

# Expression of interest

# Title: Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2018, 2019 and 2020

**Project reference: EOR/SBU/2017/039**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: Noon, 31st July 2017**

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought for an annual statistical survey of parents in England with children aged 0-14. The survey will collect data about parents’ use, views and experiences of childcare and early years provision. This will continue a series which began in 2004, and will also entail an annual follow-up survey of a sub-set of respondents after each main annual survey.

The Department for Education will contract for three annual surveys (2018, 2019, 2020), each with a follow-up survey, with a break clause after each annual survey.

This expression of interest was posted on Monday 17th July.

## Background

The Department for Education needs robust data about parents’ use, views and experiences of childcare and early years provision to inform and monitor national policy. The Government will be investing more than £1 billion extra per year by 2019 to 2020 to fund the free childcare entitlements, bringing the total investment on free childcare to £6 billion a year. In September 2017, 30-hours of free weekly childcare for working parents will be rolled out nationally, and Tax-Free Childcare will be rolled-out over the course of 2017. The 2018, 2019 and 2020 surveys are timely and important data sources for understanding trends in childcare use and will form a key part of the evaluation of these and other childcare policies.

This survey provides valuable information such as:

* Use of formal and informal childcare and early years provision, including reason for use, term-time and school holiday use, and before school and out of school use;
* Use, awareness of, and the predicted impact of free childcare entitlements;
* The cost of childcare, including weekly costs, perceptions of cost, and use of Tax-Free childcare, childcare vouchers and the childcare element of Universal Credit;
* Perceptions of the quality, availability and affordability of childcare, and accessing information about childcare;
* The relationship between childcare and work, particularly maternal labour market participation; and
* The home learning environment, including the type and frequency of activities undertaken by parents with their children, such as reading, learning about words and numbers, painting/drawing, hours a day watching TV, films and computer games.

The 2014-15 survey outputs data were published in March 2016. The 2017 survey outputs will be published on the 22nd December 2017. More information can be found online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-2014-to-2015>

## Methodology

Outlined below is the anticipated methodology for the 2018, 2019 and 2020 surveys. However, bidders are free to suggest alternative approaches to the methodology including its mode, sampling frame and other design aspects.

It is anticipated that a similar mode and methodology to previous years’ surveys will be used, involving face-to-face interviews using CAPI with an annual sample of at least 6,000 parents. The sample frame is primarily HMRC Child Benefit Records, but supplemented by a sample of respondents from the DWP Family Resources Survey of parents with children for whom a claim of Child Benefit has not been made.

The survey will be of a nationally representative sample of parents in England with dependent children aged 14 and under, with a boost sample of parents with children aged 2, 3 or 4 years-old. The sample boosts of parents of 2, 3 and 4 year-olds will be increased for the 2018 survey compared to previous years’ surveys, due to the need to undertake detailed sub-group analysis of these age ranges (whom are currently the main target ages for free childcare entitlements funded by the Government). However, there will still be a need to report on overall national estimates for the older age range. For the 2019 and 2020 surveys, the sample boosts and coverage by child age range may be adjusted to relate to policy needs and the questionnaire content for these years. Any substantial changes to sampling and the questionnaire would be subject to a user consultation carried out by the Department for Education.

Bidders will be asked at Invitation to Tender stage to detail recommended sample sizes and justifications for these. The Contractor would be expected to work with the Department to determine the best sampling approach for the 2018, 2019 and 2020 surveys and work to obtain and create the sampling frame for the survey ahead of fieldwork. The Contractor will need to ensure a high standard of fieldwork and a robust system of fieldwork quality checks.

The appendices of the 2014-15 survey report should be consulted for further information on the methodology, including sampling, weighting, and survey variables. It can be accessed online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/516924/SFR09-2016_Childcare_and_Early_Years_Parents_Survey_2014-15_report.pdf.pdf>.

Please also consult a report published in January 2017 on the sampling methods to be used for future years of the survey. It can be accessed online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-sampling-frames>.

It is anticipated that the questionnaire will be around 45 minutes in length and will be reviewed each year to ensure question content meets policy and evidence needs. The Contractor will be expected to undertake an annual review of questionnaire content, working closely with the project manager and policy teams from the Department. There will be a core set of questions that will be part of a continued time series and included annually. It is anticipated that other questions will be included as rotating survey modules at less frequent intervals. The Contractor will be expected to undertake cognitive testing and piloting of the survey and make any necessary changes prior to mainstage fieldwork.

It is anticipated that the follow-up surveys after each annual survey will also be based on a similar methodology to previous years, involving sampling a sub-group of parents from the main survey that gave consent to be re-contacted and a telephone CATI methodology. The question content of each follow-up survey will be tailored to policy and evidence needs each year. At Invitation to Tender stage, bidders will be asked to recommend and justify approaches to sampling and the survey mode for the follow-up surveys, with the aim of maximising completion rates. The most recently published follow-up survey report was published in January 2017 and focussed on parents views and demand for the extended free childcare entitlement of 30 hours. It can be accessed online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parents-views-and-demand-for-30-hours-of-free-childcare>

The Contractor will need to ensure a high standard of data processing including sample management, CAPI/CATI programming and testing, editing/data quality assurance in addition to correctly coding and weighting the data.

The Contractor will need to rigorously analyse the data including basic descriptive statistics as well as cross-tabulations and multivariate analysis. These will form the basis of the excel tables to be published.

The Contractor will be expected to work with the Department for Education on the potential for matching the survey data with administrative datasets, ensuring all parent consent and data protection requirments are met and enhancing the analysis potential of the survey data.

## Outputs

Key findings from each annual survey will be summarised in a Statistical First Release (SFR) using a Department for Education SFR template.

The Contractor will be required for each annual survey to deliver:

* A SFR (in the Department for Education template, maximum 20 pages, including charts, graphics and trend analyses)
* An accompanying set of around 20 excel data tables summarising key statistics from the SFR, supplemented by an additional set of around 100 excel tables summarising more detailed statistics from the survey. Both sets of data tables will be of publishable standard and be released alongside the SFR
* A technical report, of publishable standard and to be released alongside the SFR
* A one-page summary of key findings
* A slide pack of findings presented to Department for Education officials
* A cleaned SPSS file, a data file that can be used in any software package, SPSS syntax summarising derived variables, and a data dictionary to enable secondary analysis of the survey datasets. All of these will be placed on the UK Data Archive within 6 weeks of publication of the SFR.

The contractor will be required after each follow survey to deliver:

* A publishable research report
* A slide pack of findings presented to Department for Education officials
* A cleaned SPSS file and a data file that can be used in any software package, including unique respondent identifiers to enable responses to the follow-up surveys to be linked to the main annual surveys.

The Contractor may also be asked to separately cost and deliver thematic analysis to explore particular themes in more depth, subject to a policy need being identified and separate budgets being available within the Department for Education.

## Timing

* Expression of interest posted: Monday 17th July
* Expressions of interest due: 12 noon Monday 31st July
* Invitation to tender issued: Monday 7 August 2017
* Tenders due to Department for Education: Noon, Tuesday 29 August 2017
* Tender interviews: 11th September 2017
* Contract awarded: 15th September 2017.

Fieldwork should take place between January and August 2018 to mirror the timing of the 2017 fieldwork. Publication of the SFR should take place in November or December 2018 (the exact date will be confirmed with the supplier at project set-up).

## Assessment criteria

Expressions of interest will be assessed against the following criteria.

To proceed to the ITT stage, bidders are required to provide **explicit evidence** that they have:

1. Organisational capacity, effective project management skills and experience of designing and administering a national survey of this size and complexity within specified time constraints.

1. A record of success in sampling and recruiting parents of children aged 0-14 to participate in research, and use of a range of effective strategies to secure high and robust response rates.
2. Proven skills and experience in data processing, weighting and analysis, applying advanced statistical techniques, and reporting the results of the analysis clearly, accessibly and accurately to a range of stakeholders.
3. Knowledge of early years and childcare policy and of trends in parents use of childcare.

Evidence against each of these criteria will be scored using the following scale:

0. No relevant evidence provided.

1. Evidence provided was limited or failed to show how the bidder meets the criteria.

2. Evidence meets the criteria.

3. Evidence offered exceeds the criteria.

**Only organisations that score 2 or higher on each of the criteria will be invited to Tender.**

Each one of these criteria has equal weighting.

**Expressions of interests submitted must be no more than 1000 words overall (this includes any website links) – please note anything longer will be disregarded.**

| **Closing date for EOIs: Noon, Monday 31st July.** **Send your EOI form to:** **jonathon.blackburn@education.gov.uk** **by noon on 31st July 2017. EOIs received after this deadline will not be considered. Please ensure your completed EOI is compatible with Microsoft Word.** |
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## How to submit an expression of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the Expression of Interest Research template found on the Department’s research website. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

In order to express an interest you must be registered with us and you will need your ID number. If you need to register then please do so using the online supplier registration form. If you have already registered and have forgotten your ID number, please send an email to Enquiries.RBU@education.gov.uk

All contracts are let on the basis of the [Department’s Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eoi-guide). You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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