

Complex Residential Framework – Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides the list of questions that have been raised to date during engagement with providers on the proposed framework.

Whilst this sets out a response to the questions raised and the intended approach at this time, it should be noted that the definitive approach will be set out within the procurement documents at the time of tender, and these should be checked thoroughly in case of any divergence with these responses.

Scope and Purpose

Question	Response
What services does the framework cover?	<p>This framework is intended to cover residential services for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders.</p> <p>In line with Essex County Council's (ECC) strategic direction the framework is designed for placing adults with complex needs. The definition of complexity used by ECC is included at Appendix 1 of this FAQ.</p>
How is complexity defined?	A definition for complexity has been produced by ECC and is included at Appendix 1 of this FAQ document.
Why do you need a framework?	<p>As a Local Authority with responsibility for spending the taxpayer's money, ECC must abide by the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and must also demonstrate best value for money is being achieved.</p> <p>For a number of years placements made into LDA residential services have been on a 'spot' basis. The framework will transition ECC away from this approach and towards a structured and transparent sourcing process for placements that meets our legal obligations but most importantly our obligation to use our funds effectively.</p>

Does this cover placements outside of Essex?	<p>The goal for ECC is to significantly reduce placements outside of Essex, and to achieve this we need to develop more capacity inside Essex.</p> <p>This framework is not designed to include for out of county provision and any such placements would be made only when our framework has been exhausted and specific exception criteria has been met.</p>
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Bidding on the Framework

Question	Response
When will we be required to provide a bid?	<p>ECC will communicate with the market at the time that bids are being invited for the framework.</p> <p>All public procurements over a certain threshold (which will include this one) must be made available to the entire market and a notice will be published to the Find a Tender Service, as well as Contracts Finder.</p>
What will we be expected to do?	<p>Bids will be made up of a number of elements but the key requirements are likely to be:</p> <p>Standard Selection Questionnaire – this requires providers to answer questions around compliance and past performance.</p> <p>Invitation to Tender – this contains questions regarding the proposed delivery of services and will be scored on a pass/fail basis.</p> <p>Pricing Matrix – a price will need to be provided for each residential home proposed to be brought forwards for ECC to place at.</p> <p>The tender will come with detailed bidder guidance to steer you through the process, and questions can be asked throughout as needed to assist.</p>
What happens if we don't make it to the framework?	<p>Should you fail to be awarded a place on the framework it will mean placements cannot be made with you at your residential services.</p> <p>However, this is not a closed framework and the intention is that we will re-open the framework periodically for bidders who either did not bid first time around, or failed to be awarded a place. Such re-openings will be</p>

	made on the exact same basis as the previous tender process.
How often will the framework be re-opened?	<p>The framework can be re-opened up to two times per calendar year.</p> <p>Please note however this does not bind ECC to opening it twice per calendar year, and a decision can be taken not to open it at all where it is deemed the best course of action.</p>
How is cost assessed at the point of tender?	<p>Each bidder will be required to tell us at the time of tender which of their residential homes in Essex they are bringing forward for us to make placements into.</p> <p>For each of these homes the provider is required to complete a pricing matrix which will be reviewed by ECC in line with ECC's residential costing guideline. This will be created using Care Cubed – which is an independent benchmarking tool used by Local Authorities and providers alike – and real Essex market data.</p> <p>Where the costs are in excess of benchmarked rates or ECC has a query regarding the make up of a cost or element of the cost the cost will be discussed and negotiated prior to any placements being made on the framework.</p>
What happens if a cost is not accepted for a home?	<p>The rejection of a home does not preclude the bidder from a place on the framework, but it will mean that the home will not be brought forward and placed at.</p> <p>As the provider will be on the framework this leaves the door open to agree the cost at a future point; however, it must still be within the benchmarked rates provided.</p>
Am I bidding as a provider or do I need to bid for each home I operate?	<p>You would be bidding as a provider rather than on an individual home basis.</p> <p>The principle of the framework is to encourage development so if you are awarded a place on the framework you will be encouraged to bring forward as many residential services as possible.</p>

Do I have to have residential homes in Essex at the time of making a bid?	<p>No.</p> <p>As you are bidding as a provider you do not need to have residential homes in Essex in order to secure a place on the framework. Obviously this would mean you are unable to receive referrals until such point as a home is brought forwards to the framework but it would not preclude you from developing new services or responding to mini-competitions brought under the framework.</p>
Is there a limit to how many providers can be on the framework?	<p>No.</p> <p>The intention is to encourage as many providers as possible to join the framework and for new services to be developed.</p>

Placement Process

Question	Response
How will I get placements?	<p>The placement process will be outlined in full within the tender documentation but will follow a number of principles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ECC will create and utilise a matching tool which will rule out homes that are not suitable for an adult based on defined criteria (e.g. location, type of accommodation) ➤ All remaining homes will be invited to express an interest in the package based on the ISP and service specification for the adult. ➤ Of all homes that have expressed interest, ECC will then narrow the homes to a maximum of three based on the cost and quality score awarded at the time of tender. ➤ The homes selected will formally assess the adult and detail how they will meet their needs. ➤ Each assessment will be reviewed by ECC and scored based on set criteria as to what offers the best fit for the adult.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The cost of the proposed package will be taken into account to give a final cost/quality score to each home. The best scoring home will be selected for the placement. <p>It should be noted however that the adult has a choice about where they live which must be respected. As such the adult may at any point choose a residential home at which they wish to live from those on the framework. Provided the provider accepts the adult following assessment, ECC will honour the adults choice and make the placement at this service.</p>
<p>What information will I have to provide when offering a placement?</p>	<p>Providers will be expected to use their own assessment templates to consider whether they are able to meet the needs of the adult referred to them.</p> <p>The following information must be included in the assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How the environment will best support the adult (e.g. single service with access to shared areas) and any adaptations that will be made ➤ Outcomes and goals for the adult in the short, medium and long term ➤ Compatibility with other residents and how this will be managed ➤ Proposed transition plan ➤ Hours within the package of care proposed
<p>How does cost impact the process?</p>	<p>Cost is factored in as part of the assessment of best value on every package and is detailed in the question above.</p>
<p>What will we receive at expression of interest stage?</p>	<p>Providers would be issued the ‘Information for Service Provider’ document at this stage which provides the details of the adult and their needs following social worker assessment.</p> <p>This will include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Personal details of the Adult; (b) The Outcomes required for the Adult;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (c) Any Essential Service Elements for the Adult; (d) Whether the Adult has behaviours or needs that challenge; (e) Indicators of progress sought; (f) Any identified risks around the care of the Adult; (g) Activities to be delivered as part of the care plan; (h) Communication challenges; (i) Moving and handling; (j) Managing medications; (k) Personal relationships; (l) Cultural needs; (m) Suitability of the accommodation; (n) Compatibility with other adults currently residing in the scheme.
<p>When assessing are we able to set the number of hours included within the package or is this set by ECC?</p>	<p>Each provider will be expected to carry out their own assessment of the adult to be supported and this will include the required number of hours in the package.</p> <p>As each home is likely to have differing core hours and levels of staffing this flexibility is necessary to ensure needs are met in each placement. It does not however mean that ECC will accept a provider's assessment as to how many hours are required within a package and ECC reserves the right to challenge the number of hours that have been included on any package following provider assessment.</p>

<p>How will the most suitable placement be identified?</p>	<p>The most suitable placement will be identified based on the assessment by ECC of the provider assessment and how it will meet the adult's needs.</p> <p>Each provider assessment will be scored in line with defined criteria and this score will then be added to the score awarded for the cost of the package proposed.</p> <p>The provider and home with the highest score across both elements will be selected as the most suitable placement by ECC.</p>
<p>What is an Open Sourcing Process?</p>	<p>An Open Sourcing process can be used by ECC in a number of different scenarios including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is no current accommodation that is suitable on the framework ➤ The adult(s) require a very bespoke environment and care package ➤ There are multiple adults to be placed at the same time and in the same home ➤ A placement is needed urgently and the standard placement process will not be suitable <p>The benefit of operating an Open Sourcing process under the framework would be that it goes only to those providers who are already on the framework and who are quality assured.</p>

Development Opportunities

Question	Response
<p>Can we develop new residential homes and bring them forward for placement under the framework?</p>	<p>Yes, this is actively encouraged.</p> <p>One of the key drivers behind the framework is to expand the capacity of complex residential services in Essex. Providers who have met all of the relevant quality criteria and have a place on the framework are encouraged to develop new services throughout the term of the framework.</p>

<p>What standards are in place that must be met for residential homes?</p>	<p>Published criteria will be included with the tender but will take account of the differing models of residential care for complex adults and the differences between every individual adult.</p> <p>All new residential homes will need approval from ECC via the Accommodation Planning Board.</p>
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Contractual Matters

Question	Response
<p>What will happen to existing placements?</p>	<p>Where a provider brings forward a home to the framework for ECC to make placements at, any existing residents at that home will automatically be transitioned on to the terms and conditions of the framework contract.</p> <p>However, this will only impact the contract for the placement and will not result in any changes in costs for existing packages.</p>
<p>Can we change the costs of homes once they are on the framework?</p>	<p>Costs for new placements at homes on the framework can be reviewed by providers in exceptional circumstances where they can demonstrate that there has been a change in the commercial position of a home that must be addressed.</p>