



PRIOR INFORMATION NOTICE

The Department of Education, Sport and Culture ("the Department") wishes to explore the market, to identify interest from experienced contractors to provide Vouchers for Free School Meals.

The Department requires the successful applicant to provide Free School Meal Vouchers, to the Department's specifications, within a 48 hour turn-around period, for over 2,000 recipients. The purpose of the scheme is to assist in ensuring those free school meal recipients have access to food, avoiding food hunger, whilst not in school or college. The work would be undertaken in a clearly phased process – request, production, usage, audit and refund. The process would be required to meet all of the below specifications.

Responding to this Prior Information Notice

Interested parties are invited to submit a brief summary of their experience, capability and proposed solution for the development of a free school meal voucher scheme which should cover:

- **REQUEST**

- That the provider is able to respond within 2 working hours, to an initial request from the Department, which will include an Official Order Form, to confirm receipt and that the provider is able to produce the vouchers required within 48 hours.
- That the successful provider will provide the Department with an excel spreadsheet list of code numbers in a prescribed format for each voucher, along with a sample voucher, sent by email for approval, **in advance of** the print-run.
- If appropriate, please indicate how you would seek to operate a collaborative system across a number of stores and/or a number of providers.

- **PRODUCTION**

- The vouchers should be printed on professionally watermarked paper (possibly also having other security features), 4 to a page, guillotined precisely, marked with a unique code number, boxed and banded in 100 voucher bundles, in number order, with the IOM Government logo.
- Each voucher should clearly state an individual alpha-numeric code, part of which would be P and S, denoting Primary or Secondary, a date, as well as the unique voucher number, for example, IOMGP0122-0010.
- The vouchers would be for 2 different values, 1 for Primary, 1 for Secondary, which the Department would advise. The value of the voucher may differ, on each occasion.
- Extra Vouchers may also be required, following the main print run, again produced within 48 hours' notice, continuing the series of individual code numbers, to cover any additional ad-hoc requests.
- The voucher would also include the following instruction:-
"This voucher can be exchanged at <<provider's stores or specified stores>> on the Isle of Man. It is not valid for purchases from any of the in-store concessions. It may only be used for the purchase of groceries, excluding alcohol, lottery, tobacco and non-food products. You may exchange this voucher for articles of a higher price for face value on payment of the difference. No change will be given."

- The vouchers can be collected by the Department from the successful provider's premises.
- The vouchers would be centrally distributed by the Department.
- The Department would electronically transfer funds to purchase the vouchers from the provider.
- The voucher period, including the redeemable end date, would be specified by the Department and may be printed on the voucher.
- **USAGE**
- Whether voucher recipients purchases could be checked, prior to point of purchase, to ensure that they do not include alcohol, tobacco or lottery products, and refused accordingly.
- **AUDIT**
- The provider would audit all "spent" vouchers, and provide a full refund to the Department for any "unspent" voucher value, within 60 days of the voucher redeemable end date being passed.
- **REFUND**
- The Department would also notify the provider of any "unspent" vouchers that it held, or had been returned during the issuing phase, as part of the closing audit process, which would required to be refunded.
- A refund would be required from the provider within 60 days of the voucher redeemable end date.

By responding to this request at this point in time, the Department are only exploring options, no commitment is intended or implied and this request may or may not progress through to a competitive tender exercise. An invitation to tender may follow this Prior Information Notice, but the Department is not under any obligation to issue invitations to responders to the Notice.

Please be aware that neither the Department, Procurement Services nor any other part of Isle of Man Government, or any other organisation assisting the Government with the procurement process, will accept any liability or any charges for expenses or losses incurred by any interested party as a result of responding to this enquiry.

In order to participate in this competitive exercise, your organisation must be registered on the Isle of Man Government's Procurement Portal. If you have not previously registered, please visit <https://in-tendhost.co.uk/iomg.aspx/Home> and select 'Register' from the menu on the left side of the Home Page.

Once you have registered your organisation you should select this tender from the list of 'Current Tenders' and 'View Details' then click 'Express Interest' at the bottom of the page. Once you have clicked on 'Express Interest' a 'Form of Acknowledgement' tab will appear. This tab will provide a copy of the 'Appeals Procedure' to be downloaded. In order to progress to the next stage of the process you will need to 'Opt-In', complete the 'Form of Acknowledgment' questionnaire, upload your PIN Response document and click 'Submit Return' before the deadline as detailed below.

Should you have any difficulty in using the website or registering your interest in this way, please contact procurement@gov.im.

Expressions of interest must be submitted through the above Portal by **noon on Wednesday 22nd April 2022**.