

Requirements

Insurances

£5 million public liability & £10 million employer's liability is required for all businesses.

*If administering medicines or health care you will also need to consider medical malpractice insurance.

Regulations

Advice from the Department for Education (DfE), entitled "Registration of Independent Schools" published in January 2016, stipulates that any school (as defined by section 4 of the Education Act 1996) would need to be registered as an independent school, if it is providing:

- full time education for five or more learners of compulsory school age
- or where one or more such learners have an EHC plan or statement of special educational needs
- or where one or more learner is "looked after" by the Contracting Authorities

It is acknowledged that, because of this DfE guidance, there may be some providers who are originally categorised as alternative providers of education, but who will ultimately need to become registered as independent schools.

Where a Provider meets the threshold for independent school registration, the Provider must notify the Contracting Authority that this threshold has been reached. No further alternative provision placements should be accepted.

Providers wishing to offer provision as an independent/non-maintained special school will need to register on Nottinghamshire's Approved Provider List (NAPL). You can access the tender through the East Midlands Tender Portal <https://www.eastmidstenders.org/> The name of the tender is Alternative (education) Provision in Nottinghamshire, and the project reference is **DN112705**.

Read further DfE guidance on registering as an independent school below:

[Independent school registration guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544441/independent-school-registration-guidance.pdf)

Legislation

You must comply with all relevant legislation relating to the service, which includes any updates and amendments. It is the providers responsibility keep up to date with any such developments.

Listed below is some of the relevant legislation that providers are expected to comply with and is not meant to be exhaustive:

- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 1996, 2002 and 2011
- Health and Social Care Act 2001, 2008 and 2012
- The Chronically sick and Disabled Act 1970
- Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Health Act 1983 and 2007
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 1998 and 2018
- The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and 2005

Statutory guidance

Providers should ensure that their provision is compliant with the following statutory guidance:

- [Alternative Provision Statutory guidance for Local Authorities, January 2013;](#)
- [Promoting the education of looked-after children, February 2018;](#)
- [Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years, January 2015.](#)

Policies and procedures

You will need to have robust written policies, procedures, and codes of practice, which should include adequate instruction, guidance, and support for staff in the function and delivery of the service outlined within the service specification. These should be accessible to all stakeholders and should include the following:

- Safeguarding – identifying, logging and reporting of concerns, designated lead for child protection, contact details for [Nottinghamshire County Council's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#)
- Safer Recruitment Procedures – [Nottinghamshire Children's Safeguarding Children Partnership Guidance](#)
- Recruitment and use of volunteers (if applicable)
- Staff supervision and training
- Staff training and induction
- Risk assessment – individual/environmental/activities
- Care Planning – Assessments/support plans/reviews
- Health and safety policy – Consider the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Lone working policy

- Incident/Accident/Emergency procedures
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Equal opportunities – anti-discriminatory practice
- Behaviour management
- Whistleblowing
- Code of conduct (appropriate boundaries)
- Business continuity plan (to include risk assessment and contingency in relation to interruption or closure of the service i.e., power cut, inclement weather, unforeseen staff absence)
- Moving and handling
- Complaints and compliments
- Grievance
- Anti-bullying

Documents and systems

You will need to ensure you have relevant documentation in place for the effective running of the service and for scrutiny purposes. These documents should include the following:

- Care/support Plans
- Progression monitoring/reporting system
- Risk assessment forms
- Induction/welcome packs for children/young people and their families
- Attendance management system
- Incident/accident forms/logs
- Behaviour logs/outcomes
- Staff training and supervision records
- Staff files - Right to Work checks/references/training records
- Single DBS record – Evidence all staff have DBS checks, and these are kept up to date
- Child/young person and parent/carer feedback forms
- MAR (Medication Administration Record) *Where applicable

*Please note that if staff are transporting children/young people in their vehicles then they should have up to date business insurance in place.

Training

You will need to ensure that staff have the necessary training in place to deliver the service safely and effectively to meet the needs of the children/young people accessing the provision. If a service is to be provided to children and young people with complex health needs, then appropriate training must be available in order that all staff are trained and assessed as competent by a health care professional.

The following is a list of training that is required for staff, although it should be noted that this list is not exhaustive:

- Safeguarding Children
- Health & safety (including lone working)
- Paediatric First Aid
- Behaviour Management
- Autism awareness
- Mental health awareness
- Care/support planning
- Risk assessments – identification of individual/environmental/activity risks
- Reporting of incidents/accidents
- Academic/vocational training as required to deliver teaching effectively
- Moving and handling (where applicable)
- Administering of medication (where applicable)
- Specific health/care procedures (where applicable to meet the specific needs of children/young people e.g., PEG feeding)
- Seizures & rescue medication (where applicable)

Quality assurance and contract management processes

Nottinghamshire County Council operate a robust quality assurance management process. If you are successful with your tender application, you will be asked to complete a New Provider Checklist and a Children's Quality Assurance Framework (C-QAF) self-validation form to confirm the policies, procedures, and processes that you have in place. Once on the framework for over 6 months and when you have young people placed within your service, a scheduled C-QAF validation visit will take place to confirm everything that you have self-validated, and this visit will also involve talking to staff and families who are accessing your service.

Any contracts with over five children or young people placed with their service will be subject to an annual contract review meeting. The Contract Office will produce an annual contract review report which will be shared with the Commissioning and Contracts Board if requested. The contract review process pulls together how the service has performed during the last 12 months. It will provide details of any quality inspections, performance data, and outcome data collected during the last year. It provides the support and challenge, which leads to service improvement and better outcomes for children, young people, and their families.

Alternative education outcome star and provider workbook

The alternative education outcome star is a method of measuring outcomes for children and young people accessing Alternative Education services. On a termly basis, all providers will be expected to submit a provider workbook, which contains details of the children/young people accessing their service and how they are progressing against certain key areas e.g. employment, good health, and how they feel about their education setting.

Business support and advice (All businesses)

D2N2 Growth Hub

Offer advice and guidance on starting and growing a business including a free business health check.

<https://www.d2n2growthhub.co.uk/>

Tel: 0333 006 9178

Nottingham Business Ventures

Offer advice and support on starting and growing a business. They also offer free training on starting up and running a business.

<https://nbv.co.uk/>

Tel: 0844 887 2568 or Email: enquiries@nbv.co.uk

East Midlands Chamber

Offer tailored business advice and support.

<https://www.emc-dnl.co.uk/supporting-growth/business-advice-and-support/>

Tel: 0333 053 8639

Nottinghamshire County Council Microprovider Support

Can offer advice to small businesses who have ten or less full-time equivalent workers (paid or unpaid) and are independent or any larger organisation. The support will include listening to ideas and giving professional feedback, helping businesses to understand legal and regulatory requirements and advice on training and insurances.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/business-community/supporting-social-care-businesses/setting-up-a-small-social-care-enterprise>

Tel: 0300 500 80 80

Voluntary sector organisations

Community Accounting Plus

They help voluntary and community organisations manage themselves well in all areas of accounting and finance. They hold regular finance surgeries for businesses.

<https://www.caplus.org.uk/> or Tel: 0115 9470839

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

Offer a Consultancy Service, which includes tailored support around governance, strategy, and organisational development.

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/consultancy>

Tel: 020 7713 6161 or email: ncvo@ncvo.org.uk

Nottinghamshire County Council Communities Team

Offer practical support such as help with writing a constitution, advice on policies, preparing accounts and budgeting. They can also offer financial advice and support.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/get-involved/supporting-voluntary-sector>

Tel: 0115 9772041 or email: cvs.team@nottscc.gov.uk