**Adoption and Fostering Digital/Technical Discovery – Market Engagement Event**

*Fostering Better Outcomes* featured two independent reviews into fostering, and in response, DfE committed to a digital discovery to identify how technology could be used to meet the challenges identified in foster care, specifically around sufficiency planning and recruitment of foster parents, support for foster parents and vacancy management. DfE also wanted to look at whether the challenges in the fostering and adoption sectors were sufficiently similar to be addressed together.

The digital discovery began in October 2018 and ran for 8 weeks. It focused on the end users of fostering and adoption services and included conducting user research through 65 in-depth contextual interviews with foster parents, adopters and social workers. It qualitatively investigated the way information about the child and foster parent flowed within and between services. It also explored how information flowed in adoption to understand the overlaps between the two sectors, building upon the findings of the previous discovery undertaken on the adoption register (in 2017).

A more detailed technical discovery took place to test the hypotheses from the first discovery and to conduct a feasibility assessment of approaches for a shared information infrastructure across children’s services. The technical discovery began in January 2019 and ran for 12 weeks.

DfE would now like to engage with the market for the purpose of understanding the current capability and capacity via an initial market engagement event. This forms part of an informal technical consultation which may lead to a future procurement exercise.

The event will comprise of an overview presentation and interactive breakout sessions to better understand the views of the market. Organisations will be able to discuss and share their experiences of current technology including challenges and limitations that they face to help DfE to understand the capability of software providers to integrate existing and new products, gain an understanding of specific technical requirements and help define our approach for delivery of a future solution.

This event is aimed at software providers who can provide technical solutions within the Adoption and Fostering sector. Attendance should be from persons with sufficient technical knowledge to participate fully in the discussions.

During the event we will also be looking to identify and agree membership of a subsequent working group to work collaboratively with DfE over the next 3 - 6 months to help inform, develop and test possible solutions. This work will help inform any subsequent procurement strategy.

The event will take place on **Tuesday 2 July 2019, from 9:30am to 12:30pm** at DfE, 2 St Paul’s Place, 125 Norfolk Street, Sheffield, S1 2FJ.

Please register your interest in attending this event by emailing [anna.bourne@education.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bourne@education.gov.uk). Attendance is limited to 2 representatives per organisation. Please ensure that the attendees have the requisite technical expertise to fully represent your organisation in the breakout sessions and conversations. All interest needs to be registered no later than **5pm Tuesday 25 June**.