

# Expression of interest

# Title: Obtaining pupil insight for Building in Use reviews: the use and value of external school space

**Project reference: DFE/RPPU/2019/043**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 23.59, Thursday 5th March 2020**

## Summary

We are looking for a contractor to identify the most appropriate and efficient means of collecting views from secondary school pupils on how school external ground space is used and valued.

The sort of places in scope would include: spaces for informal play, socialising, break time, eating areas, hard play, grassed/ landscaped/ wooded/ habitat areas, outside furniture/ equipment. They could include pitches and Multi-Use Games Areas, but the focus should be on the range of spaces used by the diverse interests of pupils (also considering gender, faith and abilities) not only areas used for sports.

We are seeking a method to specifically fit within the context and timescales of Building in Use (BiU) reviews employed by the department[[1]](#footnote-2) and appropriate for all secondary pupils[[2]](#footnote-3). As pupils represent the majority of school users, this project will help to ensure that we can take their views into account as part of BiU reviews and help ensure capital investment is being used effectively.

We believe the potential exists to take advantage of digital technology in engaging with pupils rather than using traditional focus groups and our preference is an approach using a digital / online medium or platform.

The department will identify four secondary schools with whom the successful contractor can test possible approaches, and we aim to include possible visit dates in the Invitation to Tender (ITT). The schools will represent a range of schools built to our Output Specification standards in the last five years, including new build and refurbishment and constrained or unusual premises that make access to and use of outdoor space more challenging. They will likely be situated in London or the Home Counties.

The successful contractor will work closely with DfE capital advisors to ensure the fit with Building in Use objectives.

The budget for this work will be up to £20,416 (excl. VAT).

## Research aim

In order to inform future DfE BiU reviews, the primary question the project seeks to answer is:

***What is the most appropriate and efficient method of obtaining views from secondary school pupils on how school ground space is used and valued by them?***

On the assumption an appropriate approach can firstly be identified and implemented, supplementary questions and issues we would like addressed are[[3]](#footnote-4):

* Whether the method enables more specific feedback around place/ location in the school (using GPS or similar location mapping method)
* Reflections on how to most effectively combine user experiences and views from the staff and the pupils (i.e. diverse user groups) as part of one BiU review assessment
* Whether the methodology could be used for school staff instead of the questionnaires currently used to obtain user feedback
* Who should obtain the pupil views and how these should be fed back to DfE
* What outside spaces are most/least valued or used by pupils. What spaces could be improved or designed differently to benefit (i) educational outcomes, including ‘readiness to learn’, (ii) well-being, both physical and mental

Project findings will help ensure the pupil user voice is appropriately captured as part of future BiU reviews, and inform the policies and standards being developed for those involved in school site procurement and development.

## Methodology

DfE invites potential contractors to propose a suitable approach that will address the above question whilst minimising burden and demonstrating value for money. At this stage, the expression of interest does not require detailed proposals of how views can be obtained in this specific context.

We require the approach to:

* Help us understand what is important and useful to secondary pupils in their experience of school; how they *perceive, use and value their* *existing* external spaces.
* Work within the specific BiU context.

The background section below provides additional detail on how DfE BiU reviews operate to give a sense of where any proposed approach would need to “fit”.

Who, of three possible groups, could implement the recommended methodology to undertake the data collection will be an important question to address, on the time and resources available, and other responsibilities of each. The groups are:

* DfE capital advisors
* School teachers or staff on our behalf
* Technical contractors who may be appointed to carry out the BIU visits on our behalf

We would prefer a methodology for use with pupils that could be transferrable to other types of school space that feature in BiU Reviews such as corridors and dining spaces.

We require a contractor with experience in the use of technology for participative, quantitative and qualitative research with young people. Knowledge and/or experience of Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) would be an advantage.

It is anticipated that the contract will run for approximately 3 months, with a final research report and presentation to the department including recommendations required around mid-June 2020.

**Outputs:**

1. A short report adhering to the 1:3:25 principle – 1pg outline, 3pg executive summary, 25 pages for findings and recommendations. It should be accessible to the non-specialist and meet accessibility requirements. This should include:
* Summary of findings inc. what works well and what does not regarding value and use of outside space
* Final recommendation(s) on the approach best suited for the DfE’s BiU review process to include associated questions and guidance
* Recommendations for how to apply the recommended approach in other areas (e.g. pupil use of internal space) and with school staff (as a means on securing views rather than the traditional online survey currently used) and without a professional research consultancy service
* Setting out opportunities and risks if, in future, DfE technical advisors or school staff were responsible for securing pupil insight as part of BiUs.
1. Presentation of findings and recommendations at Sanctuary Buildings, London.
2. A one-page poster for senior DfE staff illustrating how the proposed approach fits with all aspects of the Building in Use process\* (\*as previously stated, the successful contractor would work closely with DfE capital advisors throughout the project)

## Background

**DfE approach to Building in Use Reviews**

The department’s BiU reviews employ a Post Occupancy Evaluation method to understand the quality of school buildings and grounds and how they support school needs. Since 2017, DfE’s Capital Directorate have carried out 75 reviews on centrally procured school building projects including buildings converted from non-educational uses, primary schools, modular school buildings, secondary school buildings, special education needs and all through schools. They evaluate schools using six criteria: functionality, health and safety, standardisation, future proofing, minimum life expectancy and sustainable design and construction – these are the principles of our Output Specification (OS standards). They look at a range of aspects such as internal and external space, safety, movement and materials and robustness, and reference aspects from the concurrent Building Performance Evaluations (BPE) which evaluate lighting, energy use, heating systems, robustness and maintenance.

Essentially, the reviews evaluate what is working well and what is not working as well for the users approximately three years post completion, and inform DfE policies and standards for capital funded programmes such as Free Schools and Priority Schools Building Programme (PSPB).

The BiU reviews are typically carried out in batches of schools over a few months. They may be carried out within the DfE or using an external company. An individual review would include a day visit to the school, including user feedback from interviews with school leaders, business managers and premises leads, as well as observations of the building in use from walkarounds. The review preparation includes a desktop analysis of planning and contractual documentation, a briefing with the delivery team lead and a review of teaching, administrative, and premises manager questionnaires. A typical BiU review might involve the following tasks:

1. Pre-BiU, Technical contractors and DfE capital advisors review school information, planning approval, contractual drawings and area schedules
2. DfE capital advisor send out staff user satisfaction survey (online return)
3. DfE capital advisors review staff feedback prior to visit to identify any particular areas for review
4. Meet with Headteacher, School Business Manager, and Premises Manager
5. Walk around the school with Headteacher and/or School Business Manager to make observations on the building in use
6. Technical contractors measure build quality using a specific QA form
7. Additional discussions with the Responsible Body e.g. Multi Academy Trust may take place by telephone
8. Following the visit, the evaluation outcomes are shared and moderated by the Project Lead (DfE capital advisor) with the review team (a combination of DfE capital advisors and external technical advisors)
9. Carry out BiU reviews at other schools in the batch
10. Analysis of user questionnaires from each school in the batch (carried out by DfE capital advisors)
11. Presentation and report on key trends and lessons learnt and recommendations from each batch BIU review (carried out by DfE capital advisors or external technical advisors).

## Timing

* Deadline for EOIs - 23:59 Thursday 5th March 2020
* Issue ITT – Monday 9th March 2020
* Deadline for bids – EOP Wednesday 25th March 2020
* Award contract – 27th March 2020
* Inception meeting – w/c 30th March 2020
* Fieldwork period – 20th April – 15th May 2020
* Findings presentation and final report – early / mid June 2020

## Assessment criteria

EOIs will be evaluated on demonstration of the criteria below. Please evidence each criterion by referring to examples of what you did, how, why and the impact. The full invitation to tender will only being issued to those organisations deemed to best meet these requirements.

* Capacity to undertake the research with four secondary schools in the London area.
* Professional / technical ability of the proposed research team to project manage, design and deliver solutions to minimise burdens and/or maximise insight within timescales
* Relevant research experience/expertise of appropriate and effective methodologies that would be appropriate for this context e.g. in the use of technology for participative, quantitative and qualitative research with young people. Knowledge and/or experience of POE would be an advantage;
* Experience of research with young people [and schools if possible]

**Each one of these criteria has equal weighting.**

Expressions of interests submitted must be no more than 1,250 words – anything longer will be disregarded.

The full invitation to tender will only being issued to those organisations deemed to best meet the requirements of the assessment criteria. CVs and references are not required at this stage.

| **Closing date for EOIs: 23.59 Thursday on 5th March 2020****Send your EOI form to:** **mike.bourne@education.gov.uk** **and** **jennifer.singer@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 ‘EOI Form 2018’ 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 Depatrtment’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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1. More detail on BiU approach used by the department is in the background section. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. This obviously includes those for whom English is not their first language and those young people with additional learning needs and/or disabilities [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. This is not an exhaustive list, but gives a sense of scope [↑](#footnote-ref-4)