

**Request for Information**

**Department for Work & Pensions:**

**User Research Participant Recruitment for DWP Digital**

**September 2025**

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# Context

The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) is undertaking market research to understand technical capability and capacity to recruit User Research Participants for DWP Digital.

This document sets out some detail about the Department’s requirement and the context within which the service will operate.

# Disclaimer

This RFI does not commit the DWP to undertaking any formal procurement activity. This RFI is a means through which the DWP can test their current thinking with the market and obtain appropriate market feedback.

Participation, or non-participation, in this RFI will not favour, disadvantage, or preclude any parties who receive the RFI in any subsequent procurement activity.

The information contained in this RFI may change prior to any future market competition. DWP reserves the right to cancel or amend any future requirement or commercial competition opportunity.

Please note that any information provided in response to this RFI may be shared with other UK Government departments for the purpose of market analysis and procurement planning and will be handled in line with applicable data protection and freedom of information requirements.

Where you consider any information provided to be commercially sensitive, please clearly identify it and provide a brief explanation.

# The Customer - DWP

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are responsible for welfare, pensions, and child maintenance policy within the UK. As the UK’s biggest public service Department, it administers the State Pension and a range of working age and disability benefits to around 20 million claimants, primarily in the UK.

# Requirement

DWP has a requirement for third-party support to recruit participants for user research across its Digital Category. The research will be a mixture of face-to-face, video calls, telephony, and surveys (moderated and unmoderated).

A wide-ranging demographic will be required, each brief may require participants for whom one or a combination of different criteria apply relating to: DWP Service Users, circumstances, and/or specific organisations.

**DWP Service Users**

Requirements may include different users of DWP services and benefits, including those who currently receive, are eligible or interact and/or are impacted by specific services or benefits. Examples of benefits and services include, but are not limited to:

* Universal Credit
* Working Age benefits
* Personal Independence Payment
* Access to Work
* Carer’s Allowance
* Job Seekers Allowance
* Jobs and Careers Services
* Retirement and Pension Services
* Maternity Allowance
* Child Maintenance Service
* Bereavement

**Participant Circumstances**

Briefs may require participants for whom one or a combination of different circumstances apply, these may include:

* Those living with a health condition or disability, this may include:
* cognitive and/or learning disabilities, including neurodiversity
* mental and/or physical health conditions
* motor skills impairments
* audio visual impairments
* Those with additional support requirements, such as:
* Users of assistive technologies to access digital services
* Participants requiring responsible adults or appointees
* Citizens requiring additional support from DWP, e.g. Visting Officer
* Those within a specified household income range
* Prison leavers
* Those who have English as a second language
* Non-UK residents
* Those with differing levels of educational attainment
* Those who have been impacted by domestic abuse and/or living in secure accommodation
* Those with varying employment statuses, such as:
* Currently employed
* Looking for employment
* Looking to progress within work
* At risk of leaving the workforce
* Not currently employed
* Unable to work
* Those acting as a carer, whether in a formal or informal capacity
* Parents / guardians of children with long-term health conditions
* Those currently going through appeals
* Those managing DWP debt
* Those impacted by benefits fraud
* Those unable to use particular channels such as paper, telephony, or digital platforms

This list is not exhaustive but is intended to provide an overview of the scope of services DWP may require.

**Organisations**

DWP may also require participants from one of the below organisations:

* Health care providers in the NHS and private sector
* Support organisations and charities
* Education providers and leaders in the SEND (Special Educational Needs) sector
* Employers of varying:
* Sizes
* Sectors
* Geographical locations

**Essential Requirements**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Experience of recruiting participants who are looking into and/or applying, claiming and/or have previously claimed DWP benefits. |
| 2 | Experience of recruiting participants for complex briefs. |
| 3 | Experience of recruiting participants with a range of socio-economic status, age, educational attainment, ethnicity and household make-up. |
| 4 | Experience of recruiting participants for remote and face-to-face research, as well as unmoderated research (e.g. surveys) across the whole of the UK, including in urban and rural areas. |
| 5 | Ability to recruit participants with specific accessibility needs that both do and do not use assistive technology. |
| 6 | Ability recruit participants who are digitally excluded (e.g. don't have internet access and/or only have low digital skills), using both digital and non-digital methods (such as through relationships with charities and local organisations). |
| 7 | Ability to recruit participants from a customer database provided by a client of similar size and scale to DWP. |
| 8 | Ability to build up new pipelines of participants for recruitment. |
| 9 | Ability to manage recruitment for multiple research projects across a large department with over 100 researchers. |
| 10 | Ability to consistently work to short deadlines (2 weeks’ notice). |
| 11 | Experience of recruiting participants ethically and sensitively, including safeguarding. |
| 12 | Ability to fully coordinate and ensure, as far as possible, attendance of participants, including the ability to reduce and cover 'no shows'. |
| 13 | Ability to handle all participant communications around recruitment including sending and collecting DWP consent forms. |
| 14 | Ability to provide contact/support for researchers and participants within office hours (9am-5pm). |
| 15 | Ability to provide incentives to research participants by way of shopping vouchers, e.g. Love2Shop. |
| 16 | Ability to provide monthly reporting, split by project and/or groups of projects, including use of labelling so research teams can differentiate between project recruitments. |
| 17 | Experience of data sharing and data transfer complying with GDPR and data security policies. |

# Information and Feedback

Appendix A contains the key information that DWP is keen to receive market feedback on. Suppliers are kindly requested to review the elements and add comments in the fields.

# Future Activities

DWP will be holding a market engagement session on **Monday 22nd September 2025 between 3-4pm,** to provide interested suppliers with an overview of our requirements and to provide an opportunity to ask any questions.

The session will be held via Microsoft Teams, interested parties should register their interest for the session by contacting [**cddigital.ucwa@dwp.gov.uk**](mailto:cddigital.ucwa@dwp.gov.uk)and we will share the meeting invitation link with you.

Following the event and once DWP has received responses to the RFI, it is expected that a procurement process will be undertaken in October 2025 through a CCS Agreement with a view to awarding a contract to start in January 2026.

DWP will be using the Atamis eSourcing Portal to electronically run the end-to-end procurement, including tender exercise, and contract management. Any suppliers who wish to take part in future tender activity will need to be registered on this system.

Access the link below to register to use Atamis, guidance is also accessible via the help with registration link.

[Register to use Atamis](https://dwp2.my.site.com/s/Welcome)

[Help with registration.](https://suppliersupport.atamis.co.uk/hc/en-gb/sections/4612344115359)

# Response

All queries and submissions should be submitted to the following email address: [cddigital.ucwa@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:cddigital.ucwa@dwp.gov.uk)

Suppliers may also submit clarification questions to the email stated above, the deadline for clarification questions is 26/09/2025. DWP will endeavour to answer all clarification questions in a timely manner.

The deadline for submitting an RFI response is 03/10/2025 at 12pm.

# Timetable

The table identifies key dates for the pre-market engagement activity:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity #** | **Description** | **Date** |
| 1 | Market Engagement Notice Published | 16/09/2025 |
| 2 | Market Engagement Session | 22/09/2025 |
| 3 | Deadline for Supplier Clarifications | 26/09/2025 |
| 4 | Deadline for RFI Responses | 03/10/2025 at 12pm |

Indicative procurement timeline – the below provides an indicative timeline if DWP proceed with procurement activity, this is subject to change:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity #** | **Description** | **Date** |
| 1 | Tender Period | 20/10/2025 to 10/11/2025 |
| 2 | Evaluation and Moderation | 11/11/2025 to 17/11/2025 |
| 3 | Internal Governance | 18/11/2025 to 10/12/2025 |
| 4 | Contract Award | 12/12/2025 |
| 5 | Contract Start Date | 12/01/2026 |

# Appendix A – Information and Response Template

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Supplier Name** | *Type text here* |
| **Supplier Contact Name** | *Type text here* |
| **Supplier e-mail** | *Type text here* |
| **Supplier Telephone Number** | *Type text here* |
| **Supplier Web Address** | *Type text here* |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Category** | **Question** |
| **1** | **Requirements** | Please confirm if you are interested in, and capable of, delivering some or all the essential requirements described in this RFI document.  DWP is still interested in receiving responses whereby you may not solely be able to provide all essential requirements independently. If applicable, please identify which requirements you may not be able to deliver. |
| **Supplier Answer** | | |
| *Type text here.* | | |
| **No.** | | **Category** | **Question** |
| **2** | | **Requirements** | Please outline your operating model which allows you to meet some/all of the essential requirements, in particular your ability to expand the scope of your reach to address new or evolving target groups and/or hard to reach audiences. |
| **Supplier Answer** | | | |
| *Type text here.* | | | |
| **No.** | | **Category** | **Question** |
| **3** | | **Requirements** | Do you offer any support or aftercare services beyond the initial participant recruitment, including safeguarding?  For example, depending on the severity, well-being checks, signposting participants to DWP and/or charitable organisations who can provide the required support, or contacting relevant authorities in safeguarding cases.  If you cannot provide this to the full extent, DWP is still interested in receiving responses. |
| **Supplier Answer** | | | |
| *Type text here.* | | | |
| **No.** | | **Category** | **Question** |
| **4** | | **Pricing** | Please explain your approach to pricing such requirements. Within your response please include:   * How, or if, you have different recruitment fees dependent on the complexity of the requirement * What is contained within recruitment fees * Any additional services which are not included within the recruitment fee that would incur an additional charge * Approach to Lab or Venue hire |
| **Supplier Answer** | | | |
| *Type text here.* | | | |
| **No.** | | **Category** | **Question** |
| **5** | | **Other Information** | Please share any other information that you think may support DWP in finalising our requirements ahead of potential future procurement activity. |
| **Supplier Answer** | | | |
| *Type text here.* | | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Category** | **Question** |
| **6** | **Route to Market** | DWP is considering using a CCS framework, currently under consideration are the Research and Insights DPS and Digital Outcomes (DOS) 6.  Please advise if you are a provider under either of these agreements and/or if there are any other CCS agreements that you are signed up to and feel would be appropriate to deliver the essential requirements under. |
| **Supplier Answer** | | |
| *Type text here.* | | |
| **No.** | **Category** | **Question** |
| **7** | **Contracting Approach** | DWP’s preference is to contract with a Prime Supplier who would have accountability for delivery under the contract. However, we remain open to Consortium bids and/or use of sub-contractors.  Please advise if you have any such commercial arrangements that are relevant to this requirement and/or if you would consider submitting such a bid. |
| **Supplier Answer** | | |
| *Type text here.* | | |