



**Stronger  
communities**

# The Short Breaks Review 2026

13<sup>th</sup> April 2026

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



# Welcome & Purpose



Provide a clear opportunity to influence the future of the Short Breaks offer, including priorities, design principles, and what good looks like for children, young people, families and providers.



Shape services so they better meet the needs of children, young people with SEND, and families across Lancashire.



Create space to share experiences, ideas, and practical insight about what is working well and what needs to improve.



# Introductions

Please introduce yourself and share:

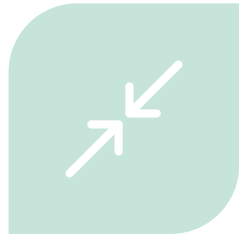
- ❖ Your name and organisation/role
- ❖ One word - one perspective you associate with *Short Breaks* for children and young people with SEND in Lancashire



*There is no right or wrong – we're hear to listen to each other*



# By the end of the session, participants will:



**HAVE A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF SHORT BREAKS INCLUDING PRESSURE ON EXISTING FRAMEWORKS AND CHANGING DEMAND**



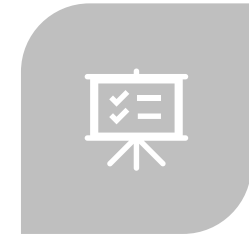
**GAIN INSIGHT FROM THE LAST ENGAGEMENT EVENTS, WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO OUR PROVIDERS AND PARENTS BUILDING ON THIS**



**UNDERSTAND THE ROUTES TO MARKET INCLUDING TIMELINES AND FRAMEWORK STRUCTURES**



**HELP SHAPE THE SHORT BREAK OFFER**



**HAVE A CLEAR OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE THE SHORT BREAK OFFER**





## Lancashire has 3 categories of Short Breaks

- 1 Universal Short Breaks:** These are everyday community activities open to all CYP. Examples include after-school clubs, sports clubs, drama or music groups, etc.
- 2 Targeted Short Breaks:** These are for CYP who cannot access universal services without additional support. Lancashire's targeted offer is called **Break Time**. A membership is number is required.
- 3 Specialist Short Breaks (including Break Time Plus):** These are for CYP with higher or complex needs, where families require more intensive support. Access is through a **social care assessment**.

# Why Change is Needed Now



The Short break offer is under increasing pressure due to rising demand and complexity. With the current framework expiring in 2027, this creates an opportunity to review and improve the model.

Access barriers remain significant  
Providers report increasing complexity of need alongside funding, staffing, and other pressures



# 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, inc. 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 venues 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**

**Difficulties recruiting sufficient Direct Payment Personal Assistants (PA's)**

**Sourcing care without a central 'ART SEND' function results in slower placement finding**

**Heavy reliance on the off-list providers reducing cost control and quality (spot purchasing)**

**Fragmented digital system architecture, preventing effective demand forecasting, capacity management**

**System failures are contributing to delayed payments to providers, placement delays for children, and increased risk of crisis responses**

**The current model isn't working for CYP with more complex needs**



# 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 Plus and specialist)
- Limited offer for Break Time Plus (group-based activities)
- 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 providers
- Complex or unclear data/reporting systems
- Confusion about forms and processes (*especially for new providers*)



# Provider Insight: What Needs to Change

Based on provider feedback, the following areas are seen as priorities :

- Improved administrative systems and digital processes, including simpler referrals, clearer CPLIs and timely payments
- Clearer communication and consistent information, particularly around referrals, parental contributions (where applicable) and package setups and changes
- More consistent commissioning arrangements, reducing reliance on off-list spot purchasing and short-notice packages

***These priorities will help shape the discussions today.***



# 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** (*similar to ASC*) 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



# Table-Top Exercises – Why We’re Doing This

**Your insights will help shape the future of the Short Break offer**

- We want to understand what works well, what gets in the way, and what would make the offer more equitable and sustainable
- These exercises are about **practical solutions** and **what good looks like**
- You don’t need to agree! We want to capture the range of perspectives 😊
- We will use your feedback alongside survey data to inform the review and next steps





# Coffee Break



# Tell us your Hourly Rates 2026/27

To support open and honest feedback, we'll be using a **short anonymous form** during this session.

This will help us understand:

- Your **current hourly rate**
- **Cost pressures** affecting delivery
- What you feel is a **realistic and sustainable fixed hourly rate**
- **Your responses are anonymous**

They will **not** be linked to your organisation; they will **not be shared**. The aim is to build a clear, honest picture of the market so we can design a **fair and 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



# Short Break Review Priorities

Looking ahead, what should Lancashire County Council prioritise to improve the Short Breaks offer for children and young people with SEND and their families?

Please share your views using the QR code.

What should LCC prioritise to improve the Short Break offer?



## Who we are



## Our Portals



## Social Value



## Contact details



## Where to find information



## Documents & Responses



## Supplier Engagement Programme



# Who we are



## Commercial Contract Management (CCM) Team

Providing support and development of consistent contract management activities across all service areas of the Council. Working with commissioners, procurement category teams and contract managers to develop practices and explore opportunities for efficiencies or change.  
Team Mailbox: [procurementcontractmanagement@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:procurementcontractmanagement@lancashire.gov.uk)

## Procurement Information Management (PIM) Team

Providing support and vital data and information management to the Procurement Service and to service areas throughout the Council. Services and processes include P2P processes, system registrations and helpline, data management, integration information and more.  
Team Mailbox: [PIM@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:PIM@lancashire.gov.uk)

## Care & Public Health (CAPH) Procurement Category Team

Procurements relating to all Care and Public Health contracts including Adults Social care, Children and Young People's Social Care, Education and Public Health Services. Contracts register references start in ACS, CYP or CAPH  
Team Mailbox: [Caphprocurement@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Caphprocurement@lancashire.gov.uk)



# Where to Find Information



## Procurement Portal (Oracle Fusion):

Central hub for live tenders advertised by LCC. Adverts will also be published on the LCC website and the Central Digital Platform (CDP). Help centre information and step by step guidance is available.

[Fusion Supplier Portal - Lancashire County Council](#)



## FTS (Find a Tender Service):

Official UK platform for high-value public contracts. Notices will be published including potential market engagement, tender advertisement notices.

[Find a Tender](#)



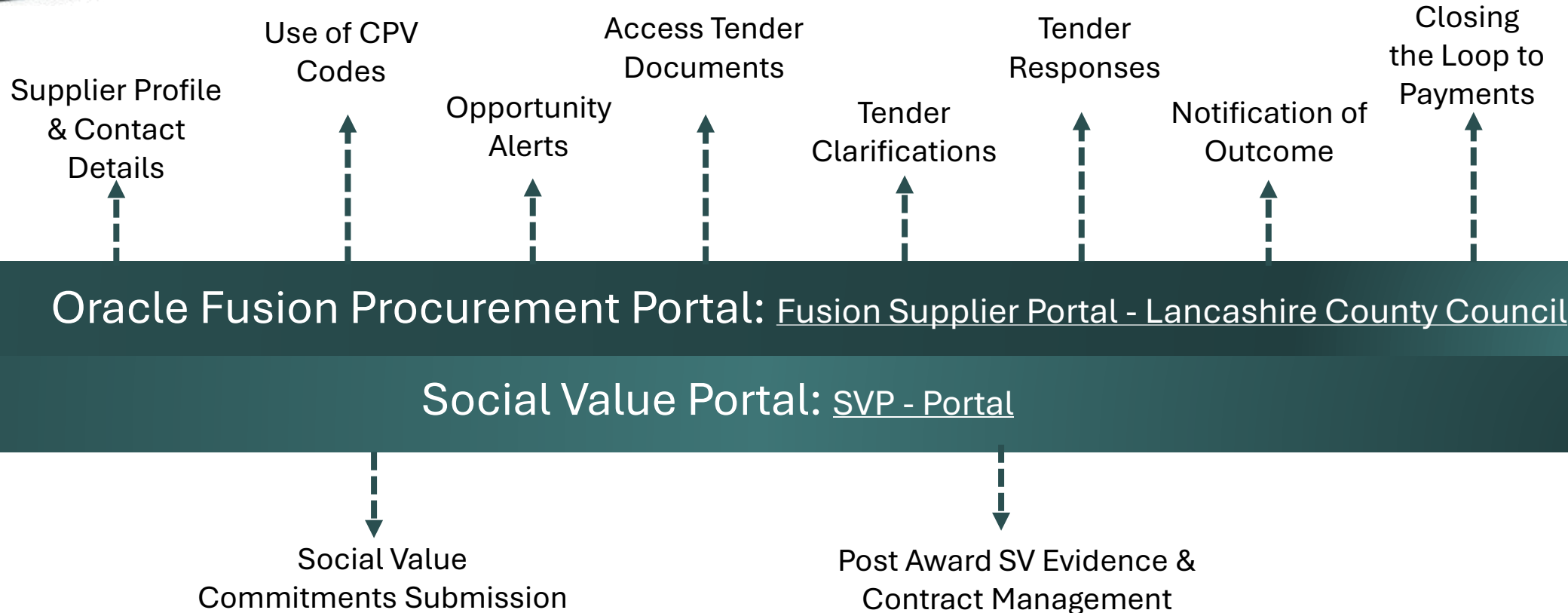
## CPV Codes:

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](#)




# Our Portals & Systems



# Supplier Engagement Programme

*What's Coming Up:*



## Meet the Buyer Events

- 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

# Initial Actions



**Register**



**Update**



**Collaborate**

- Ensure you are **registered** on:
  - the Fusion Supplier 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

# Draft Procurement Strategy

## Open Provider List

Suitable, capable and experienced Providers

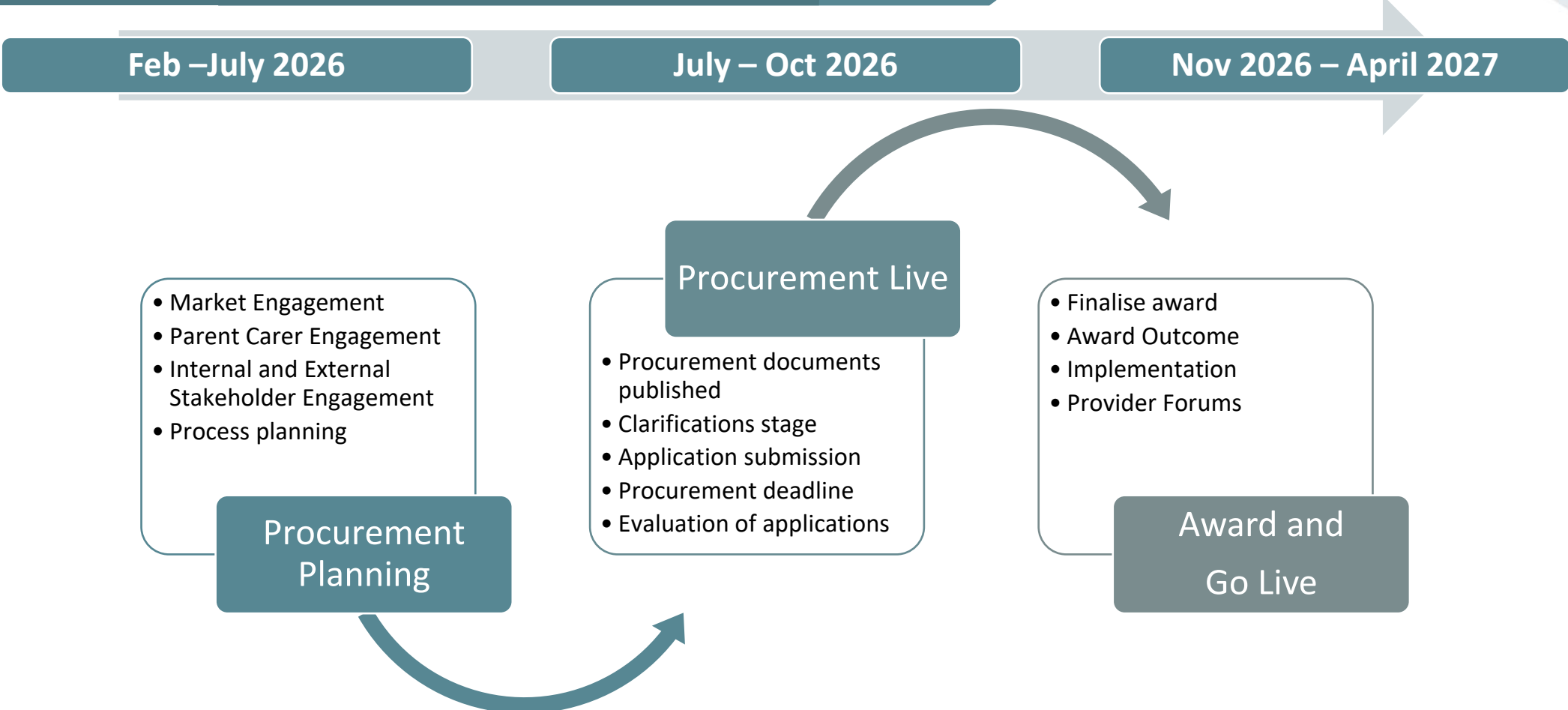
Services required commissioned from Providers who have been successfully awarded a place

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*

# Overview of LCC Documents



*Outlines the scope, evaluation criteria, submission instructions and is the 'rules' of the tender.*

**Invitation to Tender (ITT)**

**Specification & Associated Appendices**

**Evaluation Criteria**

**Draft T&CS (Contract or Framework)**

**Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ)**

**Award Criteria Questionnaire (ACQ)**

**Price Schedule**

**Supplier Incentive Scheme (SIS)**

**Commercially Sensitive Information**

**Form of Tender**



# Overview of LCC Documents



*Details the requirements of the goods/services. This is the key document which needs to be thoroughly understood. Any responses should be tailored to the requirements of the specification.*

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# Overview of LCC Documents



*Explanation of how your bid will be evaluated and scored.*

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**Specification & Associated Appendices**

**Evaluation Criteria**

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# Overview of LCC Documents



*When submitting a bid you are accepting the terms and conditions as advertised. Ensure you read through the T&Cs and use the clarification period for any areas you are unsure on. No amendments will be accepted post award.*

**Invitation to Tender (ITT)**

**Specification & Associated Appendices**

**Evaluation Criteria**

**Draft T&CS (Contract or Framework)**

**Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ)**

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**Commercially Sensitive Information**

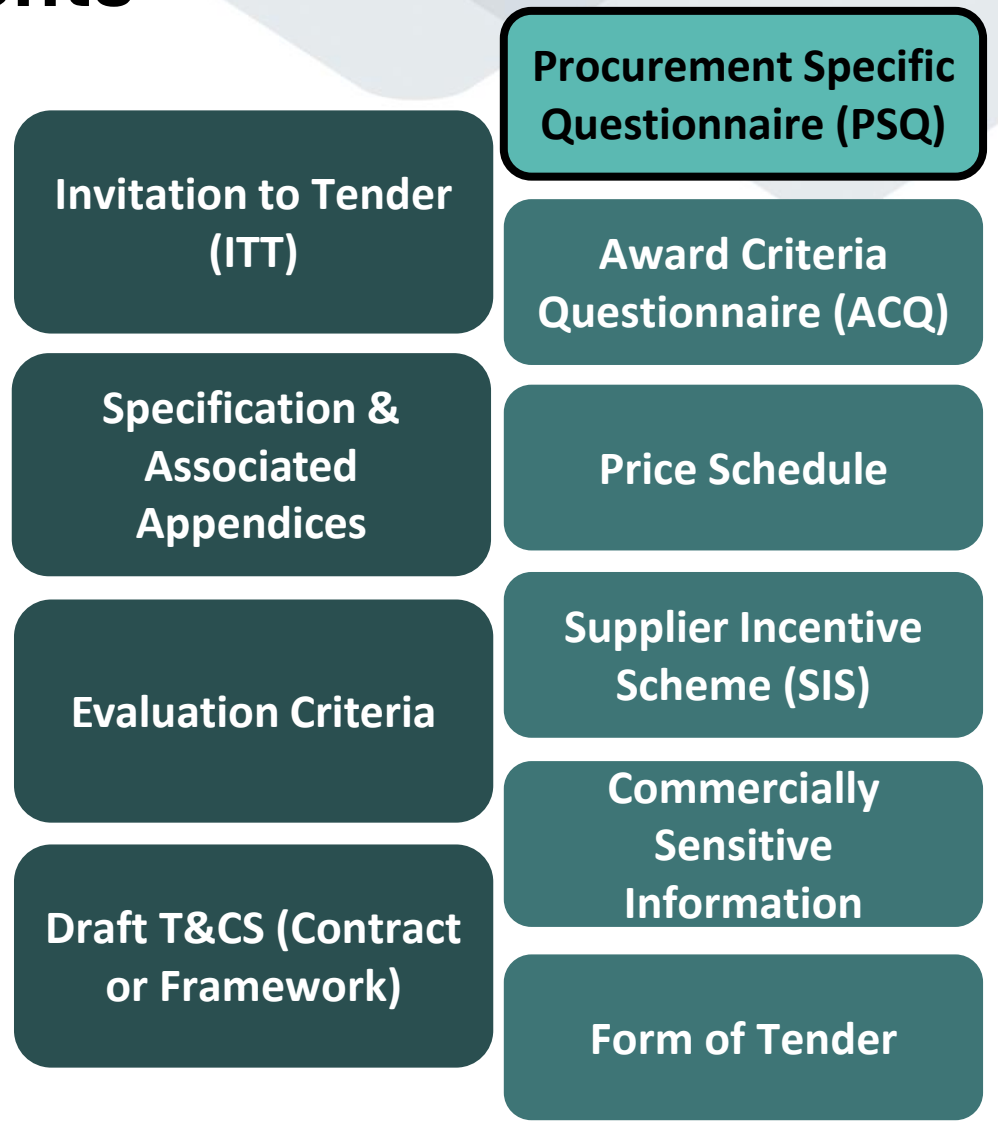
**Form of Tender**



# Overview of LCC Documents



*The PSQ is the general organisation information we require for each tender – linked to the CDP.*



# Overview of LCC Documents

*The remainder of the documents listed are generic documents which including the SIS – a scheme where suppliers can opt in to offer a rebate for being paid early, an opportunity to list your commercially sensitive information to protect against FOIs and the Form of Tender, confirming accuracy of a bid.*

Invitation to Tender (ITT)

Specification & Associated Appendices

Evaluation Criteria

Draft T&CS (Contract or Framework)

Procurement Specific Questionnaire (PSQ)

Award Criteria Questionnaire (ACQ)

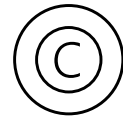
Price Schedule

Supplier Incentive Scheme (SIS)

Commercially Sensitive Information

Form of Tender

# 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.

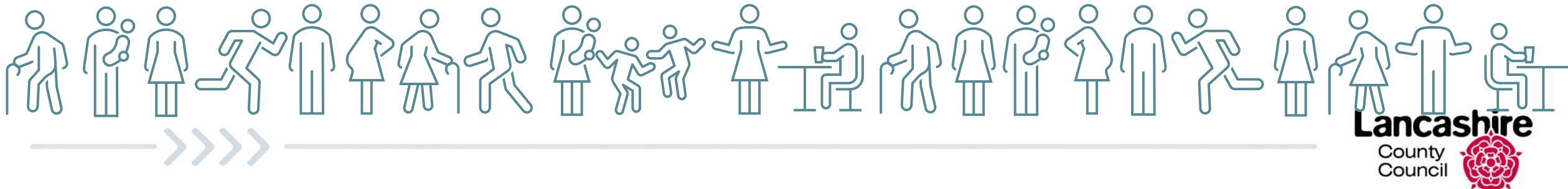


You must not qualify a bid as part of your submission.



# 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 shows that while many experiences of Short Breaks are positive, **access and consistency vary** based on need, location and availability.

This highlights both the **value of Short Breaks** for children and families, and the importance of listening to lived experience to drive improvement.

By working together, we can shape a **fairer, more sustainable Short Breaks offer** for the future.

**Thank you for your insight and contribution.**

