

# Expression of interest

# Title: Extension to the longitudinal Study of Early Education and Development (SEED)

**Project reference: DFERPPU 20-21/028**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 14/12/2020**

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought to undertake the design and delivery for an extension of the Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) until the study cohort reach the end of Key Stage 4.

SEED is a major longitudinal study commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) that has followed nearly 6,000 children from across England from age two until the end of Key Stage One (age 7).

The key objectives of SEED are to explore how the characteristics of the early environment, including early childhood education and care (ECEC) and home and parenting, relate to child development and child outcomes over time. The aim of the SEED extension is to understand the medium-to-long term, as well as the wider, outcomes associated with the early years.

The study will utilise the current SEED cohort and produce new research outputs when the children reach the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. It is envisaged that Key Stage 2 fieldwork will take place over 2022/2023, when the children are in their final year of Key Stage 2 and that data linking to the NPD will commence in 2023 once all children have completed KS2. Further linkage to the NPD will take place in 2028 when the cohort reach the end of Key Stage 4.

Project design and set up will commence in Spring/ Summer 2021. We expect the project and contract to last until mid-late 2029.

## Background

The Department for Education (DfE) has an excellent track record of managing high-quality longitudinal studies which have been used effectively to influence policies affecting children and their families. The Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) is a major longitudinal study that has followed nearly 6,000 children from across England from age two through to the end of Key Stage One (age 7) and more recently during Key Stage One to research experiences, behaviours and outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of SEED is to find out how characteristics of the early environment, including early childhood education and care and home and parenting, relate to child development over time, as well as the medium to longer-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SEED cohort. Furthermore, the study aims to understand what is important for high quality childcare provision and how the quality of provision relates to child outcomes, including comparing the costs of delivering early education with the estimated monetary value of the impacts on child development.

To date, there have been several published outputs from SEED, including baseline findings at age two, impacts at ages three, four and five, quality provision reports, value for money reports and qualitative research reports. The current study is due to finish after the early education and outcomes at age 7 report and the COVID-19 analysis is published. A final impact at age 7 report will be published in 2021, along with the COVID-19 sub-study, as per the current contract.

The DfE are extending the SEED study until the cohort reach the end of Key Stage 4. This extension would include analysis of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 outcomes (ages 8-16), data linkage with wider Government administrative data, and the potential for two additional primary data collections. The extension of SEED ensures that the study will continue to provide critical evidence across a broad spectrum of Early Years and Schools policy and for other government stakeholders.

## Research aims and objectives

The aim of the extension to the SEED is to continue to collect a high standard of statistical, and longitudinal evidence. Through the SEED extension, we aim to understand:

* The medium-to-long term impacts of the early years on later development and outcomes, including the impact of early education and care, home factors, such as the home learning environment and other home environment factors.
* The wider impacts and associations of the early years on later development and outcomes, particularly associated with justice and health outcomes.
* The medium-to-long term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SEED cohort, including educational attainment and children’s emotional and mental health.

Specifically, we envisage that the SEED extension study will cover the following:

* Data matching of SEED data to data held in the National Pupil Database (NPD) at Key Stages 2 and 4;
* Primary data collection with the children, their families, and/or teachers at Key Stage 2 and potentially Key Stage 4 if sufficient sample sizes remain after sample attrition;
* Data linkage with wider Government administrative data sources, particularly in health and justice areas (if feasible);
* Keep-in-touch communications, sample maintenance and tracing procedures to minimise sample attrition;
* Economic analysis and impact analysis on the value-for-money of early education and childcare.
* Potential additional analysis and a report using the SEED dataset on disadvantaged children succeeding against the odds, exploring the risk and protective factors associated with academic success and the key factors driving academic success among some disadvantaged children .

Further details will be provided in the Invitation to Tender. Additional information about SEED can be found [here](https://seed.natcen.ac.uk/) at the SEED website. Previous reports on SEED can be found [here.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/study-of-early-education-and-development-seed)

## Methodology and requirements

The overall requirement of the contractor for this project will be to work with the department to lead the development of a primary data collection at Key Stage 2, manage the sample, work with the department to link data, and to produce outputs, analysis and reports based on the linked data.

We envisage the minimum key work strands for the contractor to be:

* Keep in touch communications, sample maintenance and tracing procedures to minimise sample attrition
* Questionnaire/ instrument design and testing
* Piloting of key elements of the study
* Mainstage fieldwork
* Providing administrative support to the DfE in their data matching requirements, particularly in applications to link with NPD and other government administrative data.
* Production of high quality datasets, corresponding technical reports, and supporting documentation for the KS2 fieldwork
* A full research report for when the cohorts complete KS2
* Production of high quality datasets and corresponding technical reports for the data-matching at KS4.

### The Sample

The SEED study has a well-established sample as this longitudinal study has been running since 2012.

The SEED sample was initially recruited based on a random probability sample of families with a two-year-old selected from Child Benefit Records and geographically clustered using postcode districts. The sample was then stratified into three groups:

1. Most disadvantaged families (20%)– A parent in receipt of one of the following benefits or tax credits with household gross earnings of less than £16,190
2. Moderately disadvantaged families (20-40%)– A parent in receipt of Working Tax Credits with household gross earnings of less than £16,190
3. Least disadvantaged families (>40%)- Parents not in receipt of any of the qualifying benefits or tax credits

The sample was recruited over six consecutive terms (six cohorts) according to date of birth (born between September 2010 and August 2012).

For further information about the sample, please see: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444852/DFE-RR480_Study_of_early_education_and_development_survey_of_families.pdf>

### Fieldwork

So far in the SEED study, data has been collected at 4 waves and one sub-study (COVID-19 sub-study). Associated achieved sample sizes and years of fieldwork completion for each wave can be seen in brackets:

* Wave 1 (baseline) - child is about two years old (Issued sample = 9,188; n = 5,641) (completed 2014)
* Wave 2 - child is about three years old (n = 4,583) (completed 2015)
* Wave 3 - child is about four years old (n = 3,930) (completed 2016)
* Wave 4 - child is about five years old (n = 3,186) (completed 2017)

In addition to the mainstages of fieldwork, we have recently collected data from the SEED families on COVID-19 through a web and telephone survey. We asked families about their own experiences and behaviours during the pandemic alongside questions on their child’s emotional health and well-being.

* Wave 5 - children are around eight to ten years old (Issued sample = 3,647 [using respondents from Wave 3] n= 1,820) (completed 2020)

Given the requirement to collect further data at Key Stage 2 (and potentially KS4), a key requirement of the contractor will be to maximise the sample sizes and avoid attrition, especially since the last face-to-face fieldwork completed in 2018. In the ITT, tenderers will need to provide a clear strategy for how they will maximise response rates and minimise attrition. Table 1 below sets out attrition split by deprivation groupings for SEED.

*Table 1: Attrition across four waves of SEED*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Whole sample** |  | **20% most deprived** |  | **20%-40%**  **most deprived** |  | **60% least deprived** |  |
|  | *by wave* | *cumulative loss* | *by wave* | *cumulative loss* | *by wave* | *cumulative loss* | *by wave* | *cumulative loss* |
| Wave 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Wave 2 | 14% | 14% | 18% | 18% | 14% | 14% | 11% | 11% |
| Wave 3 | 17% | 29% | 23% | 37% | 16% | 28% | 13% | 23% |
| Wave 4 | 20% | 43% | 29% | 55% | 19% | 42% | 15% | 34% |

## Indicative commissioning timings (subject to change)

* Deadline for EOIs – 11.59pm on 14/12/2020
* Invitations to tender issued – w/c 25/01/2021
* Deadline for ITT submission – w/c 01/03/2021
* Placeholder for bidder interviews (if required) – w/c 15/03/2021 & w/c 22/03/2021
* Inception meeting placeholder – Start of April 2021.

## Indicative design and survey timings

* Project design and set up: 2021 and early 2022
* Main stage fieldwork for Key Stage 2: 2022/2023
* Data matching at Key Stage 2: end of 2023
* Analysis, presentation and report for Key Stage 2: mid 2024
* Potentially main stage fieldwork for Key Stage 4: 2027/28
* Data matching at Key Stage 4: end of 2028
* Presentation and Report for Key Stage 4: mid 2029.

## Assessment criteria

Bidders’ responses will be evaluated using the following criteria, with each criterion having an equal weight with regard to scoring.

* Understanding of the Department’s requirements including an outline of the proposed approach to conducting the research.
* Technical and professional ability to design and manage a complex longitudinal study. This will include expertise in survey design and methodology, e.g. probability sampling, achieving high response rates, minimising attrition, complex longitudinal analysis, producing data files and outputs, and presentations, reporting and dissemination.
* Expertise and subject knowledge regarding health, development and learning during the early years, the first years of primary school and related policies. This will include knowledge and experience of developing research instruments to measure outcomes in these areas.
* Capacity to deliver the work to time, contininuity of staff, evidence of delivering large scale projects to budget, and a demonstration of good value for money.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mark | Description |
| 0 | Fails to meet the criteria |
| 1 | Meets some of the criteria |
| 2 | Meets most of the criteria |
| 3 | Fully meets the criteria |
| 4 | Exceeds the criteria |

CVs and references are not required at this stage.

Expressions of interests submitted must be no more than 1000 words overall. Please do not include website links or references. Anything longer than 1000 words will be disregarded.

Collaborative/ consortia expressions of interest are welcome and may be advisable to score highly across the criteria.

We will produce a short Q&A during the EOI, with responses to any questions asked. Questions will be anonymised and any commercially sensitive information removed. Should you wish to ask a question and/or receive a copy of this note, please email [madeleine.ell@education.gov.uk](mailto:madeleine.ell@education.gov.uk) or [Jonathon.blackburn@education.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathon.blackburn@education.gov.uk)

| **Closing date for EOIs: 11.59 pm on 14/12/2020**  **Send your EOI form to:** [**Madeleine.ell@education.gov.uk**](mailto:Madeleine.ell@education.gov.uk) **and** [**Jonathon.blackburn@education.gov.uk**](mailto:Jonathon.blackburn@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’ form which can be found under attachments in the ContractsFinder listing. 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 Terms & Conditions, a copy is available attached to the ContractsFinder listing. You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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