



**Invitation to Tender:**

**Supply of HR and Payroll Systems and Associated  
Support Services**

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# **SECTION 1**

## **Instructions and Information for Tenderers**

## **Invitation to Tender**

Early Years – the organisation for young children, seeks to invite suppliers to respond to this Invitation to Tender (ITT) document for the provision of HR and Payroll Systems and Associated Support Services. This is a long-term investment for Early Years and duration of contracting will depend on pricing structures in bids received.

## **Submission of Tender Documents**

Completed proposals, including all appendices should be submitted via email to PeopleServices@early-years.org with subject line “Tender Document Reference: EY02026/PS/01”

All tender documents must be returned no later than **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2026 by 4pm.**

Please note that:

- I. The tenderer is fully responsible for the safe and timely delivery of the tender.
- II. Documents must be formally submitted prior to the final submission date in order to be considered for evaluation.
- III. Late tender submissions will not be accepted.
- IV. All submissions must be in English.
- V. All prices should be in Sterling and be exclusive of VAT.

## **Clarification**

Before submitting the tender documents, tenderers should seek to clarify any points of doubt or difficulty with the below-named person. Requests for clarification should be submitted via email, with subject line “Tender Document Reference: EY02026/PS/01” and must be received by **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026 at 4pm.**

## **Point of Contact**

Any queries should be addressed to Michael Gibson via email to PeopleServices@early-years.org

### **Written Acceptance**

Acceptance of the tender by Early Years will only be made by written instruction to the successful contractor.

### **Costs and Expenses**

Early Years will not be responsible for any expenses or losses that may be incurred by any tenderer in preparing their tender submission.

### **Award of Tender**

Early Years reserves the right not to award a contract to any tenderer under this process.

### **Contract Period**

For comparative purposes, all bidders should submit their bid covering a period of three years from **Friday 1st January 2027**. However, Early Years reserves the right to contract with the successful bidder for a shorter or longer period.

We would anticipate going live with the new system from **Friday 1st January 2027**.

### **Timescale**

Contract will be awarded no later than **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2026**.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Tenders will be evaluated using a two-stage process to include demonstration/interview. Only shortlisted bidders will be invited to stage two. Shortlisted bidders will be invited to a scripted scenario demonstration of their system based on scenarios provided by Early Years which will take place in person at **Early Years Head Quarters, 6c Wildflower Way, Belfast, BT12 6TA** week commencing **Monday 3rd August 2026**.

Tenderers must not make assumptions that Early Years has prior knowledge of their service provision. Tenderers will only be evaluated on the information provided in their responses.

Whilst every endeavour has been made to provide tenderers with an accurate description of the requirements, tenderers should form their own conclusions about the methods and

resources needed to meet these requirements. Early Years cannot be held responsible for tenderers' assessment of the requirement.

Tender submissions will be assessed against the qualitative and quantitative criteria detailed within this section.

		<b>Maximum Available Score 100</b>
<b>Qualitative Criteria</b>		
C1. Company overview and Previous Relevant Experience		10
C2. Approach to Delivery		10
C3. Meets functional and non-functional requirements		50
<b>Quantitative Criteria</b>		
Tender Cost (exclusive of VAT)		30

### Key to Scoring

To ensure consistency and equity the evaluation panel will assign scores for quality of response to the qualitative requirements using the scores and indicators below which will be weighted to the scoring above:

<b>Score</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
0	Failed to address the criterion.
1	Poor proposal to address the criterion.
2	Limited proposal to address criterion.
3	Acceptable proposal to address the criterion.
4	Good proposal to address the criterion.
5	Excellent proposal to address the criterion.

### Threshold Score

If tenderers score **1 or 0** in the following qualitative criteria **C1, C2 and C3** then it shall be deemed that they have failed to meet the specification and their tender will be eliminated from the competition.

**Quantitative Criteria**

The cost of delivery over three years will form the basis for assessing the financial component of the bid.

The lowest price will be awarded the maximum score of 30.

To calculate the score for the remaining price, the following formula will be applied. The lowest tendered price divided by the tenderers price multiplied by 30.

# **SECTION 2**

## **Specification**

## **Introduction**

Early Years is the largest organisation in Northern Ireland working with and for young children. We are a non-profit making organisation and have been working since 1965 to promote high quality childcare for children aged 0 - 18 and their families. Early Years is a membership-based organisation, a registered charity, a company limited by guarantee and is governed by a Board of Directors. With a staff count circa 270, based throughout Ireland, predominantly in Northern Ireland in homes and satellite offices.

Early Years currently use a cloud based integrated Payroll and HR system NaturalHR/Moorepay. Information is manually transferred from Moorepay to Sage 200 Std.

The current system has been in operation since January 2024 and was implemented when the previous system reached the end of its support lifecycle.

The People Services and Finance teams are based in Belfast and work from the office and from home using desktop apps to access the systems. Other employees use self-service features of the system via web browser using a computer/mobile phone or use the Moorepay App and are dispersed across Northern Ireland and beyond.

Description of different types of users that may have unique requirements:

- **PS Team**

All HR processes to be managed via the system with People Services having full access. People Services to manage the employee self-service system. Functionality to include multiple employers.

- **Finance**

Processing of payroll via the system.

- **Employee**

Employees having access to make requests via a self-service system that can be accessed via a mobile device. This includes but is not limited to requests for various types of leave, submission of timesheets and expenses, annual declarations including criminal convictions and conflict of interest and requests under HR policies e.g. career breaks, flexible working.

- Various shift patterns

Over 50 working patterns across the organisation including term time.

- Multiple contracts

Staff can have two jobs at any one time.

- Various entitlements

Entitlements can differ for annual leave, sick leave, maternity/paternity leave etc

- **Line manager (employed by Early Years)**

Line managers having access to approve requests using the grandparent principle.

Granular access to employee records. Carrying out HR processes including, but not limited to change of contracts, performance development reviews etc.

- **Line manager (employed by external organisation, manages staff in Early Years)**

As above.

Currently there are 10 line manager accounts of non-staff members, managing Early Years staff

- **Bank staff**

Early Years has a pool of people that we can call on as and when work becomes available. These bank staff should be managed via the system and have functionality to enable processes (including but not limited to annual leave) to be managed via the system.

# **Requirements**

## **Functional Requirements - HR**

### **1. Core HR**

The organisation is seeking a modern HR system that supports the full employee lifecycle and reduces manual administration. The system should improve compliance and strengthen reporting, providing a better experience for employees, managers and HR.

#### **It should support:**

- End to end HR lifecycle management
- Recruitment, onboarding, employment, development, performance, employee relations and offboarding
- Manager and employee self-service
- Reduced duplication between HR, payroll, finance and operational teams
- Improved workforce planning and HR reporting
- Better compliance with employment law, data protection and equality monitoring requirements
- Strong audit trails and governance
- A user-friendly experience for a geographically dispersed workforce
- Scalable future development as organisational needs change

### **2. General System Requirements**

The system should provide:

- A secure, cloud-based HR platform
- Clear, intuitive user experience for HR, managers and employees
- Mobile-friendly access for employees who may not regularly use a desktop computer
- Role-based access permissions
- Configurable workflows and approval routes
- Automated reminders, alerts and notifications
- Digital document storage - policies/procedures and forms

- Electronic signatures
- Full audit trails for changes, approvals and access
- Configurable forms and templates
- Employee and manager self-service
- Ability to support multiple sites, teams, departments and reporting lines
- Organisational charts and hierarchy management
- Configurable dashboards
- Data export functionality
- Integration capability with payroll, Microsoft 365 and other systems
- Compliance with UK GDPR and Data Protection
- Ability to support Northern Ireland employment and equality reporting requirements

### **3. Recruitment and Applicant Tracking**

The system should support the full recruitment cycle from vacancy request to appointment.

Requirements should include:

- Vacancy request and approval workflow
- Job description and personnel specification library
- Recruitment campaign management
- Internal and external vacancy advertising
- Branded candidate portal
- Mobile-friendly application process
- Anonymous or blind shortlisting functionality
- Panel member access and scoring
- Interview scheduling
- Candidate communication templates
- Automated candidate updates
- Shortlisting records
- Offer approval workflow
- Conditional offer management
- Pre-employment check tracking

- Reasonable adjustment requests
- Equal opportunities monitoring
- Recruitment source tracking
- Recruitment analytics, including:
  - Time to fill
  - Time to hire
  - Applicant numbers
  - Shortlisting rates
  - Interview outcomes
  - Offer acceptance rates
  - Diversity monitoring
  - Candidate source effectiveness – (Where our applicants are coming from)

#### **4. Pre-Employment Checks and Safer Recruitment**

The system should support secure and auditable pre-employment checks.

Requirements should include:

- Right to work checks
- AccessNI / DBS tracking
- Reference requests and responses
- Medical questionnaire tracking where appropriate
- Driving licence checks where relevant
- Conditional offer tracking
- Alerts for outstanding checks
- Restricted access for confidential pre-employment information

#### **5. Contract and Offer Management**

The system should support:

- Offer letter generation
- Contract generation
- Contract variation letters
- Electronic signatures

- Standard contract templates
- Fixed-term contract tracking
- Permanent, temporary, casual, part-time and full-time contract types
- Automated reminders for contract end dates- fixed term etc
- Audit trail of issued and signed documents

## **6. Onboarding and Induction**

The system should support structured onboarding before and after the employee starts.

Requirements should include:

- Pre-boarding portal
- New starter forms
- Digital collection of personal details and bank details
- Equality monitoring details
- Policy acknowledgements
- IT and equipment request workflows
- Manager onboarding tasks
- HR onboarding tasks
- Induction checklist
- Role-specific induction plans
- Corporate induction tracking
- Mandatory training allocation
- Probation review scheduling
- New starter survey
- Automated reminders for incomplete onboarding tasks

## **7. Employee and Manager Self-Service**

The system should allow employees and managers to complete routine HR tasks without unnecessary HR intervention.

Employee self-service should include:

- Viewing and updating personal details
- Viewing annual leave balances

- Requesting annual leave
- Clocking in and out
- Viewing sickness absence records where appropriate
- Accessing payslips
- Viewing HR documents
- Completing forms
- Acknowledging policies
- Accessing training records
- Submitting expenses or timesheets where applicable
- Viewing working pattern details

Manager self-service should include:

- Approving leave
- Viewing team absence
- Recording return-to-work meetings
- Viewing team information
- Initiating employee changes
- Completing probation reviews
- Completing PDRs or performance reviews
- Recording supervision or one-to-one meetings
- Tracking mandatory training
- Accessing reports for their team
- Initiating recruitment requests
- Supporting onboarding and offboarding tasks

## **8. Absence Management**

The system should support effective absence management and early intervention.

Requirements should include:

- Sickness absence recording
- Absence reason categories
- Fit note recording

- Return-to-work meeting workflow
- Absence trigger alerts as stated in policy
- Configurable trigger points
- Occupational health referral tracking
- Phased return tracking
- Reasonable adjustment recording
- Long-term sickness case tracking
- Disability-related absence flagging where appropriate and legally compliant
- Absence reporting by department, team, reason, duration and cost
- Lost time reporting
- Ability to record paid and unpaid sickness absence
- Occupational sick pay tracking
- Manager reminders for outstanding return-to-work meetings
- Confidentiality controls

## **9. Annual Leave and Other Leave**

The system should support:

- Annual leave entitlement calculations
- Pro-rated leave for part-time employees
- Changes in hours during the leave year
- Bank/public holiday calculations
- Carry-over rules
- Leave approval workflows
- Team calendars
- Leave restrictions or blackout periods
- Maternity leave
- Paternity leave
- Adoption leave
- Shared parental leave
- Parental leave

- Carer's leave
- Compassionate leave
- Bereavement leave
- Unpaid leave
- Time off for dependants
- Study leave
- TOIL
- Flexi-time where applicable

## **10. Performance Management**

The system should support structured performance management.

Requirements should include:

- Probation review workflows
- 2-month, 4-month and 6-month probation review points
- Probation extension tracking if required
- Confirmation in post
- Performance development reviews
- Competency frameworks
- One-to-one or quarterly supervision records
- Mid-year reviews
- Performance improvement plans
- Disciplinary warning records

## **11. Learning and Development**

The system should support:

- Mandatory training tracking
- Training course catalogue
- Booking onto training
- Manager approval for training
- Face-to-face training records
- Training evaluation forms

- Certificates
- Expiry dates and renewal reminders
- Tracking CPD (continued professional development)

## **12. Engagement and Employee Voice**

The system should support employee engagement activity.

Requirements may include:

- Pulse surveys
- Engagement surveys
- Anonymous feedback options
- New starter surveys
- Exit surveys
- Manager dashboards
- Communication tools
- Employee announcements

## **13. Policy Management and Compliance**

The system should support:

- Policy library
- Policy version control
- Policy acknowledgement tracking
- Automated reminders for policy review dates
- Employee declarations
- Compliance dashboards
- Mandatory document acceptance
- Audit logs
- Safeguarding compliance
- Equality monitoring
- AccessNI renewal tracking where applicable
- NI equality monitoring and Article 55 reporting support where applicable

## **14. Reporting and Analytics**

The system should provide strong reporting across the full HR lifecycle.

Required reporting areas should include:

- Headcount
- Recruitment
- Equality monitoring
- Turnover
- Retention
- Absence
- Lost time
- Absence cost
- Training compliance
- Probation completion
- PDR completion
- Leavers
- TOIL and overtime
- Organisational structure
- Workforce demographics
- Length of service
- Fixed-term contracts
- Contract end dates
- Flexible working arrangements
- Reasonable adjustments, with appropriate confidentiality
- Manager compliance with HR processes

## **15. Offboarding and Leavers**

The system should support:

- Resignation recording
- Manager notification

- HR leaver workflow
- Payroll leaver notification
- Annual leave balance calculation
- Exit questionnaire
- Exit interview records
- IT account closure tasks
- Equipment return tracking
- Leaver reason recording
- Rehire eligibility
- Reference request tracking

## **16. Training and User Support**

The supplier should provide:

- HR administrator training
- Super-user training
- Manager training
- Employee guidance
- Training materials
- Video guides
- Knowledge base
- System manuals
- Refresher training options
- Ongoing helpdesk support
- Named account manager
- Escalation route
- Service level agreements

## **17. Customer Support and Service Levels**

Tenderers should set out:

- Support hours
- Helpdesk arrangements

- Response times
- Resolution times
- Priority levels
- Escalation process
- Named account management
- System update process
- Planned maintenance arrangements
- Unplanned outage communication
- Customer success support
- Frequency of account review meetings
- Approach to service improvement

## **Functional Requirements – Payroll**

### **1) Bank (casual) Workers**

- Ability to store hourly rate on the employee payroll record and to bulk upload hours worked each month
- Ability to bulk upload holiday hours accrued on a quarterly basis and to have them presented separately on the payslip
- Bank workers should have access to the HR system or an app to view / download payslips and other payroll documents

### **2) Mileage and Expenses**

- Employees will enter mileage and expense claims into the HR system.
- The total of the entered claims will be transferred to payroll once per month.
- This transfer will be controlled by payroll staff.
- Once transferred the claims must be flagged as paid in the HR system.
- Ability to hold and process multiple mileage rates per employee
- Ability to hold mileage rates that can be taxable

### **3) Maternity**

- Calculate SMP
- The system should not calculate a salary alongside SMP unless it's the first month of maternity and SMP is being paid for part of the month
- Calculate enhanced maternity pay as per Early Year's policy

- Allow multiple enhanced maternity pay schemes determined by the start date of employees
- Calculate employer pension contributions at the normal monthly rate regardless of the amount of maternity pay being paid (no pension when maternity pay is zero)

#### **4) Pension**

- Ability for employees to opt-out or opt-in
- Auto-enrolment of those employees who have opted out and those employees who meet the eligibility criteria, whether at the start of employment or during their employment
- Ability to apply a 30-day waiting period before processing pension contributions
- Ability to refund pension contributions
- Ability to provide multiple pension schemes
- Ability to process salary sacrifice
- Monthly report of employees enrolled, auto-enrolled, opted out/in and non-eligible employees.

#### **5) Sickness**

- Entered via HR system with automatic transfer of absence information to payroll.
- Sickness is calculated on an hourly basis, which is essential to calculate part-day sickness absence and part-time workers.
- Ability to process multiple sickness schemes.
- Ability to enter and calculate sickness with no end date (open-ended).
- Open-ended sickness should be automatically calculated to the last day of the month.
- Calculate reversal of deductions, SSP and OSP where previous month calculated open-ended sickness to the end of the month and sickness ended before month-end.
- Easily identify sickness amounts that have been deducted / paid in the previous month(s).
- Sickness calculated in accordance with the employee's working pattern.
- Calculate rates for sickness based on the employee's rate of pay and working pattern on the dates when the sickness occurred e.g. long-term sickness spanning annual salary increments.

## 6) Term time

- A term time contract is when work is delivered during term-time (45 or 47 weeks) and ceases during July and August; however, salary is paid equally over 12 months.
- Ability to calculate salaries on a term time basis

## 7) Leavers

- Ability to change an employee status to leaver in the HR system on the date that they resign, which will be a period before the final period, i.e. to allow for notice periods.
- The employee should receive a normal monthly salary until the month in which they leave.
- The employee's final salary should be pro-rata to the leaving date.
- P45s should not be produced until the final month of employment.

## 8) Automatic Transfer of Information from HR to Payroll

The following changes / additions made to employee records in the HR system should automatically update the employee's payroll record:

- Bank Details
- NI Number
- Annual salary / hourly rate
- Working hours
- Working pattern
- Cost Centre
- Name
- Address
- Personal email address
- Personal phone number

***Please note that the above is not an exhaustive list.***

## 9) Reports

- List of all employees, including leavers, with employee number, start date, leave date, cost centre and all elements of salary calculation per employee.
- Pension report to inform upload to pension provider.
- Monthly P32.

- BACS file in CSV format to enable faster payment of salaries through Danske bank.
- Salary comparison with previous months per employee.
- Open ended sickness and duration per employee.
- P45s for leavers.
- Year-end reports.
- Annual P60s.

## 10) Other

- Ability for payroll staff to preview employees' payslips.
- Automatic RTI submissions.
- Monthly notification of RTI submissions including date and time of submission.
- Calculate and update the P32 with the employers allowance.
- Automatic assignment of unique employee numbers.
- Ability to assign multiple cost centres / project codes to an employee to enable salaries to be apportioned across multiple projects.
- Ability for payroll staff to view how the system has calculated the various elements of the employee's payslip / preview, including sickness and maternity.
- Ability for payroll staff to change the rates on standard payment codes, e.g. EY currently have a standard rate for bank / casual workers that will change each year.
- Ability for all employees including bank / casual workers to view their timesheets on an app.
- Ability to place employees on a career break or other temporary break, without calculating salary each month.
- Ability to store numerous working patterns, which, when changed in the HR system, will automatically update the employee's payroll record.
- Production of an annual P11D.
- Ability to process DEA (court order) payments per employee.
- Ability to process unpaid leave.
- Notification when an employee's minimum wage status changes.
- Ability to process student loans.
- Ability to make ad hoc and regular deductions from employee salaries for items such as healthcare benefits.
- Storage of, and ability to view a history of salary changes per employee.
- Ability to process salary sacrifice schemes e.g. cycle to work.
- Ability to bulk upload salary changes.
- Regular updates informing payroll staff of software changes / improvements / fixes.

- Access control to limit administrative functions and access to sensitive data to payroll staff members.
- Confidential storing of information.

### **Non-Functional Requirements**

- Migration of existing information from current system.
- Cloud native design with capacity to scale up and down as staff numbers change.
- High levels of assurance around data segregation, cyber and information security.
- Control over geographic location of information (UK/EU).
- Role based permissions.
- Authentication using MS Office 365 including two factor authentication.
- Separate development / test / training environment.
- Highly available.
- Independent backup and recovery options.
- Minimum performance guarantees.
- Accessible on a variety of devices including computer, tablet, Android and Apple Smart Phones.
- GDPR Compliance Features including but not limited to:
  - Retention periods.
  - Global search, report, redact.
- Staff training for system changes.

## **Additional Notes**

### **Tender Submission**

Tenderers should submit detailed proposals showing how they will address the objectives as outlined above.

Tenderers should complete and return Annex 1 along with detailed responses to Qualitative Criteria **C1, C2, C3**.

### **Qualitative Criteria**

To be considered, each tender proposal must address the following key areas:

#### **C1. Company overview and Previous Experience**

The tenderer should provide a detailed overview of their suitability to undertake this contract, clearly demonstrating that they meet the criteria set out in Section 2. The tenderer should provide two examples, at least one of which must be Northern Ireland based, (including references) of similar contracts successfully undertaken in the previous three years.

#### **C2. Approach to Delivery**

The tenderer must clearly demonstrate the proposed **approach to meeting the requirements as outlined in Section 2**, including a detailed **Implementation Plan** illustrating the **key milestones and timescales** in relation to delivery within the required timeframes including any necessary training and support.

#### **C3. Functional and Non-Functional requirements.**

The supplier should outline how functional and non-functional requirements will be met.

Responses must be limited to a maximum **20 pages using Arial Size 12** for both components above. Any information which exceeds this limit will not be considered.

### **Quantitative Criteria**

Tenderers are required to complete the pricing schedule (Annex I). Prices must be in GBP and be exclusive of VAT. Prices must only be submitted using the pricing schedule provided.

## **Pricing Schedule**

The schedule below must be completed and submitted as part of this Tender.

Tenderers must complete the Pricing Schedule in full, failure to complete may result in elimination from the competition.

Tenderers **MUST NOT** seek to provide an alternative pricing model.

All rates must be exclusive of VAT and **remain fixed for the period of this contract**.

All costs must be included. Any cost not included within the tender response cannot be included at a later date.

The pricing schedule should be signed by the person who has endorsed this tender proposal.

## Pricing Schedule

For the purposes of analysis of the financial component of the bid, please provide your **costing by module** in one of the following three options:

Option 1: an upfront fee and an annual fee. (If there is only an annual fee, then mark 0 in the column for upfront fee.)

Option 2: an upfront fee and an annual cost per user.

Option 3: an annual user fee only.

Module	Option 1		Option 2		Option 3	Comments
	Upfront fee	Annual fee	Upfront fee	Cost per user	Cost per user	
1. Recruitment and Applicant Tracking (inc Pre-Employment Checks/Safer Recruitment)						
2. Onboarding and Induction						
3. Contract and Offer Management						
4. Absence Management						
5. Annual Leave and Other Leave						
6. Learning & Development						
7. Performance Management						
8. Disciplinary						
9. Offboarding and Leavers						
10. Employee & Manager Self Service						
11. Engagement and Employee Voice						
12. Policy Management and Compliance						
13. Salaries						
14. Payroll						
15. Reporting and Analytics						
16. Training and User Support						
17. Other please specify						
Charity discount						
Discount for multiple modules						
Cost if < 200 staff*						
Cost if > 300 staff*						

*\*if there are pre-set bands for cost per user please add information in the comments column or attach with the bid documents.*

**Company Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (Block Capitals):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_