



**Stronger  
communities**

# Short Breaks Review 2026

## Context and purpose

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[lancashire.gov.uk](http://lancashire.gov.uk)



# Welcome and Purpose

This session is an opportunity to:

- ✦ Hear updates and future developments
- ✦ Share your experiences, ideas, and what works for you as a **Homecare Provider**
- ✦ Help shape services that truly meet the needs of children, young people, and families
- ✦ Ask questions

## Your voice matters

We want to understand what's working well, what could be improved, and how we can make Short Breaks more accessible, inclusive, flexible, and meaningful for families across Lancashire.



# Why Change is Needed Now



Lancashire's Short Breaks offer is under increasing pressure,

The current framework expires in March 2027, creating the right moment to introduce a modernised, equitable and financially sustainable commissioning model



# What We're Hearing – and Why This Matters

This review is about understanding gaps and shaping a fairer, more flexible, and more sustainable offer across Lancashire.

Feedback from children, young people, families, practitioners and providers tells us that while many experiences are positive, **access to Short Breaks isn't consistent**. Availability can depend on a child's needs, where they live, and what support is currently in place.



# Local Area SEND Inspection, Ofsted. Equity and Access

Ofsted noted that Lancashire offers a varied **specialist short breaks** offer, but access is not equitable. Many children and young people are unable to benefit from these services due to systemic pressures, including difficulties recruiting sufficient direct payment personal assistants, shortages in homecare provision, and a lack of foster carers able to provide overnight respite.

*Inspection dates: 9 to 13 December 2024: [Lancashire County Council - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted](#)*



# What the review will look at

- **Availability and range** of specialist short breaks, Break Time and leisure activities across Lancashire
- **Support for CYP with higher or more complex needs**, including personal care and sensory needs
- **Accessibility** and whether they meet the needs of CYP inc. sensory, physical and personal care requirements
- **How clearly and consistently we communicate with providers**, including expectations, processes and updates
- **Market pressures**, such as staffing, capacity, cost variation and sustainability
- **Systems and processes for providers**, including referrals, reporting, and invoicing



# Key System Challenges

Uneven access to Break Time and specialist short breaks across Lancashire depending on location.

Overnight provision remains critically limited with very few external providers and pressure on in-house

Recruitment and staffing challenges- including difficulties recruiting sufficient Direct Payment personal assistants

Unsuitable session lengths that don't meet the needs of CYP

Heavy reliance on off list providers reducing cost control and quality

Scarcity of foster carers for overnight short breaks adds pressure on service capacity and availability.

Fragmented digital system architecture, making it hard to forecast demand, manage capacity and pay providers

Limited offer for CYP: who experience sensory processing difficulties. Who require support with personal care tasks



# Current Commissioning Model Limitations

Lancashire's current Short Breaks arrangements are a mixture of framework and off-list spot purchasing have supported delivery to date but now present challenges:

- Inconsistent pricing, particularly within personal care
- Heavy reliance on off-list providers
- Only one external provider delivering overnight short breaks
- Very limited Intensive Positive Behaviour Support (IPBS) capacity
- Local variation in availability and access (Break Time and specialist)
- A system that is administratively heavy and difficult to forecast
- Delays in provider invoices being paid



# Increasing Pressures on the System

- Overnight provision is critically insufficient, (*this is in addition to the 3 in house short breaks settings*)
- Personal care, the largest area of need, is mostly off-list, limiting quality oversight and cost control
- The system is fragmented, administratively heavy, difficult to manage, and not scalable
- Fragmented system architecture (CLPIs issues, delays in payments, etc..)



# Difficult Aspects of the Short Breaks Process for Providers

## Common themes:

- Inconsistent or incomplete referral information from LCC staff
- Significant delays in funding
- Short-notice referrals, bookings and cancellations
- Communication gaps between professionals and services
- Complex or unclear data/reporting systems
- Confusion about forms and processes (*especially for new providers*)



# What is in the pipeline

- Introducing a **fixed hourly rate** for specialist support, with annual uplifts determined by the authority. This will standardise pricing across providers and support equitable access to services for children and young people.
- Developing a **Care Navigation / ART SEND Service** to improve coordination and reduce duplication.
- Implementation of a **Provider Portal** to streamline provider interactions, invoicing, and contract management.



# Views on a Fixed Hourly Rate Model

We're trying to build a clear picture of the landscape across Lancashire. Your openness will directly support a more informed specification and helps us make better decisions for CYP, families, and providers.

We know costs vary depending on needs, staffing, and the level of personal care required, so there's no 'right' figure,

So far, providers overwhelmingly **agree** a fixed hourly rate (ASC-style) would be sustainable:

So far, most providers believe that Short Breaks for CYP with SEND cost more to deliver than for adults with similar needs, with "Yes" significantly more and "Yes slightly more" being the most common answers. Only a minority feel costs are similar.

No strong objections recorded



# Hourly rates 2026/27

To make it easier for you to share open and honest information, we will be using a short anonymous form during this session.

This will help us understand:

Your current hourly rate

Any cost pressures influencing the rate

Your view on what a realistic and sustainable fixed hourly rate should be

**Your responses will not be linked to your organisation - the aim is to build a clear, honest picture across the market so we can design a fair, sustainable approach for everyone.**

Anonymous Hourly Rate Survey



# Your Views

**Does this model feel like something you would want to engage with? Think about:**

- The shift toward a **fixed hourly rate**
- A more **consistent and transparent** commissioning model
- Clearer expectations, processes and communication
- A system designed to reduce administrative burden and improve predictability

**Is there anything else you would want to see included within the framework design?**

Your Views on the Proposed Approach

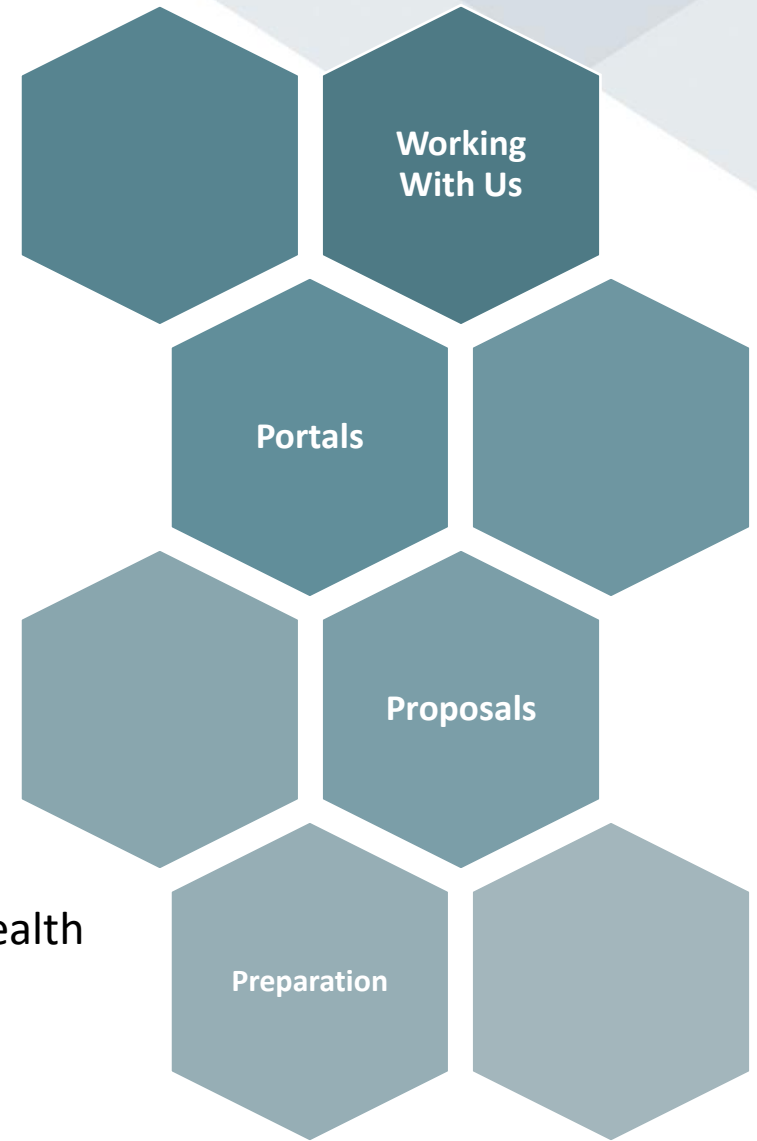


# Accessing Procurement Opportunities

Kirsty Harrison

Strategic Sourcing Lead – Care and Public Health  
Procurement and Contract Management  
Lancashire County Council

W: <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/>



# What we offer



**Strategic Planning** – Clear specifications aligned to statutory requirements.



**Stakeholder Engagement** – Early engagement to help shape deliverable solutions.



**Market Development** – Support for innovation and supporting local businesses.



**Compliance & Governance** – Fair, transparent processes under the Procurement Act 2023.



**Deliver value** – Contracting that drives quality outcomes for children.



# What You Can Expect From Us



**Transparency & Fairness** – Clear and consistent processes with equal treatment for all suppliers.



**Compliance** - Adherence to the Procurement Act 2023 and LCC Procurement rules.



**Value for Money** – Encouraging fair competition to achieve best value.



**Support & Guidance** - Advice on requirements, documents and portal navigation throughout the process.



**Risk Management** - Ensuring contracts are robust, better supplier relationships and contract management



# What We Expect From You



**Familiarise yourself with the procurement portal** - Register early and understand where documents and information are found.



**Respond and give feedback in market engagement** – You are the experts!



**Provide feedback on the proposed approach** - Help us shape realistic and deliverable procurement approaches.



**Highlight any foreseeable risks, challenges, or barriers to delivery** - Tell us about potential challenges so specifications can be refined.



**Understand the upcoming procurement opportunity** - Review the scope, service expectations and timelines before bidding.



**Prepare to demonstrate your organisation's capacity, capability, and experience** - Demonstrate how your organisation will deliver high-quality services by using your internal expertise and supporting your response with clear, relevant examples.



# Where to Find Information



## Key Sources:



### How to do business with the County Council:

Information for suppliers on how to work with LCC, including registration steps, procurement guidance and access to live opportunities. Future market-engagement updates will be published on the Tender Opportunities page. [How to do business with the county council](#)



### Procurement Portal (Oracle Fusion):

The e-tendering portal for live tenders advertised by LCC including supplier registration, tender information and bidding opportunities. Help centre information and step by step guidance is available. Adverts will also be published on the LCC website and the Central Digital Platform (CDP).



### Common Procurement Vocabulary - CPV Codes:

Used to classify procurement categories — ensure your profile includes relevant codes. Once you register with a CPV code you will receive notifications of opportunities linked to these codes. [CPV Codes 2025 | Find the right code for free](#)



### CDP (Central Digital Platform):

The Central Digital Platform (CDP), also known as the Find a Tender Service (FATS), is the official UK platform for high-value public contract notices, including market-engagement announcements and tender advertisements.

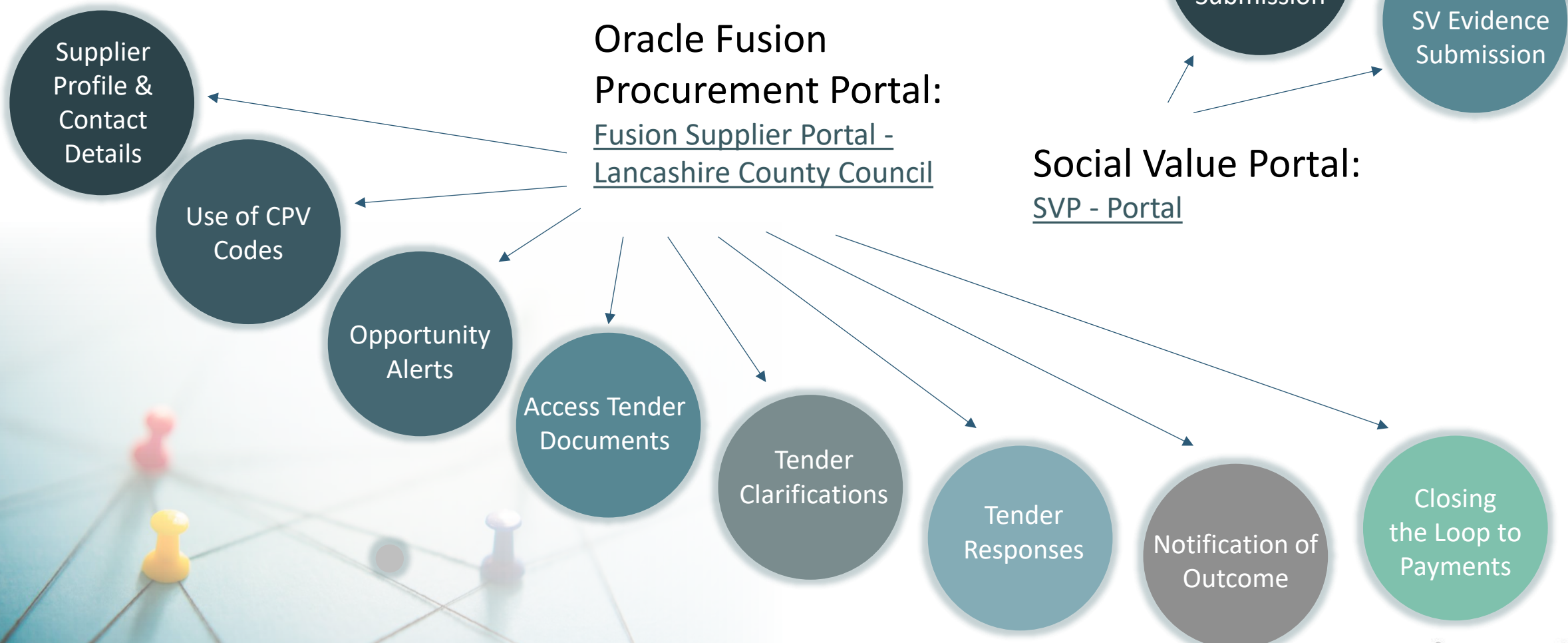


### Consortium Exchange:

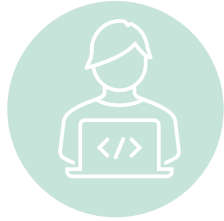
Part of the LCC website, an opportunity to share contact information for the purpose of building consortiums for opportunities. [Consortium exchange - Lancashire County Council](#)



# Portals for Use



# Initial Actions



## Oracle Fusion Portal

- Ensure you are **registered** on the Fusion Supplier Portal
- If you are already registered ensure all **contact details** are up to date
- Support is available via the LCC Procurement Information Management (PIM) team



## Social Value Portal

- Ensure you are registered with the social value portal – links may be provided for each individual tender you are interested in (via the Tender documents on the Fusion Portal)
- Support is available via the Social Value Portal help centre



## Central Digital Platform

- Ensure you are registered on the Central Digital Platform
- If you are already registered ensure all details are kept up to date regularly
- [Suppliers: How to register your organisation and first administrator on Find a Tender in three easy steps \(HTML\) - GOV.UK](#)



# Draft Procurement Strategy

## Open Provider List

Suitable, capable and experienced Providers

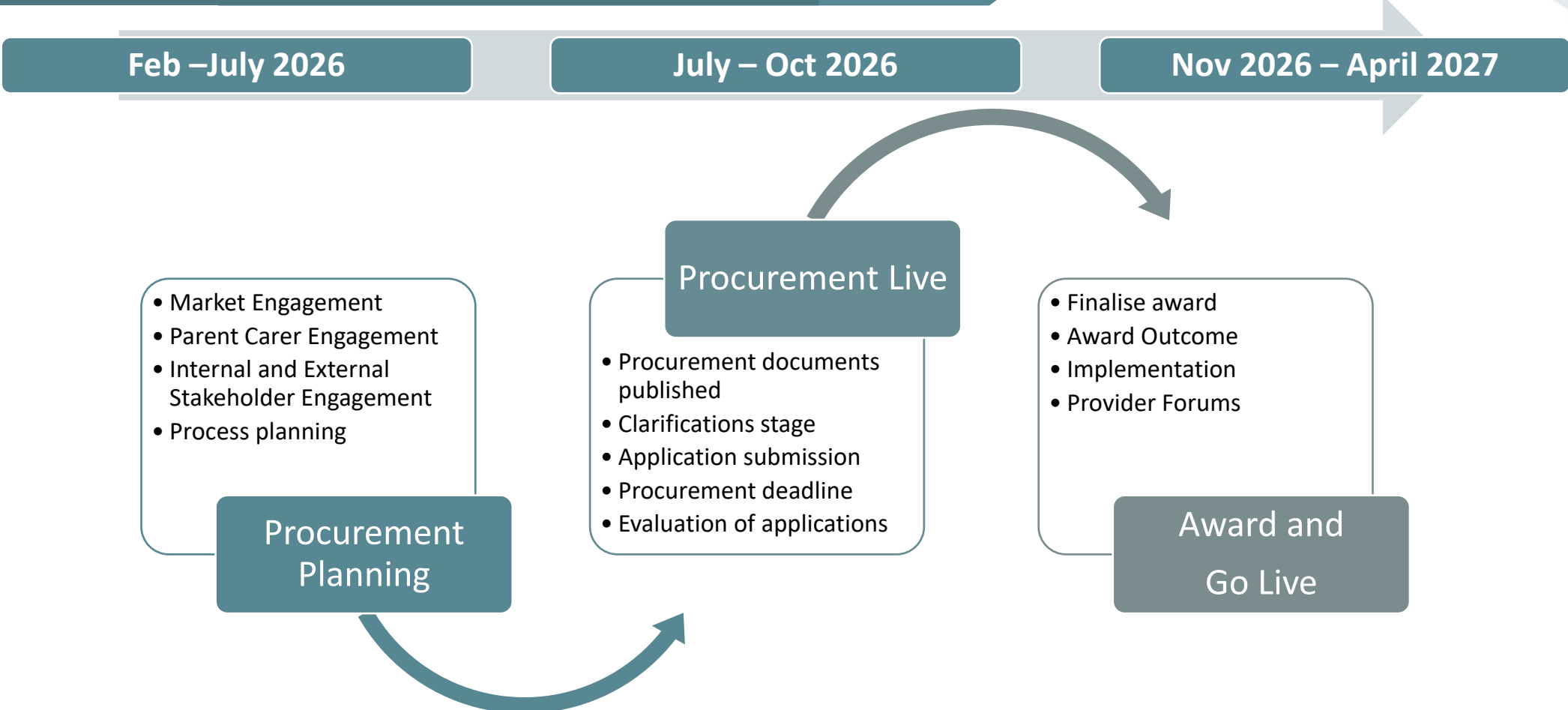
Services required commissioned from Providers who have been successfully awarded a place

Encourage partnership working to improve services

All providers are operating at a similar level of quality



# Potential Procurement Timeline



*This timeline is a guide - Procurement timelines are subject to change, please see published procurement documents for timelines and deadlines*

# LCC's Tender Documents

## Invitation to Tender (ITT)

Outlines scope, evaluation criteria, and submission instructions.

## Specification & Associated Appendices

Details the goods/services required.

## Evaluation Criteria

Explanation of how your bid will be evaluated and scored.

## Contract/Agreement

Published draft terms and conditions of the Contract/Agreement that must be accepted by the successful Tender(s)

*For Information  
(no submission  
required)*

*Contain key  
information &  
must be read  
thoroughly*

*Outline the  
requirements &  
terms which  
will be legally  
required*



**Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ)**

Procurement Specific Questionnaire, which will supplement the information held on the Central Digital Platform (CDP).

**Price Schedule**

Template for submitting prices.

**Supplier Incentive Scheme (SIS)**

Optional form used for most tenders, to provide opportunity to be part of the Supplier Incentive Scheme linking early payments and rebates.

**Commercially Sensitive Information**

To capture a record of any information contained within your bid you deem to be commercially sensitive to your organisation e.g. completed price file.

**Form of Tender**

Confirmation you are abiding by the requirements of the tender and are submitting a true and valid tender.

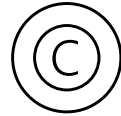
*Documents for completion & submission*

*Must be tailored and accurate to your intentions*

*Form part of the contract deliverables and legal documents*



# Further Document Consideration



Each tender will be bespoke.



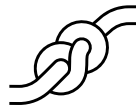
The use of robust tender documents ensures transparency and fairness.



Completion of these documents helps suppliers tailor their bids effectively.



Non-compliance may result in disqualification.



You must not qualify a bid as part of your submission.



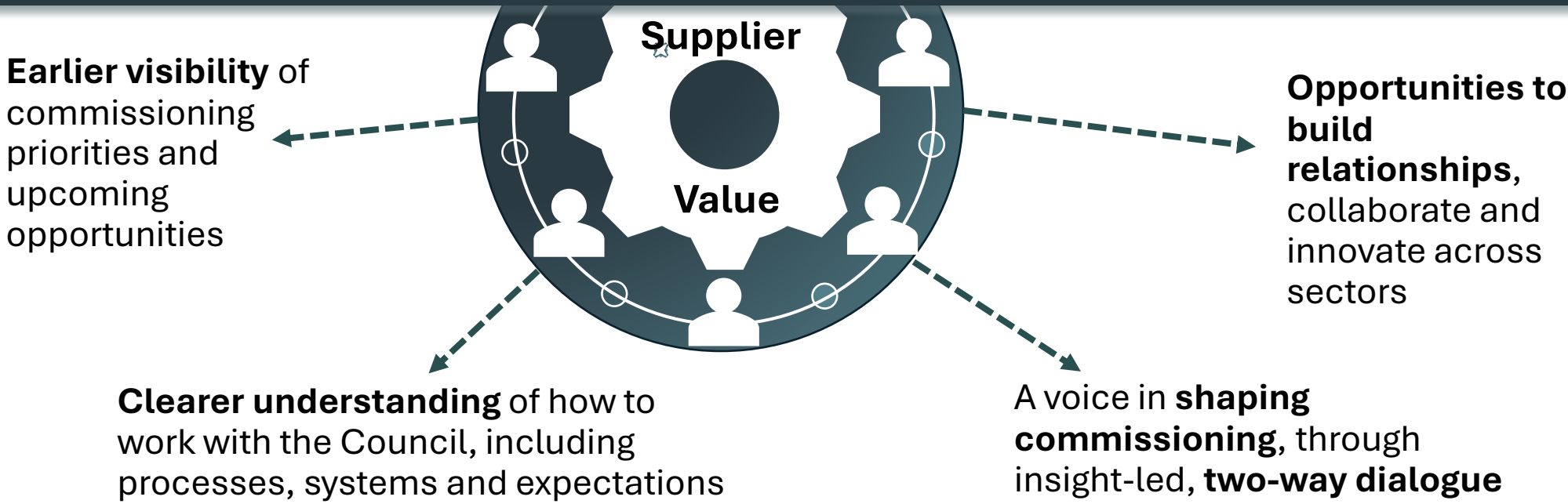


# Supplier Engagement Programme

*“Better outcomes start with better collaboration”*



- Webinars • Networking • Meet the Buyer • Annual Conference • Awards •
- A year-round programme to build a connected, innovative supplier community.*





# Supplier Engagement Programme

*What's Coming Up:*

Meet the Buyer Events



Social Value Portal Training



Annual Conference



Lancashire's Supplier Charter



# Supplier Engagement Programme

*What's Coming Up:*




## Meet the Buyer Events

- Next event 7<sup>th</sup> April
- Networking, individual meetings with procurement and LCC partners
- Information on opportunities
- Share genuine insights to shape the future of procurement



## Annual Conference

- Summer, flagship event to share information
- Gather insights specific for sectors to shape the future
- Discuss LGR
- Launch the Supplier Charter



## Lancashire's Supplier Charter

- Outline LCC commitments and supplier expectations
- Details of relationships and collaborations
- Will be on the website
- Soft testing ongoing to ensure it aligns to your expectations



## Social Value Portal Training

- SVP offering free, monthly virtual supplier training for:
  - Bidders – tender stage
  - Suppliers – contract management stage
- 1:1 sessions also bookable for specific data review

# Contact Information & Useful Links

## Contact Information:

[Procurementcontractmanagement@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Procurementcontractmanagement@lancashire.gov.uk)

## Useful Links:

[How to do business with the county council - Lancashire County Council Help & Support \(Social Value Portal\)](#)

## Live Events:

Meet the Buyer April 2026 – open for registration

<https://lccevents.evolutive.co.uk/event/details/1613825/Lancashire-County-Council-Meet-the-Buyer-In-person-Event>

Social Value Portal bidder and supplier events: <https://calendly.com/supplier-events>

## What happens next:

- Please keep informed and attend future events – watch our social media & website!
- Insights from the events will shape our future and we need you to do it.
- Get in touch if you have ideas, want to share knowledge or need the link to register directly to your email.

COME ALONG  
GET INVOLVED



SHAPE OUR  
LANCASHIRE



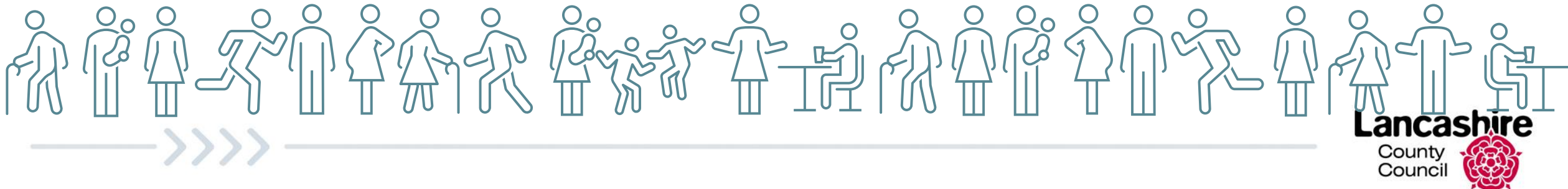
What are your thoughts on how to work with LCC & engage with us?  
Any questions?

- Ensure you are **registered** on:
  - the Fusion Supplier Portal
  - Social Value Portal
  - Central Digital Platform
- If you are already registered ensure all **contact details** are up to date
- Utilise the Consortium Exchange
- Ask questions & Share insights
- Register for the Meet the Buyer Event to meet procurement, network & share genuine insights



# Contact Info

- **Procurement Enquiries:**
  - CAPH: [caphprocurement@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:caphprocurement@lancashire.gov.uk)
- **Procurement Helpdesk – Etendering support**
  - PIM: [pim@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:pim@lancashire.gov.uk)
  - 01772 534966
- **Consortium Exchange:** [consortiumexchange@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:consortiumexchange@lancashire.gov.uk)
- **Contract Management / Event Contact:**  
[procurementcontractmanagement@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:procurementcontractmanagement@lancashire.gov.uk)



# Next steps

We want to ensure the Short Breaks offer is **fair, inclusive, and accessible**, and meets the needs of Lancashire's children, young people, and families now and in the future.

## Over the coming month, we will be:

- Holding parent and carer engagement sessions across Lancashire
- Working with children and young people to hear their views
- Asking families, practitioners and providers to share their experiences through online surveys
- Talking to providers, schools, and community organisations through regular engagements
- Attending Lancashire Parent Carer Forum 'Drop Ins'
- Attending SEND Roadshows
- And more...



# Final Reflections

Feedback from CYP, families, practitioners and providers shows that although many have positive experiences, access to short breaks can vary depending on individual needs, location, and availability.

This is a powerful reminder of the difference high-quality, inclusive short breaks support can make for children and their families. Your feedback reinforces the importance of truly listening and continuously learning from lived experience to shape a stronger, more equitable offer for the future.

**Thank You**

Further Engagement Opportunity

13<sup>th</sup> April Face to Face Engagement - Preston

