

# Expression of interest

# Evaluation of the looked after children’s mental health assessment pilots

**Project reference: EOR/SBU/2017/061**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 5pm Monday 18th December 2017**

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought for an evaluation of looked after children’s mental health assessment pilots.

This expression was posted on Friday 24th November 2017.

## Background

The Department for Education (DfE) is implementing between 6 to 10 pilots to test new approaches to the health assessments that looked after children receive on entry to care. Poor mental health and emotional wellbeing in looked after children can have far reaching effects on all aspects of their lives with long term impacts on future life chances. Effective identification of need is an essential first step and the pilots will seek to improve aspects of the assessment relating to looked after children’s mental health and emotional wellbeing. The pilots respond to a 2016 Education Select Committee enquiry which found that current mental health assessment methods are often poor, failing to identify need. A delivery partner is currently being sought; the Prior Information Notice (PIN) for which can be found [here.](https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/b656051a-09d6-488f-b509-ecebf613626f)

## Evaluation aims

The aim of the evaluation of the pilots is to inform what, if any, changes are needed to the assessment system for looked after children on first entry into care and if so, how this can best be achieved. Findings will be used to understand what works, or doesn’t, and what other factors are at work that affect outputs and outcomes to improve health assessments.

The overarching research questions are:

1. How successful are the pilots in delivering the project aims and outputs? What, if any, improvements have there been in the timeliness and appropriateness of assessments and referrals?
2. How effective are the operating models in delivering the specified outputs (see PIN) and project aim – mental health assessments that are: thorough, good quality, accurate, timely, needs focused and child centred?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches, and what are the enablers/ barriers to successful outcomes and to wider roll out?
4. What are the key lessons and best practice for assessments of looked after children?
5. Have there been any changes in awareness and knowledge of health assessments and/or changes in processes and systems, particularly regarding inter-agency working and the strategic commissioning of services?
6. What are the cost implications of the changes to assessment?

## Methodology

We anticipate that this research is likely to include:

1. A scoping phase that includes: (i) desk research of key documents produced by the pilots, bids, and implementation plans to feed into the development of research; (ii) qualitative interviews with pilot leads to understand the aims of the pilot, implementation, and explore the proposed approach, the agencies/ stakeholders involved and any cross-agency arrangements.
2. Surveys of families and children to understand their experience of the pilots, whether they felt their needs and preferences had been met, and their understanding of the outcomes for the child/family as a result of the piloted approach. These could include child level assessments to measure the emotional, behavioural, developmental needs of the children and young people. We also wish to explore the possibility of identifying a comparison group.
3. A series of case study visits over the two year period to the pilot sites to explore lessons learned from implementation, successes and challenges and how these were overcome, and plans for wider roll-out. This should include engaging with the children and young people involved in the pilots.
4. Setting up an expert review group to review assessments and provide an independent view of the quality of the assessments and the extent to which they meet the aims of the pilots.

## Timing

We are seeking expressions of interest by 5pm on 18th December 2017 and we anticipate issuing the tender to successful organisations week commencing 8th January 2017. The deadline for bids will be confirmed in the Invitation to tender but is likely to be around the 26th Janaury 2017. It is anticipated that the evaluation will begin in April 2018 and complete in December 2020.

• Deadline for EOIs – 5pm on Monday 18th December 2017.

## Assessment criteria

Expressions of interest will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. Understanding the Department’s requirements.
2. Knowledge and experience of research and practice in this area, for example, mental health of children, measurement tools assessing mental health and well-being of children, and in particular looked after children.
3. Experience of the methodologies to be used, including undertaking research with families and working with an expert group to review the quality of the assessment models.
4. Experience of working on high profile Government research projects working to tight deadlines and writing good quality reports with clear evidence based conclusions and lessons for practice.

Each one of these criteria has equal weighting.

Expressions of interests submitted must be no more than 1000 words – anything longer will be disregarded.

| **Closing date for EOIs: 5pm on Monday 18th December 2017.****Send your EOI form to: maura.lantrua@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 which can be found under attachments. 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 and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eoi-guide). You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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