

SPECIFICATION

Exploratory Research to Consider Ways of Conducting a Large-scale Qualitative and Quantitative Research Study into Child Sexual Abuse in Residential Schools and Special Schools

1. Summary

The Research Team at the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) is seeking to commission a contractor to conduct discussion groups within a small sample of residential schools. The discussion groups should include a cross-section of school types and participants.

The aim of this project is to assist IICSA in scoping the design and delivery of a large scale primary research project in residential schools which the Inquiry is planning to commission.¹

We are seeking a research contractor with expert knowledge of the subject area, a proven track record of undertaking sensitive discussion groups for government or other high profile clients, and the capacity to deliver the project immediately and quickly.

2. Background

IICSA was established in 2015 to investigate whether public bodies and other, non-state institutions have taken seriously their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse in England and Wales. The IICSA will identify institutional failings where they are found to exist, demand accountability for past institutional failings, and support victims and survivors to share their experience of sexual abuse. The IICSA will also make practical recommendations to ensure that children are given the care and protection they need. Although the focus of the Inquiry has no set time parameters, it is focusing on cases from the 1940s onwards.

The IICSA is composed of three strands: the Public Hearings, the Truth Project and the Research Project. The Research Project aims to generate new insight into both current and

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https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/935/view/IICSA%20Review%20Report_Final_alt_v4_ACCESS.pdf

non-recent child sexual abuse that will help to inform the IICSA's recommendations, as well as leaving a legacy of research reports and tools/approaches on which other researchers and practitioners can build. This aim will be achieved through a combination of drawing together existing research and extracting new learning from the synthesised evidence base; conducting secondary analysis of existing datasets; and undertaking primary research to fill key evidence gaps and broaden our knowledge about child sexual abuse. During the course of its work, the Inquiry will be examining data on the perspectives and experiences of victims and survivors, perpetrators of child sexual abuse, and professionals working with children in the institutions under investigation, amongst other groups.

The Research Project is being developed and delivered by an experienced research team, working in partnership with IICSA colleagues. It is being overseen by an independent Academic Advisory Board (AAB), chaired by Professor Jenny Pearce OBE from the University of Bedfordshire. The AAB are responsible for providing advice and guidance on topics, methods and outputs as well as granting the research projects ethical approval. Further information about IICSA, including the Research Project, can be found at: www.iicsa.org.uk

3. Objectives

The Inquiry is conducting an investigation into child sexual abuse and exploitation within residential schools. The investigation will consider the nature and extent of, and institutional responses to, child sexual abuse in residential schools, including schools in the state and independent sectors and schools for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs in England and Wales.

As part of the investigation, the Inquiry intends to commission a large-scale primary qualitative and quantitative research study in residential schools, both special schools and mainstream schools. The research would include the participation of school staff, pupils and parents. The aims of this study would be:

- To obtain data on prevalence of child sexual abuse by staff and other adults, and peer on peer sexual abuse, in residential schools;
- To explore the differences in prevalence and response to allegations between schools (e.g. based on religious/secular, single sex/co-ed etc);
- To understand the nature of peer sexual abuse, including sexual harassment and online abuse in residential schools, including differences between schools;
- To understand the culture within residential schools and how this contributes to safeguarding or failures in safeguarding;
- To assess the levels of awareness, knowledge and understanding of staff at residential schools regarding child sexual abuse, including the provision and quality of training and awareness, knowledge and implementation of school and statutory policies;
- To understand the extent of parental understanding and involvement in safeguarding in residential schools;

- To gather information on the availability and efficacy of mechanisms for children to disclose abuse and children's feelings about this;
- To gauge the level of understanding amongst pupils, staff and parents about what constitutes child sexual abuse and peer sexual abuse.

To inform the design and delivery of this large-scale study, IICSA are keen to explore with schools, the methodological and logistical implications of conducting this research. Additionally, it is hoped discussions can provide initial insight into a range of contextual issues (safeguarding, complaints process, staff training) which will be explored further in the main-stage study. This will be conducted in 'discussion groups' with key stakeholder staff from a range of residential schools as set out in the methodology section below (section 5).

4. Research questions

The key questions to be addressed by the discussion groups (see methodology section below for details) are as follows:

1. How to best gain participation of schools in the planned research - what are the facilitators and barriers to potential participation;
2. What approaches are likely to be effective for conducting quantitative and qualitative research with staff, children and young people and parents;
3. What approaches to safeguarding (including training, policies and guidance, referral and response processes, school ethos) are currently being taken in residential schools;
4. How do schools currently engage with staff, young people and parents on safeguarding issues and raise awareness of CSA and CSE.

In answering the above questions, the contractor should give consideration to any differences between school types (such as religious/secular, single sex/mixed, special/mainstream).

If any other areas likely to be of interest to the Inquiry but not explicitly covered in the questions above emerge from the discussion groups, the contractor is asked to discuss with the Inquiry Research Lead whether and how to include them in the project outputs.

5. Methodology

Schools selection and recruitment

Discussion groups should be held in four residential schools, including at least one residential special school, and representation should be achieved in the following areas: religious/secular schools; mixed/single sex schools; reasonable geographical spread. Tenderers should set out their recruitment strategy as part of their proposal, including the selection and recruitment of schools, the venue for the discussion groups and use of any information leaflets and consent materials. It is anticipated there may be some reticence on

the part of schools to take part in the discussion groups, and strategies to overcome this should be addressed within proposals.

Tenderers should also set out the anticipated overarching risks to contract delivery and associated mitigation strategies.

Participants

The discussion groups assuming one per school, should be formed of a cross-section of school staff, to include senior staff, teaching staff, pastoral staff, school governors and staff with a specific/designated safeguarding role. It is anticipated that groups will be formed of 6-8 participants. Tenderers are invited to submit proposals for achieving appropriate levels of representation and heterogeneity within the groups and how inclusivity and accessibility will be ensured. Tenderers should also outline how group dynamics will be managed within the group and also the logistics of running the groups (i.e. on/off school site and during/outside of school hours).

Data collection

Tenderers are asked to set out a proposed topic guide encompassing the research questions set out above and an appropriate strategy for moderating the discussions. Discussion groups should be recorded and transcribed verbatim by the contractor. It is anticipated that discussion groups will last between 1.5 - 2 hours, more detailed estimates are invited from tenderers.

Analysis and reporting

Tenderers are required to outline in detail their approach to analysing the discussions, identifying the key themes and main-stage recommendations and how these would be presented in the final report. Expectations with regard to the final report are discussed further in the following section (Section 6: Outputs).

Ethics

The proposal should include an assessment of any ethical considerations that might arise in the course of this work, and how these will be addressed. In particular, the anonymity of participating schools and individual discussion group participants must be guaranteed by the appointed contractor. Tenderers should also set out how any potential harm to participants, or third parties (where, for example, a group member discloses sensitive information in relation to a third party), caused by the discussion of sensitive topics, will be mitigated. Contractors must comply with the IICSA ethical approval process, and must complete the IICSA ethical approval form and supply associated documents, such as information sheets and consent forms.

6. Outputs

The main project outputs will be:

- A concise and accessible report of publishable quality that answers the research questions and draws out key findings for the Inquiry, in particular, in relation to the planned primary research discussed in section 3. The report should also make relevant recommendations in respect of the planned research based on the discussion group findings where appropriate. A detailed report structure should be shared with and approved by the IICSA Project Lead before the report writing phase begins.

The Inquiry has an established sign-off process for research reports which includes inviting feedback from internal colleagues and the Inquiry's Academic Advisory Board (AAB), and peer reviewers. Tenderers will be expected to reflect the time required for completion of this process in the timescales and costings proposed in their bid.

We anticipate that the report will be IICSA branded; we will provide guidance on its format and style. The report will initially and primarily be for internal use. However it may be published by the Inquiry as part of the specification for the planned main-stage research outlined in section 3; the findings from the report may also be summarised and used as part of output from this project.

7. Timescales

We would like the Contractor to meet a timescale involving the delivery of the first draft report within three months of contract award. The timescale for the project is set with regard to the school term, with the intention being that the discussion groups are held before schools break-up for the May half-term. In addition, the Inquiry would like to commence work on the planned large-scale study, which the findings of the discussion groups will feed into, as soon as possible. An indicative timetable for the full set of project milestones is set out below. However, tenderers are asked to propose their own detailed timetable for delivery in their bids.

| Milestone no. | Milestone description | Indicative timeframe |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Inception meeting | w/c 03/04/2017 |
| 2 | Recruitment strategy and topic guide agreed with IICSA and ethical approval form submitted to IICSA | w/c 17/04/2017 |
| 3 | Discussion groups completed and transcripts supplied to IICSA | w/c 29/05/2017 |
| 4 | Draft report completed and supplied to IICSA; presentation of findings to IICSA | w/c 12/06/2017 |
| 5 | Final report supplied to IICSA | w/c 26/06/2017 |

Tenderers are asked to provide assurances that they can deliver the project within their stated timescales, and to clearly set out the resource they would commit to each stage of the project in order to ensure they can do so.

Payment will be tied to the successful delivery of the outputs forming milestones 3, 4 and 5 above (and listed as milestones 1, 2 and 3 in Paragraph 10 below). To be deemed 'successful' the outputs must be delivered within agreed timescales and be of a quality acceptable to the Inquiry. For further information about the invoicing schedule, please see section 10.

8. Partnership working and project management

The IICSA Research Team takes a collaborative, partnership approach to working with its contractors to ensure the research outputs meet our needs and are the highest quality possible. We therefore expect to have the opportunity to provide advice and guidance at every stage of project delivery, as well as to sign-off key elements of the methodology and outputs before use (including the topic guide, sampling framework and final report). Members of the IICSA research team will also like to discuss the feasibility of attending the discussion groups as observers. Liaison with the IICSA Research Team over dates and times for the groups will therefore be required.

The project will be managed on the IICSA side by a member of the Research Team who will also be the primary day to day contact for the successful supplier. Tenderers are asked to factor in three face-to-face meetings at IICSA's London offices (for the inception meeting, presentation of findings and wrap-up meeting). However, if the successful tenderer is based outside of London or is otherwise unable to attend any of these meetings in person, subject to IICSA's agreement, they may be able to take place by video conference or telephone.

During the course of the project, a weekly progress report will be required from the contractor in order to keep IICSA updated on progress and to confirm the project is on track for delivery against key milestones. This should be in the form of a phone call accompanied by a short email containing a summary of progress. The contractor is also required to be flexible and responsive to contact from IICSA outside of these set times.

9. Contractor skills and experience

We are seeking tenderers with expert knowledge of conducting research within schools (preferably with specific experience to residential and special schools, although this is not essential). Contractors should also have experience in holding discussion groups with a range of participants.

All contractors must be in possession of up to date DBS checks and be able to provide evidence of this to IICSA.

10. Milestone schedule and pricing

Payment shall be tied to delivery against key project milestones, which are as follows:

| Milest one no. | Milestone description | Indicative timeframe | Percentage of total contract price |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Discussion groups completed and transcripts supplied to IICSA | w/c 10/04/2017 | 40% |
| 2 | Draft report completed and supplied to IICSA; presentation of findings to IICSA | w/c 24/04/2017 | 40% |
| 3 | Final report supplied to IICSA | w/c 08/05/2017 | 20% |

Payment shall only be made following satisfactory delivery of pre-agreed outputs that have been signed off by IICSA, and the submission of a detailed invoice from the contractor.

Prices submitted should be inclusive of expenses and exclusive of VAT.

11. Quality

Tenderers are asked to outline the quality assurance and business continuity procedures in place within their organisation(s) and the mechanisms by which they will ensure the project outputs delivered to IICSA are consistently high quality, and any risks to quality delivery are anticipated and mitigated. If Tenderers hold any quality accreditation (such as ISO 9001 or ISO 20252) it should be stated in their bids.

Final decisions about whether required quality thresholds have been met will be made by IICSA. Payment will not be made until these thresholds are met.

12. Data security

The contractor must comply with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 and any information collected, processed and transferred on behalf of IICSA must be held and transferred securely. Tenderers must provide assurances of compliance with the DPA and set out in their proposals how the security of data collected and generated as part of the project will be ensured. This should include details of: how the data will be stored and transferred; who will have access to the data and, in particular; how personal and identifying information in relation to schools and participants will be managed. Contractors will have responsibility for ensuring that they and any subcontractor who processes or handles information on behalf of IICSA is conducted securely.

13. Location

Groups should be held at the selected schools which will be spread geographically within England and Wales. The inception meeting, presentation of findings and wrap-up meeting at IICSA's central London offices or, subject to IICSA's agreement and dependent on contractor location, by video conference or telephone. All other work should be carried out at the contractor's premises.

14. Definitions

Tenderers should have reference to the IICSA glossary:
<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/sites/default/files/glossary.pdf>.