

Provision of Fostering Agency Placements Flexible Agreement

Blackburn with Darwen Council,
Blackpool Council, Cumbria County Council,
Lancashire County Council

Market Engagement Virtual Event
9th July 2021 10am-12pm

DfE Sufficiency in Foster Care

DfE funded a project to identify and explore potential areas of collaboration with the specific aim of improving local non-connected foster care sufficiency.

Stage 1 Feasibility Study March 2020

Evidenced

- a sufficiency of fostering households across BBCL at a macro level
- A lack of sufficient fostering households to meet demand in certain locations
- 50% IFA fostering households within BBCL used by other LAs. (c500)
- 300 CLA placed outside BBCL
- A gap in service provision for a group of CYP who require an enhanced placement to achieve a stable placement.

Stage 2

Action Stage

- BBCL Exchange Days
- Review of Decision Tree within Placement Teams
- UCLAN involvement in Digital Marketing
- Development of Flexible Agreement to improve Sufficiency
 - Including for CYP with Enhanced Needs

Flexible Agreement

- Acknowledgement that IFAs are essential for sufficiency
- Need to improve partnership working focussed on meeting CYPs needs collectively
- Existing arrangements need to be improved
- Learn from experiences of all parties
- Building on existing arrangements

Consultation with Providers

Carried out independently

Attended NAFP NW meetings

Individual Interviews offered to all providers.

Headline Feedback

- Relationships are essential
- Essential to have regular communication and avenue for escalation
- Financial Burden is passed back to LAs
- Lack of annual price increases unfair
- Some discounts cant be justified
 - Volume
 - Same LA CYP in household who are not siblings
 - Increasing Long Term Discount
 - Discounts on Enhanced/ Step Down Placements
- Multiple Tenders coming out in Summer/ autumn
- Sharing key Terms and Conditions early

Consultation with Providers

- Relationships are essential
 - Desire to improve relationships
 - Concept of Tier 1 Relationships
 - Structured into Relationships
 - All LAs named individual
- Regular communication
- Avenue for escalation
- Financial Burden passed back to LA
 - Desire to minimalise Financial Risk
- Lack of annual price increases
 - Annual Average CPI increase
- Some discounts can't be justified
 - Volume
 - No Volume discount
 - Same LA CYP in household
 - Siblings Price. Provider lead
 - Increasing Long Term Discount
 - No 10% LT Discount
 - Enhanced/ Step Down
 - No Discounts applied
- Multiple Tenders Summer/ Autumn
 - Aiming for 2 month ITT Oct/ Nov 2021
 - Basic Entry Requirements with options
 - Based on Existing Contract Documents
 - Sharing key areas now

Study of Hard to Find Referrals

60 Referrals from across BBCL

Where 3 or placement searches had been carried out

Sense Checked with Placement Officers

- Younger children where needs expressed in placement exceeded that expected on referral – including attention seeking and verbal aggression prompting carer exhaustion and placement end.
- Children with SEN/ SEMH with challenging behaviour. Described as active children with social workers identifying the need for activities and structure within the placement.
- Older children with emotional support needs, frequently referred following disengagement from carers.

Expectations of Young People

20 CYP were interviewed- majority identified with Enhanced Care cohorts

Successful placements need

- The young person's engagement in the planning process & developing the plan
- Pre- knowledge of placement
- A known adult supporting the introduction to the placement
- Access to an adult outside of the placement (Trusted Adult) – so that the young person
 - Can discuss issues and challenges re the placement.
 - Could have focussed work that allowed them to achieve stability in placement.
 - Could have a mediator or facilitator for solving issues jointly with the foster carer in placement.
- Joint activities with their foster carer, in school and in the community. This was especially valuable at the start of a placement to support the settling in process, provided supportive networks, and appreciation.
- Young people to be involved in formulating how they were to be introduced to others in the community.

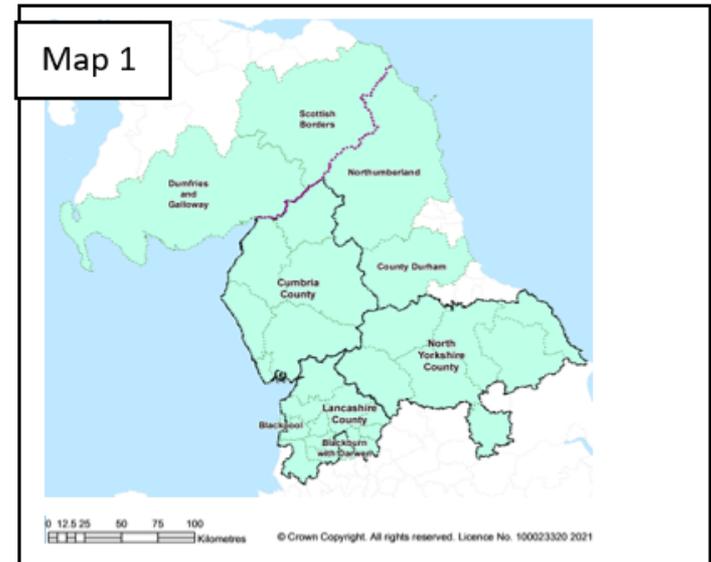
Flexible Agreement

The purpose of this briefing is to give you an introduction to the potential tender process, implement **fairness** and **transparency**.

We reserve the right to amend what is set out today and any procurement process will be conducted only in accordance with the procurement documents that are published

Minimum Criteria to have a place on the Flexible Agreement

- **Standard Selection checks** - suitability to provide the professional activity economic and financial standing, as well as technical and professional ability.
- **Ofsted/ equivalent Registration and rating** – Ofsted Rating of Requires Improvement or Care Inspectorate rating of Adequate or above
- **As part of this registration 2 or more registered fostering households residing within Map 1 footprint** - within the combined footprint of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Lancashire, Cumbria, Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Northumberland County Council, Durham County Council, North Yorkshire County Council.



Meet the minimum criteria & you are on the Flexible Agreement. Simple and Easy access

Lots & Tiers

Lot 1 **Mainstream Foster Care** **3 Tiers**

Prices by Age Bandings
 Sibling Price by Age Banding (for all in Sibling Group)
 Parent & Child Placement
 Solo Placement cost
 Reservation/Retainer Fee (for all Lots)
 All Providers who meet Minimum Criteria can be on Lot

Lot 2 **Enhanced Foster Care** **2 Tiers**

1 Price for all.
 Additional Services and Costs can be agreed
 No Discounts
 All Providers who are on Lot 1 can be on Lot 2

Lot 3 **Step Down Foster Care** **2 Tiers**

1 Price for all age ranges
 4 Stages , Price by stages
 No Discounts
 All Providers who are on Lot 1 can be on Lot 3

As part of Tender Exercise, Providers will be informed of indicative Tier position and offered opportunity to submit best and final prices

Lot 1 Tier Consideration

Lot 1 Mainstream Tier Consideration

Essential Criteria to be Accepted on Tier 2

- Ofsted Registration and rating - Good or Outstanding
- As part of this Ofsted registration, 2 or more registered households residing within Map 2 footprint - combined footprint of Blackburn, Blackpool, Cumbria and Lancashire (BBCL)
- Price – no more than 10% of the average price within this Lot.

If Agency can not meet the above essential criteria they will be placed in Tier 3

Essential Criteria to be Accepted on Tier 3

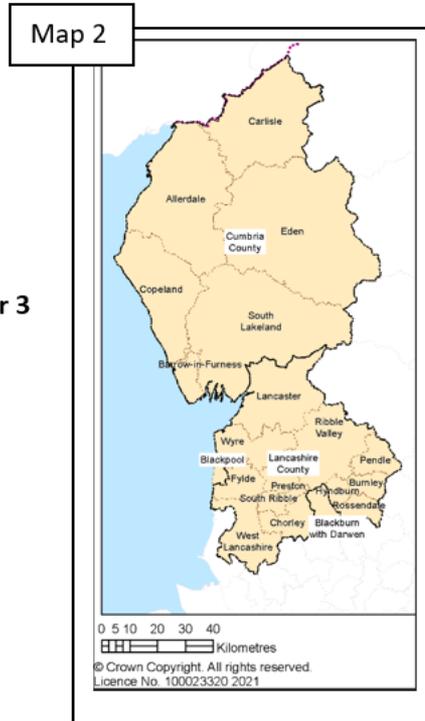
- All those providers who met the minimum criteria (2 or more registered households residing within Map 1 footprint) but don't have 2 or more registered households residing within BBCL footprint

And/or

- Ofsted Rating of Requires improvement

And/or

- Price –more than 10% of the average price within this Lot.



Lot 1 Tier 1 Consideration

Lot 1 Mainstream Foster Care Tier Consideration

Area A 'Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire's Fostering Sufficiency Area'

Essential Criteria for Tier 1

- Ofsted Registration and rating – Good or Outstanding
- As part of this registration, 5 or more registered households residing within Map 3 footprint - within the combined footprint of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire

Price – no more than 10% more than average price.

All Fostering Providers who pass the above Essential Criteria and select to be considered for Tier 1 will be assessed using the following Quality/Price Criteria:

Scored Quality Questions weighted (scored 0-4)

Quality 60%

Price 40% compare to lowest price per cohort (standard and sibling)(*weighted according to current usage?*)

Price + Quality = Total Score

Top scoring Providers Tier 1.
 Remaining Providers Tier 2 Reserves



Lot 1 Tier 1 Consideration

Area B 'Cumbria's Fostering Sufficiency Area'

Essential Criteria for Tier 1

- **Ofsted Registration and rating** – Good or Outstanding or Care Inspectorate rating of Good or above
- **As part of this registration, 5 or more registered households residing within Map 4 footprint** - within the combined footprint of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Cumbria and Lancashire

All Fostering Providers who pass the above Essential Criteria and select to be considered for Tier 1 will be assessed using the following Quality/Price Criteria:

Scored Quality Questions weighted (scored 0-4)

Quality 60%

Price 40% compare to lowest price per cohort (standard and sibling)(*weighted according to current usage?*)

Price + Quality = Total Score

Top scoring Providers Tier 1.

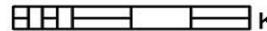
Remaining Providers Tier 2 Reserves



Lot 2 & 3



0 5 10 20 30 40

 Kilometres

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Lot 2 Enhanced Foster Care

Minimum Criteria Lot 2

Must have met the minimum criteria of the flexible agreement as above and in addition:

- As part of this registration, 2 or more registered households residing within Map 2 footprint - within the combined footprint of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool Cumbria and Lancashire (BBCL)
- A Service Model meeting the Service Specification requirements

Placed in Tier 2

Fostering Provider will select if want to be considered for Tier 1

Essential Criteria for Tier 1

In addition to the above minimum criteria

All Fostering Providers who pass the above Essential Criteria will be assessed:

Quality Questions (60%) including an assessment of Service Model

Price 40% compare to lowest price (inc retainer/ reservation fee & placement fee)- average across 12 months

Price + Quality = Total Score

Top scoring Providers Tier 1. (smaller number than Lot 1)

Remaining Providers Tier 2 Reserves

Lot 3 Step Down Foster Care

Minimum Criteria Lot 3

Must have met the minimum criteria of the flexible agreement as above and in addition:

- As part of this registration, 2 or more registered households residing within Map 2 footprint - within the combined footprint of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool Cumbria and Lancashire (BBCL)
- A Service Model meeting the Service Specification requirements

Placed in Tier 2

Fostering Provider will select if want to be considered for Tier 1

Essential Criteria for Tier 1

In addition to the above minimum criteria

All Fostering Providers who pass the above Essential Criteria will be assessed:

Quality Questions (60%) including an assessment of Service Model

Price 40% compare to lowest price (inc Stages of placements) average across 12 months

Price + Quality = Total Score

Top scoring Providers Tier 1. (smaller number than Lot 1)

Remaining Providers Tier 2 Reserves

Annual Review

Annual Price Review

- Providers entitled to apply to increase their prices by CPI on average Tendered Price.

Example

Lot 1 Average Tendered Price of 0-4 placement is £700 per week

CPI is 2%.

All providers entitled to increase Price of 0-4 placement by £14 per week

Provider A Tendered Price £600. Requests price increase. New 0-4 Placement price £614

Provider B Tendered Price £800. Requests price increase. New 0-4 Placement price £814

- Change of price/ not changing price can impact on Tiering

Annual Review

- Regulatory Rating changes
- Number of Households in Areas
- Kpi reviews
 - Responses
 - % BBCL CYP with BBCL Carers
 - Recruitment
 - Other individual Kpis
- Number of IFAs within Tier 1 reviewed to ensure meets need

Re opening

Reopen/ Reapply every 3 years

- Intend to undertake every three years at the contract anniversary
- Could occur earlier

Eligibility:

- Option for Existing Tier 1 and reserve Agencies to resubmit Quality Questions
- (or confirm they can still meet their original proposals)
- Existing Tier 2 and 3 providers can apply to be in Tier 1 by (re)submitting Quality Questions Response.
- New IFA provider to apply

Expectations of Tier 1

Working closer with the respective Authorities to better meet the needs of their CLA

Commitment to

- Work collaboratively
 - closer relationship- sharing pipeline of carers
 - Use of Reservation Fee/ Retainer Fee
- To carry out targeted recruitment as required
- To ensure optimum placement stability
- To prioritise local placements
- Added Social Value
- Respond to referrals
- Provide regular feedback
- Work creatively with the Authorities

- Actively engage with exchange days
- Creative placement planning

KPIs

Mixture of high level standard KPI (Ofsted etc)

Development of individually agreed bespoke KPIs

For example

- No of BBCL Carers with BBCL Children
- Recruitment targets
- Review of responses
- Attendance at meetings and exchange days
- Sharing of pipeline of carers/ vacancies
- Responses to safeguarding concerns

Procurement Strategy

Procurement Guidance

Kirsty Harrison

Category Manager – Care and Public Health

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07/09/2018

Introduction

The purpose of this briefing is to give you an introduction to the potential tender process, implement **fairness** and **transparency**.

Joint procurement between Blackburn with Darwen Council, Blackpool Council, Cumbria County Council and Lancashire County Council.

Lancashire will lead the procurement, working with the other authorities throughout. Directed all procurement enquires to Lancashire.

We reserve the right to amend what is set out today and any procurement process will be conducted only in accordance with the procurement documents that are published.

Procurement Process

Fostering Agency Placements Flexible Agreement

The Authority is required by law to tender services at regular intervals to encourage competition and value for money.

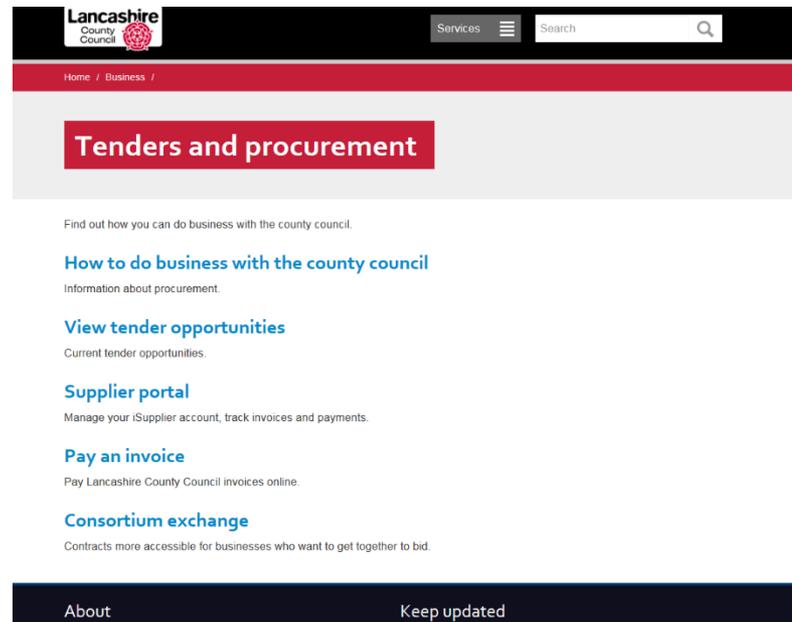
The Authority intend to procure an **open Flexible Agreement** of suitable, capable and experienced Fostering Providers to deliver the required Services.

Benefits of the Flexible Agreement

- Providers don't have to demonstrate suitability and capability every time they wish to compete for a package of care. This is assessed to be accepted on to the Flexible Agreement and **must be maintained**
- Therefore award of individual placements can be quicker than under some procurement procedures.
- The Flexible Agreement will be open to new providers at periods throughout the agreement. This enables Fostering Providers who may not be able to meet the criteria at the time the Flexible Agreement is first established to review their processes, finances, capabilities and proposals and apply for acceptance onto the Agreement at a later stage.
- In Addition to Lot 1 a Fostering Provider may apply for as many Lots for which it is eligible.

Finding New Opportunities

- All of Lancashire County Council's tenders are advertised on our Tenders and Procurement webpage and on Contracts Finder
- To view tender documents and respond to active tenders you must register on our eTendering portal, accessed via the Supplier Portal (Oracle iSupplier)
- It is free to register



The screenshot shows the Lancashire County Council website's 'Tenders and procurement' page. The header includes the Lancashire County Council logo, a 'Services' menu, and a search bar. Below the header, a red banner reads 'Tenders and procurement'. The main content area lists several links with brief descriptions:

- [How to do business with the county council](#)
Information about procurement.
- [View tender opportunities](#)
Current tender opportunities.
- [Supplier portal](#)
Manage your iSupplier account, track invoices and payments.
- [Pay an invoice](#)
Pay Lancashire County Council invoices online.
- [Consortium exchange](#)
Contracts more accessible for businesses who want to get together to bid.

The footer contains 'About' and 'Keep updated' links.

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/business/tenders-and-procurement/>

Oracle iSupplier Portal

Register on the Oracle iSupplier e-Tendering system at the **earliest opportunity**. Go on www.lancashire.gov.uk and search for "Oracle". Takes you to straight to registration page.

For technical **support issues** and for support with registering on Oracle iSupplier, dial - **01772 534966** (option 2).

For written guidance on using the system, including finding tenders and how to submit your tender to us, you can use the **quick guides** (<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/iSupplier/>).

Once the procurement is live:

- Use **"on-line discussions"** feature within Oracle iSupplier for clarifications on the application content or questions about the service. Please do not email officers directly. This is to ensure transparency.
- Remember to check online discussions facility regularly throughout the application process. **Clarification questions** will be published along with responses from BBCL.

It is important to keep your Oracle record up to date. This minimises the risk of missing any email notifications, mini competitions invites or delaying payments. Please use a team/group email address and not an individual person. This can be done via iSupplier using the admin section or by contacting the iSupplier Support Team.

Procurement Overview

- Flexible Agreement will remain in place for 9 years
- Annual Tier Review
- Reopening/reapply every three years (or sooner if required)
- **Lancashire** will lead on the **procurement of the Flexible Agreement**
- **Call off, placement arrangement and contract management of providers** will be the responsibility of the **placement Authority**.
- **Reopening/reapply** process will be led by **Lancashire**.

Indicative Timescales

Invitation to Participate Issue Date	October 2021
Initial Applicant Return Deadline	December 2021
Initial Application Evaluation	December 2021 – February 2022
Accept / Reject Application Outcome Notification	March / April 2022
Commence Commissioning of Placements from Flexible Agreement	May 2022

[These dates are an approximate guide only and are subject to change](#) at the Authority's sole discretion. When the procurement is live any significant changes to the procurement timetable during the application process shall be notified to all Applicants as soon as practicable. Changes to these dates will be notified via the means of the **online discussions function** within the e-Tendering system when the procurement is live. Dates communicated to applicants via these means take precedent over the dates listed in the above table.

Criteria to Apply

- There will be a minimum criteria to be considered for a place on the Flexible Agreement
 - Ensure you read the Invitation to Participate document and Evaluation Criteria carefully it will explain what is a 'Pass' and 'Fail'. Do you meet this criteria?
- For each Lot there will be different essential criteria to be considered for each Tier.
- Additional criteria for a Tier 1 place:
 - Quality questions and price assessment

Hints and tips – Do

- Read the **entire** procurement documentation.
- **Read all clarification** responses - the system will allow Applicants to resubmit their bids before the deadline.
- Dedicate **time** to write your applicant and use the **expertise** within your organisation, it is advisable to have someone else **check** through before submitting.
- Address the **exact requirements** of the Flexible Agreement – minimum criteria, specification, evaluation criteria and weighting. For the quality criteria, refer back to the specification and use examples where possible.
- Give correct information in the **format requested**, keep to the character limits. (found in the Tier 1 Quality Criteria Questionnaire)
- Demonstrate **skill and capacity** within Tier 1 quality assessment.
- Demonstrate your **strengths and advantages** within Tier 1 quality assessment.

Hints and tips – Don't

- **Miss deadlines** – we cannot accept late submissions - Start early.
- **Canvass Council** staff – this could lead to exclusion of your application.
- **Assume**, leave gaps or give **ambiguous information** – the panel for the Tier 1 quality questions evaluation can only assess the information or responses provided.
- Promise what you can't deliver – your application responses form part of the **final contract**.
- Use **generic and stock responses** for Tier 1 quality assessment– show that you are addressing the flexible agreement requirements, refer back to the service specification.
- Insert **marketing material unless instructed**.
- **Exceed the character counts** provided- any information submitted which exceeds the character count will not be considered at evaluation stage.

Questions

We are seeking the markets view and feedback on a few areas.

Questions are available via

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/bbclifa>

This link is now open.

Please can you take time to respond by 12 noon on Wed 21st July

1. Geographical areas
2. Tender and Timeline
3. Working closer together
4. Enhanced carers and Enhance Care cohorts
5. Reservation fee/ retainer
6. Pricings
7. Evaluation of BBCL DfE project

KEY PERSONNEL

Helen Kane
Service Leader Placements
Blackburn with Darwen Council

Stephanie Armstrong
Commissioning Manager
Cumbria County Council

Kirsty Harrison
Category Manager
Lancashire County Council

Debbie Park
Market Review and Development Lead
Blackpool Council

Michael Townson
Policy, Information & Commissioning Senior Officer
Lancashire County Council

Annette McNeil
Policy, Information & Commissioning Manager
Lancashire County Council

Next Steps

Complete Questionnaire

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/bbclifa>

Complete evaluation form which will be emailed to you

Register with Oracle iSupplier

Get Tender Ready!

Monitor <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/business/tenders-and-procurement/>

Questions & Answers

Thank you for listening to our presentation.

We hope we have answered many of your potential questions as we have progressed through the slides.

There is now an opportunity for you to answer any other questions that you still might have or to ask for clarification on specific areas.

If you do have any questions, please feel free to ask them via the the chat function.

Please note there is a thirty second delay with Teams Live Events