

# Expression of interest

# Title: Evaluation of the 2019/20 School Improvement Offer

**Project reference: DFE/RPPU/2019/009**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 3pm on 23/07/2019**

## Summary

Expressions of interest (EOI) are sought for the evaluation of the school improvement (SI) offer 2019/20.

The SI offer for 2019/20 requires the coordination and deployment of National Leaders of Education (NLEs) to help maintained schools and academies to agree an action plan and identify and access school improvement resources. The proposed evaluation aims:

* to investigate how schools are interacting with the offer in order to use our findings to identify potential refinements to the delivery model; and
* to develop the department’s understanding of the facilitators and challenges to the delivery of the offer.

Although open to suggestions of alternative approaches, we envisage that this project will involve telephone interviews with around 40-50 schools that took up the offer and around 15-20 schools that, although eligible, declined the offer.

## Background

The SI offer for 2019/20 requires the coordination and deployment of NLEs to help maintained schools and academies to agree an action plan and identify and access school improvement resources. The offer is structured in two tiers: All schools with an Ofsted judgement of Requires Improvement who have not received support from the version of the SI offer made available in 2018/19 will be offered funded support from an expert leader to give them bespoke guidance. Any schools with two consecutive Requires Improvement judgements will be offered a more intensive package of assistance.

## Evaluation aims

The aim of the project is to develop our understanding of how schools are interacting with the offer, using our findings to identify potential refinements to the delivery model. The evaluation will investigate facilitators and challenges to delivery, including any financial issues. The evaluation will also look at how schools are experiencing the implementation of the offer and whether processes are operating as intended.

## Methodology

Although we are open to alternative approaches, we are suggesting a small-scale qualitative evaluation via telephone depth interviews with schools that did and did not take up the school improvement offer.

*Telephone depth interviews with supported schools*

Interviews with senior leaders in a range of tier 1 and tier 2 schools that opted to take up the SI offer, covering a range of phases, school types and sizes. We are recommending a two-stage interview process with an initial 30 minute interview held shortly after the initial support has been provided (November 2019 – January 2020) to cover experience of the matching process and early perceptions of the offer, and a second 45 minute follow-up interview with the same schools after they have had some time to implement the offer and will include barriers and facilitators, working with the NLE and the overall process (March 2020 – April 2020).

Research questions

* what barriers and facilitators there were to implementing the recommended actions or advice given, this would include discussion of any financial obstacles;
* how schools experienced the matching process once they accepted the offer;
* how schools perceived the support process and working with the NLE; and
* whether the process overall was clear, easy to understand and well communicated.

*Telephone depth interviews with schools who declined support (up to n=20)*

We want to understand the reasons behind schools declining to take up the offer and suggest that interviews are held with a small sample of schools (eg up to 20) that declined to take up the offer to investigate the reasons behind their decision in more depth. We suggest these interviews are held relatively early in the project to ensure the reasoning behind the decision is still fresh in interviewee’s memory.

Research questions

* how they responded to being identified as eligible;
* the process by which they decided to decline to participate and their reasons for refusing the support;
* whether they are undertaking alternative school improvement activity or whether they challenge their identification as requiring support; and
* whether anything would convinced them to participate.

### Reporting

We require early findings in February 2020 and final reporting in June 2020.

The early findings will be in the form of a slide deck and short presentation to policy colleagues

The final report will be a written report (in Word and meeting the DfE standards) of no more than 50 pages which will be published on gov.uk and a presentation to colleagues.

## Provisional Timetable

* Deadline for EOIs – 23/07/19, 3pm
* Expected start of project – w/c 09/09/19
* Initial findings – February 2020
* Final report – June 2020

## Assessment criteria for EOI

Your expression of interest should be **no more than 1,000 words** and there is no need to provide references at this stage.

* Evidence of relevant methodological experience (qualitative semi-structured telephone interviews)
* Evidence of understanding of school improvement and system leadership landscape
* Capacity to complete the interviews and reporting by the deadlines given above

| **Closing date for EOIs: 23/07/19, 3pm****Send your EOI form to:** **katharine.bear@education.gov.uk** **and** **ciaran.oconnor@education.gov.uk** |
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## How to submit an expressions 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 NEW EOI Form which can be found under attachments. 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.

All contracts are let on the basis of the Department’s t&c’s. You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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