



## **STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS**

### **CPD4122014 – Feasibility Study on Domestic Abuse Impact Evaluations**

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this commission is to procure a feasibility study to advise MHCLG on suitable designs for two separate evaluations in relation to domestic abuse (DA): an evaluation of the Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Duty ('the duty') as well as an evaluation of the Respite Room programme.
- 1.2 Key project tasks and responsibilities are likely to include a desk review of existing literature on DA, an online survey of LAs, and interviews with key stakeholders and experts. The Supplier will identify a range of options for evaluating the duty and the Respite Room programme, including the implications of each option in terms of delivery and likely timescales. The project is expected to cost up to a maximum of £100,000 excluding VAT.

#### **2 Background**

##### **Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Duty**

- 2.1 The Government is committed to supporting all victims of DA as well as increasing the support for refugees, as outlined in the 2019 Manifesto. The Domestic Abuse Act, which was signed into law in April 2021, will place a statutory duty on tier one LAs to provide support to victims of DA and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation.
- 2.2 The duty is a key MHCLG contribution to the Government's wider objective to tackle DA and violence against women and girls, as will be set out in the refresh of the Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy and the new Domestic Abuse Strategy being led by the Home Office. £125.1 million in funding has been approved for 2021-22 for MHCLG to implement the duty and the Government expectation is that LAs will begin delivery from April 2021.
- 2.3 Under the new duty, tier one LAs will be required to appoint a Local Partnership Board (LPB) for DA, complete a full needs assessment, and develop and publish a local strategy every three years for the provision of support within safe accommodation according to identified needs. LAs will be required to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their local strategy and report back to MHCLG using a standardised form. An overview of the types of safe accommodation and support covered under the duty is provided in Annex 1.
- 2.4 Because this is a large national intervention and is the first of its kind for MHCLG in terms of scale and direct focus on the provision for victims of DA, the design and delivery of an effective evaluation is a key part of the proposed plans for the duty.

##### **Respite Room Programme**

- 2.5 The Respite Room programme is a one-year pilot announced by the Chancellor at the Budget 2021. With a particular emphasis on women, the programme will provide support for individuals affected by violence and abuse and suffering multiple disadvantages in areas with a high prevalence of rough sleeping. It will



aim to provide a safe, single gender space for a short period of time with trauma informed support to make choices and decisions around next steps for recovery.

- 2.6 The programme is intended to complement the duty on LAs to provide support in DA safe accommodation, but also provide accommodation and support options for rough sleepers who are often victims of DA, and aims to address a gap in provision for vulnerable individuals who have nowhere else to go.
- 2.7 Total funding for the programme is £4.15 million in 2021-22, which is expected to support around 1,100 individuals. A small number of areas (around 11) will be expected to bid for funding. They will be identified in July 2021 and programme delivery is starting in October 2021.
- 2.8 There is a need to evaluate how well the Respite Room programme works for the cohort as the individuals supported are unlikely to be accessing mainstream services due to their multiple complex needs. Because most LAs are unlikely to have the accommodation provision needed ahead of delivery, there is also a need to evidence key learning from setting up the service.

### **3 Objectives**

- 3.1 The primary objective of this feasibility study will be to provide insights and identify suitable designs for (1) the duty evaluation and (2) the Respite Room programme evaluation.
- 3.2 We are commissioning a combined feasibility study covering both evaluations due to the links between the duty and the Respite Room programme, and because many of the research areas where we require external expertise and input are similar in both cases. While the Supplier will be required to report on each evaluation separately (and to contextualise findings in terms of how they relate to each evaluation), there are likely to be some shared lessons that would apply to both, such as ethical and practical issues surrounding research involving victims of DA. The Supplier will also need to consider any implications for the evaluations that arise from any links between the duty, the Respite Room programme and, if relevant, any other services or duties that relate to DA.
- 3.3 The evaluations will seek to establish the impact of the duty and the Respite Room programme; if possible, this should include a robust counterfactual. The feasibility study should also consider how the evaluations can assess value for money; for the duty evaluation, we are especially interested in the potential to evaluate the efficacy and value for money of the different types of DA safe accommodation and support.
- 3.4 The evaluations are also expected to include a process element to understand delivery at the local level as well as to identify lessons learned and recommendations going forward. While it is not expected that the feasibility study will advise on approaches to conducting the process evaluations generally, the supplier may want to consider how the different elements of process, impact and value for money could fit together when identifying options for the evaluations.
- 3.5 Finally, we require a better understanding of what data is currently available which could be used for the two evaluations. There is likely to be a lack of detailed evidence in terms of the existing DA safe accommodation-based service provision commissioned and/or provided by LAs, however, which could influence the approach used to evaluate the effect of the duty and the funding on local



services. Alongside other research elements, we anticipate that the feasibility study will include some quantitative data collection with LAs to enable us to understand the existing provision better (as well as provide guidance on how this data could be used to assess changes going forward), but would welcome suppliers' input on this as part of the proposals.

**3.6 Key research questions for the feasibility study include:**

- 3.6.1 What types of methodologies would be most appropriate and provide a robust evaluation of the impact and value for money of both policy initiatives? This should consider any possibilities to establish a counterfactual, as well as measure both the immediate and longer-term impact.
- 3.6.2 What are the key considerations for the scope of the evaluations in terms of the level of impact measured (individual, population and/or area level), target outcomes and geographic coverage?
- 3.6.3 For the duty evaluation, what did DA accommodation-based service provision commissioned and/or provided by LAs look like ahead of the duty in terms of the level and type of support provided? To what extent did service provision vary across different LAs?
- 3.6.4 What are the ethical, data protection and safeguarding issues surrounding research with victims of DA and what are the implications of this on the design and delivery of both evaluations? This should consider both adult and child victims.
- 3.6.5 What data is available from different sources (both local and national) which could be used to evaluate the two initiatives? What, if any, additional data needs to be collected and how?
- 3.6.6 What are the likely challenges for the two evaluations considering the complexity of the policy area, the potential interconnections between different services or duties, and likely differences in service user journeys? How can this be overcome to isolate the effect of each of the two initiatives?

**3.7 The Supplier will design and conduct a research project to answer the above questions. Expected tasks and responsibilities will include:**

- 3.7.1 Gather and review relevant information and evidence to identify how to evaluate the duty and the Respite Room programme (for example, but not limited to, through desk-based research, LA surveys, and interviews with key stakeholders and experts).
- 3.7.2 Prepare written reports answering the key research questions and outlining a range of options for evaluating the duty and the Respite Room programme.
- 3.7.3 Conduct workshops with MHCLG colleagues as well as present key findings.

**3.8 The Supplier's staff must possess skills and experience in the following areas:**

- 3.8.1 Understanding of policies and interventions relating to DA and other forms of violence against women and girls, including the intersection between DA and homelessness.



- 3.8.2 Skills and experience in designing and delivering on large scale evaluations focusing on complex policy areas and involving vulnerable or hard to reach groups.
- 3.8.3 Knowledge of research ethics, including ethical approaches to conducting research with adults and children who have experienced DA and trauma.
- 3.8.4 Skills and experience in conducting feasibility studies and/or advising on the design and development of evaluation plans.
- 3.8.5 Knowledge of administrative data, local data systems and data linking.
- 3.9 The project is working to a tight timescale and therefore the Supplier will need to work at pace to design, develop and deliver the project.

#### **4 Scope**

- 4.1 The purpose of the feasibility study is to identify appropriate designs for evaluating the duty and the Respite Room programme.
- 4.2 The table below sets out the range of activities that we anticipate will be required for the feasibility study and how responsibilities will be assigned:

Owner	Activity
MHCLG	<p>Support the supplier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With advice and knowledge on the duty and the Respite Room programme as well as methodological expertise.</li> <li>• In gathering relevant information and evidence, where appropriate (for example, sharing relevant documents and reports to support desk-based research, providing suggestions for suitable participants for surveys and interviews, and supporting the supplier in contacting potential participants).</li> </ul>
Supplier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with MHCLG to agree and finalise the approach for the feasibility study, including data collection methods and analysis strategy.</li> <li>• Preparation of all research materials and tools, such as surveys and interview discussion guides.</li> <li>• Gather and review relevant information and evidence to identify how to evaluate the duty and the Respite Room programme. We anticipate that this will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An online survey into current DA accommodation-based service provision across LAs.</li> <li>- A desk review of existing literature and research around DA, including identifying any learning from relevant evaluations that have been conducted previously.</li> <li>- Interviews with key stakeholders, such as LA and local service staff with involvement in delivering on the duty and the Respite Room programme, experts in DA</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p>research etc. Any qualitative research being undertaken should aim to ensure a diverse sample, providing a wide range of views.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hold regular meetings via video conference or telephone and prepare written updates detailing project progress, upcoming activities and notifying MHCLG of important developments.</li><li>• Analyse data gathered from desk-based research, surveys, and interviews etc. and synthesise findings.</li><li>• Report findings from the feasibility study through developing written reports and delivering workshops.</li></ul>
<p>4.3 The Supplier will respect any relevant legislation or guidance pertaining to social distancing set by the Government to stop the spread of Covid-19 throughout the project management and research process. The Supplier will be free to adjust their methods in line with these restrictions.</p> <p>4.4 The project will be overseen by policy officials and analysts. The Supplier will have regular project sessions with MHCLG to discuss progress and expectations.</p>	
<b>5 Deliverables/Outputs and Performance Measures</b>	
<p>5.1 Outputs from the feasibility study will include:</p> <p>5.1.1 A short (less than five pages) interim report covering emerging findings. The precise contents of this report will be agreed at project inception but will likely include any findings to date covering local data sources and systems to inform MHCLG's work around monitoring data and metrics.</p> <p>5.1.2 Two written reports (one covering the Respite Room evaluation and one for the duty evaluation) in Microsoft Word/PDF format outlining findings and recommendations in response to the research questions and identifying different options for evaluation methodologies.</p> <p>5.1.3 Two workshops (one coinciding with each report) via video conference with MHCLG to present findings and recommendations. The aim of these workshops will be to ensure knowledge transfer between the supplier and MHCLG colleagues from the analytical and policy teams.</p> <p>5.2 MHCLG is working to a tight timeframe for the research and we require the two written reports to be submitted at different stages of the project. The report covering the Respite Room evaluation will be due in October/November 2021; this is because the programme is being launched in October 2021 and to enable plans for the evaluation to be finalised and put into place as close to this time as possible. The report covering the duty evaluation will be due in December 2021 to enable us to reflect on the findings and prepare for the evaluation commencing in Spring 2022.</p>	
<b>6 Approach</b>	
<p>6.1 We anticipate that the feasibility study will include a desk review of existing literature around DA, LA surveys and interviews with key stakeholders and experts. The Supplier is welcome to suggest alternative and/or additional</p>	



approaches. However, a rationale must be provided for the proposed approach and methodology (including how this will help to answer the key research questions above). The Supplier must also demonstrate how they will ensure their approach can be delivered within the project timeline and budget.

6.2 The Supplier may present proposals for research approaches that include direct input from individuals with lived experience of DA. The Supplier must set out detail on how this could be conducted, demonstrating prior experience in engaging with this group and the presence of robust processes and policies in terms of research ethics, safeguarding and data protection.

## **7 Key Dates**

7.1 The following milestones and dates will apply to this project:

Description	Timeframe
Feasibility study contract awarded	August 2021
Project set-up, planning and design	August 2021
Desk review delivery; delivery of primary research (e.g. surveys and interviews)	August-October 2021
Interim findings	September 2021
Analysis and report development	October-December 2021
Report submission and workshop: Respite Rooms	October/November 2021
Report submission and workshop: Duty	December 2021

## **8 Contract Management Arrangements**

8.1 The contract will be managed by **[NAME REDACTED]** Senior Research Officer in the Homelessness and Troubled Families analytical team, and **[NAME REDACTED]** Senior Executive Officer in the Domestic Abuse policy team.

8.2 An advisory group will be established to review outputs from the feasibility study, such as the report recommendations and evaluation options identified. The intention is that the same group will also provide input as part of the subsequent evaluations.

8.3 Weekly meetings will be held with the Supplier via video conference or telephone.

8.4 The Supplier must provide weekly written updates detailing recently completed tasks, upcoming activities and notifying MHCLG of important developments on the project.







**Annex 1 – Types of Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation and Support  
Provided Under the Statutory Duty**

Types of DA safe accommodation covered by the new duty will include:

- Refuge accommodation
- Specialist safe accommodation
- Dispersed accommodation
- Sanctuary schemes
- Move-on or second-stage accommodation

Types of DA support being provided through the duty will include:

- Advocacy support, such as development of personal safety plans and liaison with other services (for example, GPs and social workers, welfare benefit providers)
- Domestic abuse-prevention advice, such as support to victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships to help them remain safe (including online) and to prevent re-victimisation
- Specialist support for victims with protected characteristics and/or complex needs, for example interpreters, faith services, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, and immigration advice
- Children's support, including play therapy and child advocacy
- Housing-related support, such as providing housing-related advice and support (for example, securing a permanent home and advice on how to live safely and independently)
- Counselling and therapy for both adults and children