

DPS Schedule 6 (Order Form Template and Order Schedules)

Order Form

ORDER REFERENCE: **24-25/044**

THE BUYER: **The Department for Education**

BUYER ADDRESS **Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street,
London, SW1P 3BT**

THE SUPPLIER: **NFER**

SUPPLIER ADDRESS: **National Foundation for Educational Research,
The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, SL1 2DQ**

REGISTRATION NUMBER: **900899**

DUNS NUMBER: **229517859**

APPLICABLE DPS CONTRACT

This Order Form is for the provision of the Deliverables and dated 4th September 2025

It's issued under the DPS Contract with the reference number **RM6126 CCS Research & Insights Marketplace DPS** for the provision of **Further Education Workforce Survey and Longitudinal Feasibility Study**.

DPS FILTER CATEGORY(IES):
Further Education, Mixed method (qualitative and quantitative), Feasibility study, Longitudinal research, Teaching, England

ORDER INCORPORATED TERMS

The following documents are incorporated into this Order Contract. Where numbers are missing we are not using those schedules. If the documents conflict, the following order of precedence applies:

1. This Order Form including the Order Special Terms and Order Special Schedules.
2. Joint Schedule 1(Definitions and Interpretation) **RM6126 CCS Research & Insights Marketplace DPS**



DPS Joint Schedule 1
- Definitions v1.0.pdf

3. DPS Special Terms

4. The following Schedules in equal order of precedence:

- **Joint Schedules for RM6126 CCS Research & Insights DPS**

- [Joint Schedule 1 is covered in '2.' above, and *must* be included]
- Joint Schedule 2 (Variation Form)



DPS Joint Schedule 2
- Variation Form v.1.0

- Joint Schedule 3 (Insurance Requirements)



DPS Joint Schedule 3
- Insurance Requirem

- Joint Schedule 4 (Commercially Sensitive Information)



DPS Joint Schedule 4
- Commercially Sensit

- [Joint Schedule 5 is covered in '6.' Below, and *must* be included]
- [Joint Schedule 6 (Key Subcontractors)]



DPS Joint Schedule 6
- Key Subcontractors '

- Joint Schedule 10 (Rectification Plan)



DPS Joint Schedule
10 - Rectification Plan

- Joint Schedule 11 (Processing Data)



Joint Schedule 11
(Processing Data)

- Order Schedules for **24-25/044**
 - Order Schedule 1 (Transparency Reports)



DPS Order Schedule
1 - Transparency Rep

- Order Schedule 2 (Staff Transfer)



DPS Order Schedule
2 - Staff Transfer v1.1.

- Order Schedule 3 (Continuous Improvement)



DPS Order Schedule
3 - Continuous Impro

- [Order Schedule 4 (Order Tender)



BID 5- NFER Bid.pdf

- [Order Schedule 5 (Pricing Details)]



DPS Order Schedule
5 - Pricing Details.doc

- [Order Schedule 7 (Key Supplier Staff)



DPS Order Schedule
7 - Key Supplier Staff

-

- [Order Schedule 10 (Exit Management)]



DPS Order Schedule
10 - Exit Management

-

- [Order Schedule 20 (Order Specification)]



Attachment%206b%
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5. CCS Core Terms (DPS version) v1.0.3



RM6126 DPS Core
Terms v1.0.pdf

6. Joint Schedule 5 (Corporate Social Responsibility)



DPS Joint Schedule 5
- Corporate Social Re:

No other Supplier terms are part of the Order Contract. That includes any terms written on the back of, added to this Order Form, or presented at the time of delivery.

ORDER SPECIAL TERMS

The following Special Terms are incorporated into this Order Contract:

Special Term 1. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Special Term 2. Project outputs

Special Term 3. (Security) Consultancy Security



Special Terms -
Research updated Oct

ORDER START DATE: 04 September 2025

ORDER EXPIRY DATE: 30th July 2026

ORDER INITIAL PERIOD: 10 months

A break clause will be implemented at the end of the survey data collection (expected January 2026) to account for if the survey response rate is not sufficient.

DELIVERABLES

See details in Order Schedule 20 (Order Specification)]

MAXIMUM LIABILITY

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The limitation of liability for this Order Contract is stated in Clause 11.2 of the Core Terms.

The Estimated Year 1 Charges used to calculate liability in the first Contract Year is

██████████

ORDER CHARGES

Milestone	Description	Invoice scheduled for	Cost
1. Initial development and planning (WS1 and 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception meeting • Survey development, including survey script agreed with DfE • Confirm sampling approach with DfE. Cognitive testing with five providers (at least one GFEC, one SFC and one ITP, including a teacher, leader and manager from each) • Survey online scripting and QA • Data review and evidence review specifications agreed with DfE 	31 st October 2025	██████████
2. WS2- stakeholder engagement phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of key data sets listed in the ITT, assessing overall suitability for a longitudinal sample frame. • Evidence review of appropriate range of studies relating to longitudinal research, the teaching workforce and FE research.. • Interviews with approximately eight relevant internal DfE stakeholders, including policy leads on FE workforce, Skills Strategy policy, Skills Policy Analysts, FEWDC data leads and the WLTL team. • Online consultation with approximately 20 consultees from organisations representing the post-16 sector. • Interim findings presentation summarising findings from the data and evidence review, online consultation. 	30 th December 2025	██████████
3. WS1- Survey fieldwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination strategy, including pre-engagement with providers and targeted follow-ups. 	30 th December 2025	██████████

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey administration, including regular reviews of responses received. • Survey fieldwork completed with approximately 7-10% response rate of population, with target response numbers achieved across FE teachers, leaders and managers. • Draft survey analysis plan shared with DfE, including subgroup analysis plans, proposed statistical analyses and confirmation of data cleaning/QA procedures. 		
Break clause: Discussion around suitable outputs and costings for milestones 5 and 7 to take place.			
4. WS2- engagement phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three online focus groups with 6-8 members each (one group will be FE leaders, one with managers and one group with teachers) completed. • Analysis and summary of focus group findings shared with DfE 	27 th February 2026	██████████
5. WS1- Survey findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data cleaning • Analysis of survey data and QA • Initial summary of findings presented to DfE 	30 th April 2026	██████████
6. WS2- Final feasibility study report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A final feasibility study report that meets DfE requirements, with at least two drafts of the report shared with DfE as it progresses. 	30 th April 2026	██████████
7. WS1- Final workforce survey findings outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A final survey report that meets DfE requirements, with at least two drafts of the report shared with DfE as it progresses • Technical appendix • College feedback reports created and disseminated to FE providers 	29 th May 2026	██████████
8. Findings presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings from both workstreams presented to DfE stakeholders 	19 th June 2026	██████████

ORDER CHARGES

Expenditure for the financial year 2025-26 shall not exceed ██████████ exclusive of VAT

Expenditure for the financial year 2026-27 shall not exceed ██████████ exclusive of VAT.

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Total Project expenditure shall not exceed **£179,500** exclusive of VAT

REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

None

PAYMENT METHOD

Via BACS upon submission of valid invoice

BUYER'S INVOICE ADDRESS:

Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street,
London SW1P 3BT

Invoices must be submitted in pdf format, state the Purchase Order number
(provided separately to this form), and sent via email to

AccountsPayable.OCR@education.gov.uk

BUYER'S AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE

[REDACTED]

Senior Social Researcher

[REDACTED]

Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street,
London SW1P 3BT

BUYER'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Department for Education Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, 21 April
2022, available online at: [Sustainability and climate change strategy - GOV.UK](#)

BUYER'S SECURITY POLICY

Department for Education Personal Information Charter, available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/personal-information-charter#co>

SUPPLIER'S AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE

[REDACTED]

Interim Finance Director

[REDACTED]

NFER, The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2DQ

SUPPLIER'S CONTRACT MANAGER

[REDACTED]

Senior Research Manager

[REDACTED]

NFER, The Mere, Upton Park, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2DQ

PROGRESS REPORT FREQUENCY

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Monthly: Ahead of the first progress meeting of the month.

PROGRESS MEETING FREQUENCY

Weekly (specific day can be amended where necessary). These meetings will be accompanied with a brief written project update. Both the supplier and the DfE are willing to change the frequency of meetings, potentially moving to fortnightly catch ups to accommodate busy or quieter periods of the work.

KEY STAFF

See DPS order schedule 7.

KEY SUBCONTRACTOR(S)

Not applicable

E-AUCTIONS

Not applicable

COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION

See 'DPS Joint Schedule 4'

SERVICE CREDITS

Not applicable]

ADDITIONAL INSURANCES

Not applicable

GUARANTEE

Not applicable

SOCIAL VALUE COMMITMENT

The Supplier agrees, in providing the Deliverables and performing its obligations under the Order Contract, that it will comply with the social value commitments in Order Schedule 4 (Order Tender)]

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For and on behalf of the Supplier:		For and on behalf of the Buyer:	
Signature:		Signature:	
Name:		Name:	
Role:		Role:	
Date:		Date:	

Order Schedule 20 (Order Specification)

This Schedule sets out the characteristics of the Deliverables that the Supplier will be required to make to the Buyers under this Order Contract. This should be read in conjunction with the following document

Attachment 3 – Statement of Requirements

Title: **FE workforce survey and longitudinal feasibility study**

Contract Reference: **24-25/044**

**FURTHER COMPETITION FROM THE CROWN COMMERCIAL SERVICE
RM6126 RESEARCH & INSIGHTS DYNAMIC PURCHASING SYSTEM
(DPS)**

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The Department for Education referred to as ‘the Authority’ hereafter is looking for a supplier to conduct two strands of research aiming to enhance understanding of the Further Education (FE) workforce and to inform future research plans:
- a) A survey of FE teachers and leaders
 - b) A feasibility study to explore options for long-term research, with a focus on the feasibility of a longitudinal study of the FE workforce.

2. Background to the Contracting Authority

2.1. This research is being commissioned by the Further Education Workforce Division alongside analysts from the Skills Policy Analysis Division.

3. Definitions

Expression or Acronym	Definition
FE	Further Education
FEWDC	Further Education Workforce Data Collection
GIAS	Get Information About Schools
GFEC	General Further Education College
SFC	Sixth Form College
PSPF	Private Sector Publicly Funded providers
AoC	Association of Colleges
CSS	College Staff Survey
ETP	Education and Training Professionals survey
WLTL	Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey
SFCA	Sixth Form College Association
ITPs	Independent Training Providers
ACLs	Adult and Community Learning Providers

4. Summary

- 4.1. The Authority has two key objectives to enhance its understanding of the FE workforce. The primary objective is engaging a supplier to run a survey of the Further Education workforce, focused on capturing the FE teacher and leader voice. The survey will provide insights on teacher and leader experiences to update the Authority's evidence base in the immediate term which are critical to inform policy development. Additionally, the supplier will conduct a feasibility study to achieve the secondary objective of identifying the most appropriate method to continue to collect data in the future on FE teachers' and leaders' experiences of working in the sector. This includes producing design recommendations for a future study. Initial discussions with FE policy suggest a longitudinal study is favourable, but the Authority is open to other approaches and expects the feasibility study to confirm the most appropriate solution. The bidder's proposal should include an approach for both strands of work.
- 4.2. There is currently a gap in the evidence base on experiences of the FE workforce. The Department previously commissioned the College Staff Survey (CSS) (2018) and the Education Training Providers Survey (ETP) (2020) which collected data on the experiences of FE teachers and leaders, including exploring key topics in FE such as training and pay. However, these sources are now out of date and this project therefore aims to collect new data and insights on contemporary topics to meet current evidence needs on the FE workforce.
- 4.3. The Department anticipates outputs from the project will include two reports: one putting forward clear recommendations from the feasibility study, and one detailing the findings from the survey. The Authority is also interested in a tailored output for FE providers that take part in the survey research. We anticipate this would involve an interactive dashboard of survey results for FE leaders; however we are open to other suggestions on format.
- 4.4. The customer for this research is the Department for Education, although it will also be of interest to external stakeholders.
- 4.5. The project will run for approximately ten months in total, with all outputs being delivered by end of June 2026. More information on key milestones, timings and deliverables is set out below.

5. Background to the Requirement

- 5.1. The FE sector is responsible for providing further education and skills training, including industry specific qualifications, apprenticeships and vocational courses. Having high quality FE teachers is crucial to delivering the Government's Growth and Opportunity missions through improving employment prospects, skills and productivity. Building an evidence base to support Government's ambitions over the next parliament is vital to inform delivery. As new policies are implemented, the Authority needs to understand their impact over time and build a picture of an expanding sector.

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- 5.2. The FE sector is experiencing high levels of teacher turnover, losing more teachers than they recruit. Total teacher numbers in the sector have generally decreased over the last decade, although have remained steady over 2022/23¹. Only 40% of FE teachers stay beyond 5 years in the sector, (compared with 70% in schools), with high exit rates of 16% per year compared with 10% for schools and 10-11% for most NHS occupations². This is leading to high vacancies for subject expert teachers across the board. The FE Workforce Data Collection (FEWDC) (22/23) shows vacancy rates of 4.7 per 100 teaching positions, with rates particularly high for subjects that align with the sectoral priorities set out in the Industrial Strategy³, including areas such as construction (9.6%), engineering (8.9%), computer science (6.9%) and functional skills (7.3%).
- 5.3. Despite the key challenges faced by the FE sector, there is currently a lack of evidence regarding FE teacher experiences, including perceptions of their role and reasons for leaving the sector. The teacher voice is not well captured in current research, as internal DfE surveys and workforce surveys carried out by stakeholders such as the Association of Colleges (AoC) typically collect data from FE providers only. The most recent research from the Authority that sought to explore FE teacher experiences is the 2018 College Staff Survey, focusing on General Further Education Colleges, and the 2020 Education and Training Professionals survey, which focused on Independent Training Providers. Both surveys covered similar topics including views on the best and most challenging elements of working in FE, support/training opportunities for staff and likelihood of leaving the sector. Key findings from the CSS included workload being found as the most common challenge for teachers working in FE (48%), and the higher salaries offered in industry and schools⁴ being the key challenge principals faced in recruiting and retaining staff (22% and 17% respectively). Whilst the CSS and ETP provide insights into teacher and leader attitudes towards key topics in the sector, this information is now more than five years out of date.
- 5.4. A follow up survey to the CSS was conducted in 2019, focusing on staff movement within the sector. Of the 9603 respondents from the initial 2018 survey, 5916 (62%) formed the 2019 sample frame. The survey found one in eight (13%) teachers and leaders had left the college they were surveyed at as part of the main stage research in 2018. Of those that left, 52% remained working in education, with one in six leaving education altogether⁵. The follow-up survey highlights the churn in the FE sector, something which will need to be considered when considering the feasibility study.
- 5.5. Other literature reviews of relevance include the Teaching, Leadership and Governance in Further Education report (2018)⁶. The report summarises key findings on teacher quality, leadership, governance and supply issues. Additionally, the School and College Staff

¹ [Further education workforce, Academic year 2022/23 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

² Institute for Fiscal Studies (2023) *What has happened to college teacher pay in England?* London:

³ [Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [College Staff Survey 2018](#)

⁵ [College Staff Survey 2019 follow-up - research report September 2020](#)

⁶ [Teaching, leadership and governance in further education - GOV.UK](#)

Wellbeing report (2019)⁷ aimed to examine the wellbeing of staff in schools and colleges, focusing on the effectiveness of existing support mechanisms. Both reports summarise key literature in the FE space, however they are now outdated.

5.6. Current annual statistics on the FE workforce in England are provided by the Further Education Workforce Data Collection (FEWDC). Collecting information at the teacher-level from all FE providers, the collection covers topics such as subjects taught, pay and vacancy rates. The most recent FEWDC publication⁸ relates to academic year 2022/23, with data relating to academic year 2023/24 being published on 29th May 2025. The FEWDC provides the most comprehensive overview of the FE workforce to date, however, it does have limitations. For example, the FEWDC had a response rate of 80.9% in 2022/23, meaning it is not fully representative of all FE providers. It is also completed by providers, meaning the teacher voice cannot be captured through the FEWDC. We will be able to access personal data from this collection for research purposes in late Spring 2026. Currently only pseudonymised data can be shared for research purposes.

6. The Requirement

6.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

6.2. The primary aim of this research is to:

1. Conduct a survey to provide up to date insights on the views of FE teachers and leaders, informing immediate policy thinking and allowing us to test question design and responses ahead of testing options for future research.

The research also has a secondary aim which is to:

2. Carry out a feasibility study to assess the most appropriate solution to meet the evidence needs of FE workforce policy in the long-term, providing recommendations on future study design and data collection exploring similar topics to those covered in the survey. We anticipate the feasibility study will focus on a longitudinal solution.

Research activities across both work strands are interconnected and interdependent, requiring the successful bidder to effectively manage their time to work on multiple strands simultaneously and deliver timely outputs.

6.3. Survey aims

The survey aims include the following:

1. Provide insights into experiences and motivations of FE teachers, including in relation to pay, workload, flexible working, wellbeing and CPD.

⁷ [School and college staff wellbeing: report - GOV.UK](#)

⁸ [Further education workforce data collection - GOV.UK](#)

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2. Provide insights into future career intentions and FE recruitment and retention challenges.
3. Explore how findings compare across provider types, regions, and subject areas.
4. Provide a strong baseline to monitor and evaluate the impact of new initiatives for the FE workforce.

Research questions the survey should aim to answer include:

1. What are the demographic characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity etc.) of the workforce surveyed? (Sufficient to link to the FEWDC.)
2. What factors affect the recruitment and retention of FE teachers and leaders? How does this vary by college/demographics?
3. What roles and responsibilities do members of the workforce hold within FE?
4. What are the typical career paths of FE teachers and leaders, including previous occupations and teaching qualifications?
5. What are the current experiences of workload, flexible working, and pay for FE teachers and leaders?
6. What other factors, aside from terms and-conditions, impact staff experience? e.g. pupil behaviour, class size, student support needs, staff development etc.
7. How does the workforce rate their overall wellbeing, and how does their work impact this? How does this compare to other industries, geographies, demographics and schools?
8. What qualifications, continuing professional development (CPD) and training opportunities are available to FE teachers and leaders? How have these impacted professional growth?
9. What are the main motivations for working in FE?
10. What proportion of the workforce are planning to move roles or leave the sector?
11. What are the timeframes, rationales and intended destinations for those planning to leave the FE workforce?

6.4 Feasibility study aims

The aims of the feasibility study include the following:

1. Establish if a longitudinal study is the most appropriate method for future ongoing FE workforce research (e.g. as opposed to cross-sectional studies, deep dives).
2. Review the options for the longitudinal sample frame. We expect the FEWDC to be most suitable but are keen to consider other sources such as Teacher Pension Scheme and Initial Teacher Training data. Consider the strengths, limitations and mitigations for each dataset (e.g. whether to use a combination of data sources) and establish a clear recommended option.
3. Using the evidence review, discussions with key stakeholders (internal and external) and input from DfE analysts to inform the remit of the longitudinal survey, for example which participant groups and provider types should be included.
4. Develop assumptions around response rates for FE workforce research and putting forward a clear recommendation for the minimum response rate needed for a longitudinal study, including where boost samples are needed (e.g. for those receiving the TRI, teachers new to the profession).

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5. Review responses from the survey data collection, assessing types of respondents, testing how the questions have been responded to, and if the data is providing the detail we need.
6. Understand the drivers of participation in research for the FE workforce and what can be done to reduce attrition in a longitudinal study.
7. Design and test potential survey question for a future longitudinal study, using the survey as an opportunity to test questions in the field.

Research questions the feasibility study should aim to answer include:

1. Is a longitudinal study best placed to meet evidence needs, and what other methods may be appropriate if not?
2. What is the best sample frame for a FE workforce study, for surveying FE teachers, leaders, and newly qualified teachers?
3. Who in the workforce should be surveyed? How should we contact them?
4. What is the likely response rate for a future FE workforce study? What types of FE teachers are harder to reach, and should 'boost' samples of certain groups be used?
5. Which types of FE providers should be in scope for the survey?? In particular, should Sixth Form Colleges (SFCs) and Private Sector Public Funded providers (PSPF) be included? What are the challenges with including these types of providers?
6. How should we keep the sample up to date or 'refresh' the sample over the course of the study?
7. How and when should the data be collected (e.g. annually versus termly, online data collection versus other modes)?
8. What are the main barriers and enablers for engaging the FE workforce in research, and does this vary depending on timing of fieldwork, types of teachers and leaders/provider types?
9. What can be done to reduce attrition for the duration of a future study if the same cohort were to be studied over time? What incentives should be used?

6.5 TARGET PARTICIPANT GROUP

The target participant group can be broken down into the following categories:

6.5.1 Providers

As of the 2022/23 academic year, there are over 1500 FE providers in England. These providers can be categorised into the following institutions:

Type of provider	Number of providers	Percentage of total FE staff employed by provider type
General Further Education Colleges (GFECs)	187	58.4%
Sixth Form College (SFC)	44	5.1%

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Private Sector Public Funded (PSPF) <i>Contains the following subgroups: Independent Training Providers (ITPs), Local Authority with an Education Remit, Special Post-16 Institution and School Based Providers.</i>	1,103	25.2%
Other Public Funded Provider	229	11.3%

Contact details for statutory providers including names, addresses and phone numbers can be accessed through the Get Information About Schools (GIAS) database⁹. The successful bidder is expected to review the dataset and determine whether contact details are up to date before engaging with providers.

The key providers of interest to explore in the survey are GFECs and SFCs where we expect all providers to be engaged. We also want to reach a smaller sample of PSFPs through the survey.

6.5.2 FE leaders and managers¹⁰

The latest published figures in the FEWDC estimate there was approximately 7000 FE leaders employed in the academic year 2022/23, equivalent to 3.4% of the total FE workforce. The majority are employed in PSPF institutions, followed by GFECs.

Managers make up 9.3% of the total workforce. Approximately 19,000 FE staff hold managerial positions with over half of them (~10,000) employed in GFECs.

We anticipate FE leaders and managers acting as gatekeepers to access the sample of FE teachers, as personal contact details for teachers are not publicly available, presenting a challenge to reach them. We suggest the successful bidder spends time building relationships with FE leaders and managers to support the dissemination of the survey to the teacher workforce, as well as building understanding of them as a participant group and encourage their participation. Principal information is available on the GIAS website.

6.5.3. FE teachers

Approximately 81,900 teachers were employed in FE in 2022/23.

The successful bidder will need to be mindful of research burden on this participant group and consider how to make the research accessible and engaging to busy FE teachers. As

⁹ [Get Information about Schools - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁰ According to the Further Education Workforce Data Collection, leadership roles encompass higher level positions such as principals, vice-principals and senior leadership team members. They are responsible for the overall strategic direction, policy implementation and high-level decision making. FE managers typically include roles such as department heads, curriculum managers, and other mid-level administrative positions. Their responsibilities often involve overseeing specific departments or programs or managing day-to-day operations and supporting teaching staff. ([Further education workforce, Methodology - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#))

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mentioned previously, the Department does not hold contact details for FE teachers and so we are reliant on gatekeepers to disseminate information about the study to teachers.

We are particularly interested in hearing from newly qualified teachers, teachers who have recently joined FE, and teachers who are thinking of leaving in the survey sample.

6.5.4 Internal and external stakeholders

Throughout the research, the successful bidder will need to work with internal and external stakeholders to inform the research design.

Key stakeholders the successful bidder will need to work with include:

1. DfE FE workforce division – main policy stakeholders for the research.
2. DfE data leads – particularly owners of FEWDC and analysts who use the data.
3. DfE research teams – including Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders team and Omnibus Surveys team.
4. AoC and the SFCA.
5. Academics with expertise on the FE workforce.
6. Representatives from a cross section of key FE providers- we expect a minimum of six providers from a spread of provider types, locations and size to be included.

The department will be able to provide named contacts for key internal and external stakeholders, however we also welcome suggestions on key stakeholders to involve in engagement.

7. Suggested Approach and Analysis

To achieve the aims of both the survey and the feasibility study, we suggest breaking down the research into two key work strands. Work strand 1 (WS1) includes a survey of FE leaders and teachers, whereas work strand 2 (WS2) includes a feasibility study that consists of an evidence and data review and small-scale qualitative research.

There are particular challenges to engaging the FE workforce with research including time constraints for participants and tracking movement over time. For this reason, we encourage bidders to work with an academic or specialist advisor to ensure understanding of the FE workforce is captured.

7.1 Work strand 1: Survey of FE teachers and leaders

We propose an online survey on FE teachers and leaders to collect up to date insights from the FE workforce as well as informing future survey design for a potential longitudinal study.

The proposed approach to the survey is outlined below, however we welcome alternative suggestions from bidders where these are well justified. Engaging the FE workforce in research can

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be challenging, and so we are particularly keen to hear suggestions for innovative and cost-effective survey dissemination strategies.

Note the FEWDC will not be available to use as a sampling frame for the survey due to privacy restrictions. We will be able to access personal data from this collection for research purposes in late Spring 2026.

It is anticipated the survey will cover the following topics:

1. Demographic information (sufficient for matching to FEWDC)
2. Job role and career history
3. Workload and flexible working
4. Pay and conditions
5. Career ambitions and progression
6. Wellbeing
7. CPD and training
8. Questions for those new to the FE workforce (e.g. motivations to join FE, route into teaching)
9. Questions for those planning to leave the FE workforce (e.g. timeframes, rationale, destinations)

The mode of the survey and the need to maximise responses rates suggests the survey should not exceed 15 minutes in length. It will not be possible to share names or contact details for individual teachers with the contractor. Because of this, we anticipate the survey will be disseminated via gatekeepers, primarily FE leaders, who will be asked to cascade a survey link to their teaching staff to achieve the sample frame. We recommend each provider has an individual survey link to allow response tracking. Bidders are invited to suggest alternative strategies to achieve the leaders and teachers' sample.

We recommend survey respondents are asked if they are happy to be re-contacted, so the Authority has a sample for potential future engagement if needed.

7.1.1 Survey sampling

We suggest taking a mixed approach to sampling depending on the provider. The key providers of interest for this research are GFECs and SFCs. For these providers, we suggest taking a census approach, to gather a comprehensive sample of responses from c.230 providers. The Authority are also interested in independent training providers and suggest using a stratified sampling approach to select a further c.100 Private Sector Public Funded providers, inviting them to take part in the research. We are open to considering other approaches to the sample frame where these are well-justified by bidders.

The target response rate for the survey is 1,500 leaders/managers and a target teacher response rate of 4,000 (this is an estimated ~10% response rate across ~330 providers). We encourage bids to consider how to increase responses alongside our proposed dissemination strategy and encourage bidders to explore other low-cost engagement plans. We are particularly interested in how bidders may approach achieving responses from newly qualified teachers, teachers who have recently joined

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FE and teachers who are considering leaving FE. The contract will include a break clause to account for issues with response rates that require the research to be stopped or rescoped.

To strengthen the sample, we expect contractors to monitor responses whilst the survey is live to identify and address biases where possible. As previously mentioned, it is expected each college will be provided with a unique survey links, allowing the contractor to monitor whether the gatekeeper has disseminated the survey to teachers in their provider. It is expected the contractor would provide tailored follow-ups where colleges have not cascaded the survey link, particularly focusing on boosting responses for underrepresented provider types. We encourage examples of how bidders may approach this.

7.1.2 Survey design and dissemination

The successful bidder will be expected to work with key stakeholders, including DfE colleagues and external organisations such as AoC, SFCA and academia to inform the survey design. Previous questions included in the CSS, ETP and WLTL study should inform question development, as well as considering new topics of interest to the Authority.

To ensure clarity and effectiveness of the survey, the successful bidder should conduct thorough cognitive testing with FE leaders and teachers, to ensure any issues with the survey are identified early on and support increasing survey completion rates. The sample should include providers from GFECs, SFCs and ITPs at minimum. They should be spread across regions with a variety of Ofsted ratings. Particularly for FE teachers, we are interested in testing with those who are newly qualified, new to FE, and those considering leaving the profession. Bids should include clear details on the approach to survey testing.

Engaging the FE workforce in departmental research has proved challenging to date. In the CSS, a response rate of 14% was achieved but this relied on an intensive dissemination strategy. The ETP achieved a 22% response among providers confirmed to disseminate the survey link, with an estimated 28% of ITPs, 13% of Adult and Community Learning (ACL) providers, and 21% of SFCs responding. At present, the Authority will not be able to share names or contact details for the sample with the contractor. We therefore suggest using the Get Information About Schools database to obtain contact details for providers in the sample.

Given these challenges, we support bidders to present a comprehensive engagement and dissemination strategy to achieve the target response rates and encourage bidders to aim above this. To support the dissemination strategy, the budget for this work includes costings for making phone calls to the ~330 providers in the sample in order to explain the purpose of the research and encourage providers to disseminate the survey to their workforce. Although we believe phone calls with providers is likely to be the most effective way of encouraging providers to disseminate the survey, we are open to other suggestions from bidders (e.g. posting information to providers).

As part of the survey engagement strategy, the contractor should include an output that can be offered to colleges to encourage participation, potentially a dashboard summarising high-level survey findings at the college level. We welcome bidders to consider other engaging, low-cost outputs that could be offered to encourage survey participation. A personalised approach to

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engaging providers should be emphasised in the engagement strategy, for example through including college names on emails, engaging information sheets, etc.

The Authority will support communications to raise awareness of the survey and encourage participation. We will seek endorsements from the Authority's senior staff and FE commissioner, as well as boosting survey visibility through DfE networks where appropriate. We welcome suggestions from bidders on how to raise the profile of the survey, including using professional and sector groups.

We welcome bidders to consider whether any small-scale experiments to inform the longitudinal feasibility study (WS2) should be carried out as part of the survey design. This could include examples such as taking a push to web vs postal approach or varying the survey length between e.g. 15-20 minutes. Recognising budget and timing constraints for this project, experiments are not a necessity.

7.1.3. Survey analysis

Bidders should put forward clear plans for survey analysis, including what types of subgroup analysis they anticipate carrying out and associated statistical tests. A clear approach to quality assurance should be given in bids, both in relation to reviewing and cleaning the data collected and quality assuring analysis.

We expect weightings to be considered as part of the analysis based on the makeup of the final sample compared to the overall population of FE teachers available from the FEWDC. Expected weightings to consider include those at the provider level, such as type of FE college (general, specialist, independent training provider etc), region and Ofsted rating, and those at the teacher level, for example teachers of academic versus vocational courses, full time versus part time, and personal characteristics such as gender.

The survey analysis should also feed into WS2 (detailed below). In particular, reflections on how effective different survey questions have been and which should be retained or revised for a future study should inform the final feasibility study output.

7.2 Work strand 2: Feasibility study

Bidders should also include a feasibility study for a longitudinal survey of the FE workforce in their proposal. Once the data review, described below, has been completed, the bidder should confirm with the authority whether a longitudinal study is the best approach. If it is agreed a longitudinal approach is not feasible, the feasibility study should put forward an alternative methodological approach (e.g. repeated cross-sectional survey design). The feasibility study should consist of an evidence and data review as well as small-scale qualitative research with key stakeholders.

The Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders (WLTL) survey is of particular relevance to this aspect of the requirement. Although there are specific challenges to carrying out a longitudinal study in FE, the WLTL provides insights on engaging teachers in longitudinal research. The survey also explores topics such as workload, wellbeing, attitudes to pay, professional development experiences and future career intentions which are also of relevance for FE.

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7.2.1. Evidence and data review

We expect the successful supplier to conduct a small-scale evidence review of relevant literature relating to longitudinal studies and the teaching workforce and FE research. In particular, the review should highlight how we can engage participants and reduce attrition in longitudinal research. We would also like information on the importance of incentives for improving the quality of longitudinal research. Due to previous internal work done in this area by the WTL team and the Omnibus team in the Department, and expected interviews to take place with these teams, we anticipate the literature review to be on a small scale, focusing on how applicable findings from the literature are for a FE study.

The data review should focus on a comprehensive review of datasets that could be used for the longitudinal sample frame, considering their reliability, limitations and practicalities (e.g. type of contact details held and potential for data linking). Subject to access, we expect the following datasets to be in scope:

Data Source	Description	Link
FE workforce data collection	<p>Annual statistics covering the further education workforce in England.</p> <p>Collects data on the FE workforce and vacancies from General Further Education Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, Private sector public funded providers (including Independent Training Providers), and Other Public Funded Providers.</p> <p>Data is collected from providers retrospectively, with data for a given academic year being collected once that year has concluded and published towards the end of the following academic year. For example, data relating to AY 22/23 was collected from providers in AY 23/24 and published in May 2024.</p> <p>We anticipate this is the likely to provide the best option for a longitudinal sample frame. We will be able to access personal data from this collection for research purposes in late Spring 2026. Pseudonymised data can be shared with the contractor for the purpose of the feasibility study.</p>	<p>Further education workforce, Academic year 2022/23 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK</p>
Skills Engagement Survey	<p>Termly insights of FE providers on their delivery of post-16 programmes e.g. 16-19 starts, Skills Bootcamps, Apprenticeships, Higher Technical Qualifications and Childcare and early years qualifications. Explores recruitment and retention for FE teachers.</p> <p>Spring survey results have been developed into a Power BI dashboard.</p>	<p>Internal only. Speak with DfE colleagues</p>

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Teacher Pension Scheme	Monthly data release capturing administrative data for teacher pension claims. Data is not publicly available and may be difficult to access. Reviewing this data set is dependent on discussions with DfE colleagues.	Internal only. Speak with DfE colleagues
Initial Teacher Training data	Annual statistics covering initial teacher training (ITT) recruitment, allocations and performance data in England. Presents outcome measures including the proportion of trainees with course outcomes that gained Qualified Teacher Status (TQS), and the employment rates of those qualified teachers. Personal characteristic data, ITT subjects and routes is also collected.	Statistics: initial teacher training - GOV.UK

Bidders are welcome to suggest alternative data sources that should be considered in the data review. The Authority anticipates the FEWDC is likely to be the most robust option for a sample frame, potentially in combination with another data source to sample FE teachers new to the profession given the lag in data availability.

The data review is expected to include an assessment of the following:

- Details on how representative the data is of the FE workforce.
- Data quality assessment, including accuracy, completeness, timeliness and consistency.
- Consideration of which variables will be needed to draw a representative sample.
- Practicalities of working with the data set, including potential for data linking.
- Data protection and ethical considerations.
- An overall assessment of whether the dataset is suitable as a future sample frame.

The supplier must provide a clear recommendation around the most appropriate dataset for the proposed longitudinal study sample frame based on their review. Alongside this, recommendations on sample sizes, top-up/refresher samples, and sampling approach should be developed based on the data review. If the study determines a longitudinal survey is not feasible, the supplier should provide an assessment on whether the data sources are suitable for a sample frame for a different type of study (e.g. cross-sectional).

7.2.3 Qualitative research with stakeholders

To inform the potential longitudinal study and ensure future research design and development is well-informed, we propose a qualitative research element to this project, consisting of three stages:

- a) **Interviews with internal DfE stakeholders:** Undertaking this activity during the desk research phase of the project will allow the successful bidder to gain expert insight in DfE data sources to help inform the feasibility study. Interviewing stakeholders aims to deepen understanding of the requirements of a longitudinal study, including key research questions, pitfalls to avoid and comparative studies to draw information from.

The interviews will also inform the design and scope of the survey. Expected stakeholders to engage with include key policy leads on the FE workforce, Skills Strategy policy, Authority data leads including Skills Policy Analysts and FEWDC data leads, and members of the WLT team. Where possible, contractors will include more than one stakeholder interview at a time (e.g. one interview with policy leads, one interview with data leads etc). We recommend bidders cost for ~8 interviews. Some interviews will need to take place ahead of the WS1 survey development (e.g. policy interviews) but others can take place later in the project (e.g. data leads).

- b) **Consultation with external stakeholders:** An online consultation inviting representatives from organisations including the AoC, SFCA, academics, representatives from FE providers and any other contacts that may be of interest. Stakeholders will be invited to contribute their views in writing on the development of a longitudinal study of the FE workforce. The consultation should explore types of evidence needed by different institutions and preferences for data access. It should also gauge interest in whether participants would be interested in being a part of a future expert group to support the longitudinal study. We anticipate c.20 external stakeholders feeding into the consultation, with one response per stakeholder organisation. It is expected the consultation findings will inform the survey design, and this should be considered in the study timings.
- c) **Three focus groups with FE teachers and leaders:** Exploring barriers and enablers for engaging participants in longitudinal research. We recommend each focus group will have 6-8 participants and last no longer than 1.5 hours although bidders can suggest alternative approaches. We anticipate one focus group will consist of FE leaders, and two will consist of FE teachers- we would like to achieve a representative group of FE teachers and leaders from a range of provider types.
- d) Bidders should outline how they will recruit participants and incentivise participation. We anticipate a financial incentive would be appropriate for focus group participants. The focus groups will ideally take place online, reducing cost and enabling FE teachers and leaders across locations to participate. We anticipate focus groups participants will be recruited off the back of the survey in WS1. They should aim to be representative of different type of colleges, including a range of leaders and teachers with variable characteristics including age, gender, location etc. We recommend deliberative methods to be used within the focus groups, allowing participants to discuss recommendations for the longitudinal study and to put forward their own views and ideas. The focus groups are expected to take place toward the end of the study, using learning from desk research and initial survey findings to discuss specific options for future FE research.

7.3 Analysis and quality assurance

Findings from the survey and qualitative research should be robustly analysed. We recommend a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis to be included in the feasibility study findings. We expect the survey analysis will be mostly quantitative analysis. We encourage bidders to include anticipated approaches to statistical analysis in their bids.

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To ensure high standards of quality assurance, all research should adhere to the following:

- Data collection: ensure the accuracy and validity of data collected, including checks for missing data, inconsistencies and outliers.
- Data monitoring: active monitoring of survey response rates.
- Data cleaning: survey response data should be cleaned to remove any errors, duplicates etc.
- Statistical testing: ensure the reliability and validity of data collected- from hypotheses testing to regression analysis.
- Documentation: in the research outputs, include detail outlining the measures taken and decision made to maintain high levels of quality assurance throughout the research.

Bidders should outline how they will meet the QA requirements.

8. Research Outputs

We expect the following services at minimum from a successful bidder. These will likely be adapted based on the bidder's chosen methodology. The customer for the feasibility study and survey outputs will be the Department for Education.

8.1. WS1: Survey of the FE workforce outputs

1. Design of the survey questionnaire and data tables, with input and review from DfE.
2. Delivery of a robust sampling approach and dissemination strategy. Design and delivery of the survey.
3. Delivery of a draft and final survey report, with two rounds of substantive comments from DfE followed by final sign-off by the Department.
4. Survey outputs should include an overview of findings and analysis, supported with graphics including tables and charts.
5. An output for FE providers (e.g. a dashboard providing high level oversight of survey findings) should be produced and made accessible.

8.2. WS2: Future FE research feasibility study outputs

- Summary of relevant literature findings to inform future FE research, with a focus on longitudinal studies.
- Agreement on data collection and data sharing arrangements with DfE and any other parties if necessary to the feasibility study.
- Overview of the strengths, limitations and potential mitigations of sample frame options.
- Calculations of sample sizes for a future longitudinal study, including top up samples.
- Summary of interview findings with internal and external stakeholders
- Summary of barriers and mitigations to involvement of FE leaders and teachers in research.
- Recommendations for questions to include in a longitudinal study or the recommended research approach.

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- Recommendation as to whether a longitudinal study is the best approach for future FE research. If a longitudinal approach is deemed unsuitable, a recommendation for the best alternative method for gathering insights on the FE workforce must be provided.
- Delivery of a draft and final feasibility report, with two rounds of substantive comments from DfE followed by final sign-off by the Department.

8.3. Project Outputs

We will require the following outputs from the successful bidder:

- Regular updates of emerging findings throughout the study.
- Project timeline and risk register to be reviewed and updated monthly
- Sign off for research products with DfE e.g. survey and focus group prompts, recruitment documents, reports. Payment points will be reliant on successful delivery of outputs and fieldwork.
- Interim findings presentation, focused on findings from the desk review exploring literature and data sets, and initial stakeholder interviews and consultations.
- Survey findings data tables.
- Two draft and final reports: one covering the feasibility study and one covering the survey findings.
- Final findings presentation for DfE colleagues.
- All datasets produced as part of the study to be provided to the Authority. Technical reports, analysis reports, and supporting documentation should be provided for the datasets.
- All reports to be written by the contractors, finalised with the Authority, and written with the Authorities' approved research report template and meet all accessibility requirements.

Bidders should provide evidence of producing such reports to a high standard for feasibility studies, longitudinal research projects, survey research or other research projects using mixed methods designs.

9. Liaison Arrangements

- 9.1. The contractor will be required to work closely with the project manager in the Skills Policy Analysis Division within the Department for Education. This analytical team supports the Further Education Workforce Division. An initial inception meeting after contract award will take place between the contractor, members of Skills Policy Analysis Division and relevant policy colleagues from the FE Workforce Division. The successful contractor will be expected to be available for meetings as required to deliver the research requirements set out in the contract. Regular meeting arrangements will be agreed between the Department and the contractor after a contract is signed. These meetings will provide opportunity for the contractor and the authority to ask questions, comment on and agree fieldwork documents and draft reports. Fortnightly email updates in between meetings will be required- but can be reduced according to the needs and phase of the work. The Department will have the

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final decision on any survey content, interview scripts and focus group scripts. The Department's project manager will arrange and chair meetings at one of DfE's sites or remotely. Day to day management will be the responsibility of the Department's project manager.

- 9.2. The contractor should name an experienced lead researcher who will take overall responsibility for directing the work and liaising with the Department for the course of this project on a day-to-day basis. This lead researcher should only be replaced with the Department's agreement and any replacement will need to be a researcher of similar status and experience. All other researchers who are proposed for work on the study should also be named in bids and the daily rates of each grade of research staff specified. The relevant policy and methodological experience and areas of expertise of staff should also be detailed. Where a bid proposes a consortium between two or more research organisations, the key research managers should be named for all service institutions and one of those nominated as the lead manager.

9.3 TIMINGS

Please note that all timescales (procurement and project) are estimated and subject to change. Final timelines will be agreed with the successful bidder.

Procurement timescales

DATE	ACTIVITY
27 05 2025	Launch of Procurement
16 06 2025	Clarification period closes ("Bid Clarification Deadline")
23 06 2025	Deadline for the publication of responses to Clarification questions
07 07 2025	Deadline for submission of Bid ("Bid Submission Deadline")
07 07 2025	Commencement of Evaluation Process
28 07 2025	Proposed Award Notification Date
11 08 2025	Expected execution (signature) date for Contract (3 weeks)
18 08 2025	Expected commencement date for Contract

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Project timescales

Timings are tentative and will be finalised with the contractor. Bidders should outline how they would meet these timescales in their tender. There is flexibility in the proposed timings, particularly for the literature and data review which could be postponed until the new year to prioritise development and fieldwork for the survey. Any issues in meeting these timescales should be clearly justified.

Milestone	Work Stream	Delivery Date or Timeframe
Survey Development	WS1	August-October 2025
Data review	WS2	August-December 2025
Literature review	WS2	August-December 2025
Stakeholder research	WS1&2	September-October 2025
Survey sampling (phone calls with FE leaders)	WS1	October/November 2025
Survey dissemination	WS1	November-December 2025
Interim findings presentation of desk research and stakeholder research	WS2	December 2025/January 2026
Analysis of survey data	WS1	January-February 2026
Focus groups	WS2	January-February 2026
Initial summary of survey data	WS1	March 2026
Draft feasibility study report	WS2	March 2026
Draft survey report	WS1	April 2026
Final feasibility study report	WS2	April 2026
Final survey report	WS1	May 2026
Full findings presentation	WS1&2	May/June 2026

9.4 BUDGET

The budget for this project, including expenses and any respondent incentive payments is £210,000 (excluding VAT). A detailed breakdown of costs is required within **Attachment 4 Price Schedule** as per the instructions set out in **Attachment 2 Instructions to Bidders**.

9.5 FORMAT OF PROPOSAL

9.5.1 Your written proposal should clearly demonstrate how you will deliver the requirements, including whether the services will be delivered solely by your 'in-house' capability or whether you intend to Sub-Contract any element(s) of the Services delivering the proposal. Details of sub-contractors should also be provided as part of your response to Qualification Criteria 4 – Further Information within **Attachment 2 Instructions to Bidders**.

9.5.2 Your proposal should be in the following format:

- **Format:** Microsoft Word or PDF
- **Font:** Min. font size 12
- **Page Limit:** 60 pages, including annexes, (with the exception of CVs). Anything longer than this will be disregarded and not evaluated.

9.5.3 Your proposal should contain the following:

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Model Version: v1.3

- **Section 1:** Table of Contents
- **Section 2:** Summary of Proposal.
- **Section 3:** Meeting the Requirement:
 - Aims and Objectives
 - Methodological approach and analysis
 - Project Management and Monitoring
 - Staffing
 - Outputs and Reporting
 - Timetable of Activities (including time per activity)
- **Section 4:** Risk Management (Including Risk Register). (further details given in 'Proposal Requirements – Section 4: Risk Management' below).
- **Section 5:** Data Security Consideration and Arrangements.
- **Section 6:** References and Expertise
- **Section 7:** Social Value Theme – as detailed in TECX in '6. Technical Evaluation Criteria' of 'Attachment 2 Instructions to bidders'

9.6 Proposal Requirements – Section 4: Risk Management

- 9.6.1 You should submit as part of your proposal a one-page summary on what you believe will be the key risks to delivering the project and what contingencies you will put in place to deal with them.
- 9.6.2 A risk is any factor that may delay, disrupt, or prevent the full achievement of a project objective. All risks should be identified. For each risk, the one-page summary should assess its likelihood (high, medium, or low) and specify its possible impact on the project objectives (again rated high, medium, or low). The assessment should also identify appropriate actions that would reduce or eliminate each risk or its impact.
- 9.6.3 Typical areas of risk for a research project might include staffing, resource constraints, technical constraints, data access, timing, management, and operational issues, but this is not an exhaustive list.

9.7 Additional Proposal Requirements – Dependencies

You should indicate in your proposal if you are reliant on any third party for the access of information, data or undertaking any of the work. This should be considered in addition to your requirement to outline formal sub-contracting arrangements within your response.

9.8 Additional Proposal Requirements – Monitoring Techniques

You should indicate in your proposal how you will monitor the project to ensure it is delivered in terms of quality, timeliness, and cost.

9.9 Additional Proposal Requirements – The Use of Incentives

- 9.9.1 With some important exceptions, the Authority believes that the routine use of respondent incentives in surveys is, in general, not justified as they are rarely cost effective in either increasing participation or reducing non-response biases. If you are proposing the use of respondent incentives in your proposal you must set out why you feel they are necessary, why it is not possible to achieve the required sample sizes or response rates without the use of incentives, how and to what extent they will raise the overall response rate, how you will mitigate any specific biases that could be introduced, and provide a cost comparison with non-incentive methods. Your arguments should be supported by empirical evidence from past use.
- 9.9.2 The exceptions to this are payment for participation in group discussions or in-depth qualitative interviews, payment to cover respondent expenses e.g., travel and childcare costs, and compensation for excessive demand on respondents, e.g., taking basic skills tests, diary keeping, panel maintenance and compensating schools for the respondent's time. If you wish to use a prize draw incentive then you must also set out in your proposal how you will comply with all relevant legislation and codes of practice (e.g., the British Code of Advertising and Sales Promotion), state that you shall be solely liable for any breach of these and that you shall indemnify the Authority against any claims that may be made under them.

10. Key Milestones and Deliverables

- 10.1 The following contract milestones/deliverables shall apply:

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Milestone	Description	Delivery Date or Timeframe
Survey design and testing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews with internal stakeholders and external stakeholder consultation carried out to inform survey design. 2. Draft survey (pre-testing) shared with DfE for review. 3. Cognitive/user testing carried out with FE leaders and teachers. 4. Final survey coded in appropriate software, with final sign-off from DfE. 	October 2025
Interim findings presentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary of literature reviewed highlighting key points including barriers to FE research engagement, success of incentives and suggestions to reduce attrition in longitudinal research. 2. Overview of key datasets that could be used as sample frames for the FE workforce, including strengths, weaknesses and mitigations. 3. Review of the FEWDC (using appropriate statistical tests), identifying strengths, limitations and suggestions of caveats if this data set was used in the longitudinal study. 4. Brief summary of internal and external engagement findings at high level, focused on exploring the needs of a longitudinal study. 	December 2025

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<p>Survey data collection</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sampling and recruitment of FE providers to take part in survey. 2. Data collection from sample of FE leaders and teachers on key topic areas described. 3. Dissemination strategy and follow-up messages to encourage responses. 4. Active monitoring of survey responses and targeted follow-ups. 5. A final survey response rate of 1500 leaders and managers, and 4000 teachers across a spread of providers. 	<p>December 2025</p>
<p>Focus group data collection</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimum of three focus groups (one with FE leaders and two with FE teachers) exploring barriers and enablers for longitudinal research. 	<p>February 2026</p>
<p>Initial survey findings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High level breakdown of sample demographics. 2. Responses organised by overarching themes, including analysis. 3. Suggestions for presenting information through visuals including tables and charts in the final report. 	<p>March 2026</p>

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Feasibility study reporting	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A draft report with 2 rounds of substantive comments from the Department, followed by a final report for sign-off. All reports must be written in-line with GSR style guidance and meet DfE standards.2. The report should be based on findings from: the literature and evidence review; stakeholder engagement activities; focus groups; and relevant survey findings.3. The report should include a feasibility assessment based on key criteria agreed with the department. There should be an overall recommendation as to whether a longitudinal study is feasible.	April 2026
Survey reporting and final presentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A draft report with two rounds of substantive comments from the Department, followed by a final report for sign-off. All reports must be written in-line with GSR style guidance and meet DfE standards.2. The report should include detailed findings from the survey analysis, including visual presentations of data.3. Methodological details, including sample frame, response size, and analysis methods to be detailed in a technical annexe.	May 2026

11. Management Information

11.1 Management Levy and Management Information in a supplier's overarching DPS Agreement will apply.

12. Continuous Improvement

- 12.1 The successful supplier shall maintain open channels of communication with the Authority to resolve issues, share lessons learned and present new ways of working during project review meetings. Any proposed new ways of delivering the Services shall be brought to the Authority's attention and formally agreed prior to any changes being implemented.

13. Social Value and Sustainability

- 13.1 All government procurements must assign at least 10% weighting of award criteria to specified social value/sustainability criteria as per [Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Note 06/20.](#)
- 13.2 For this procurement, our social value criteria is Wellbeing- improve health and wellbeing.
- 13.3 As part of this criteria, we require bidders to put forward a clear plan of their past experiences to include a variety of groups within a sample frame, including hard to reach participants. Bids should also include evidence of conducting research with a range of adults, considering their needs and building this into recruitment, fieldwork and analysis.

14. Price

- 14.1 **Prices are to be submitted *only* within Attachment 4 Price Schedule as per the instructions set out in Attachment 2 Instructions to Bidders excluding VAT and including all other expenses relating to Contract delivery.**
Suppliers should ensure that there is no reference to prices within the Technical sections of their bids.

15. Staff and Customer Service

- 15.1 The Supplier shall provide a sufficient level of resource throughout the duration of the Contract to consistently deliver a quality service.
- 15.2 The Supplier's staff assigned to the Contract shall have the relevant qualifications and experience to deliver the Contract to the required standard.
- 15.3 The Supplier shall ensure that staff understand the Authority's vision and objectives and will provide excellent customer service to the Authority throughout the duration of the Contract.
- 15.4 The Supplier shall communicate all changes to the Key Personnel as defined in the Call-Off Contract throughout the Term.

16. Security and Confidentiality Requirements

16.1 Departmental Security Standards for Business Services and ICT Contracts

16.2 The Authority's security standards clauses are included as the Buyer's Security Policy within **Attachment 6a Order Contract Terms & Attachment 6b Order Form**.

16.3 As the supplier will be handling and process personally identifiable information, a **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)** will be conducted. This will help assess privacy risks and liabilities.

16.4 Supplier Security Assurance Questionnaire

16.4.1 Suppliers and any sub-contractors are required to complete **Attachment 5 Supplier Security Questionnaire** as part of their bid, for the Authority to obtain a level of assurance with regards to our assets throughout the life of the contract.

16.5 Data Collection

16.5.1 Suppliers will be expected to clear any data collection tools with the Authority before engaging in field work. Suppliers should include Data Privacy Notices for research participants via respondent documentation and/or interviewer briefing notes and clearly state what the data is being collected for and on behalf of the Authority and that no reference is made, implied or otherwise, to the data being used solely by or available only to the supplier. Suppliers should establish with the Authority the legal basis for data processing under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

16.5.2 The respondent documentation and/or interviewer shall ensure that the respondent clearly understands (before they give their consent to be interviewed) the purpose of the interview, that the information they provide will only be used for research purposes and, in the case of interviews (telephone or face-to-face), that they have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. Where consent is used as the legal basis for data processing, consent procedures should ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

16.6 Burden

16.6.1 The Authority seeks to minimise the burdens on providers and teachers taking part in surveys. It is therefore important that bids should set out how the proposed methodology will minimise the burden on providers and/or teachers and a justification for the proposed sample size.

16.6.2 When assessing the relative merits of data collection methods, the following issues should be considered:

- only data essential to the project shall be collected;
- data should be collected electronically where appropriate and where teachers and/or providers prefer this;
- questionnaires should be pre-populated wherever possible and appropriate;
- Providers/teachers must be given at least four working weeks to respond to the exercise from the date they receive the request.

15.6.3. The Contractor shall clear any data collection tools with the Authority before engaging in field work.

16.7 Consent Arrangements

16.7.1 The Authority and the supplier shall agree in advance of any survey activity taking place the consent arrangements that shall apply for each of the participant groups. All participants should be informed of the purpose of the research, that the supplier is acting on behalf of the Authority and that they have the option to refuse to participate (opt out). Where opt-in consent is used, the approach should be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. Contact details should be provided including a contact person at the Authority. Children who are 16 or over will usually be able to give their own consent but even where this is so, the Contractor, in consultation with the Authority, should consider whether it is also appropriate for parents, guardians or other appropriate gatekeepers (e.g., schools, Local Authorities) to be informed when a child has been invited to participate in research.

17. Payment and Invoicing

17.1 Details of payment and invoicing requirements are included within **Attachment 6a Order Contract Terms** and **Attachment 6b Order Form**.

Key additions based on order tender

The followings section gives an overview of key additions to the ITT based on the order tender from the supplier.

Work strand 1 – FEW survey

Cognitive testing

The survey and recruitment letters will be tested with 5 providers, including at least one GFEC, SFC and ITP. Within each provider, one leader, one manager and one teacher will be consulted. A minimum of 15 consultations will take place.

DfE will seek support from the Regions team to suggest providers to test the survey with, however if this is not possible the supplier will be expected to find an alternative approach.

Engagement and dissemination strategy

Providers will be recruited in advance of the survey fieldwork going live, with an engaging invitation to participate letters going to providers. Letters will include an easily accessible link to a response form to confirm whether providers will or will not take part. Targeted follow-ups will be made initially by email and post, and then by phone (up to 250).

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The supplier will also disseminate information about the survey through networks such as the AoC, SFCA, ASCL, and Gatsby.

Response rates

The supplier suggests aiming for a 7% response rate of the total leader and manager population, and 6% of the teacher population. To achieve this, the supplier will seek a minimum of a 30% response rate from providers within the sample, and a 22% response rate from leaders and managers and a 19% response rate from teachers within each provider. Targeted follow-ups will be used to ensure these response rates are met. The supplier will provide regular updates on the response rates and highlight any challenges as early as possible (as detailed in initial ITT and break clause).

During fieldwork, the supplier will provide weekly updates on responses broken down by provider and participant type.

Sample sizes

The bidder suggests a sample size of 376 FE leaders and 1,124 FE managers. Although overall sample numbers are in line with the ITT, further discussion between supplier and buyer are needed to establish the exact split between these groups based on policy needs, in particular noting the higher margin of error for FE leaders with the current sample split.

Specific sub-samples of interest will be discussed at project inception, and these will also be taken into account when monitoring response rates to ensure we achieve required sample sizes.

Analysis

Post-collection weighting will be considered by the supplier depending on the final sample.

All statistical analysis planned for the project will be agreed with the DfE as part of the quantitative analysis plan to be drafted following inceptions.

Work stand 2 - Longitudinal feasibility study

Evidence and data review

In addition to the datasets suggested in the ITT, the supplier will include the following datasets in the data review:

- UK Register of Learning Providers
- HESA data
- Any other promising sources that are discovered as part of the evidence review.

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Interviews

Eight consultation interviews (individual or grouped) will take place as part of the survey development and feasibility study. This will be with a mix of DfE policymakers and analysts. DfE will support the supplier with contacting this group.

Online consultation

The online consultation will involve up to 20 stakeholder organisations. The responses will come from a range of stakeholders, including: AoC, SFCA, ASCL, Gatsby, academics and providers.

Focus groups

As detailed in the ITT, 3 focus groups will take place each with 6-8 attendees. Focus groups will include participants from a wide range of provider types. Consideration will also be given to personal characteristics, teaching experience, and job role when selecting the focus group sample. The focus groups will last for an hour and a half maximum.

All focus group participants will receive a £50 voucher following participation.

Outputs

Details of key project outputs are listed in the initial ITT. In addition to the outputs listed here, the supplier will provide:

- Quantitative analytical plan for the FEW survey.
- Evidence and data review specifications.
- Summaries of early findings from stakeholder interviews, online consultation, cognitive survey testing and focus groups.
- Presentation of high level survey findings ahead of full survey report.

Outputs

Tasks

Tasks	Outputs	Date required
Inception meeting	Note of the meeting, decisions and actions agreed with DfE	22 nd August 2025
WS1-Survey design	Agree sampling approach and dissemination strategy with DfE	19 th September 2025
Data sharing arrangements/Data	Data sharing application	30 th September 2025

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request application		
WS1- draft survey	Shared with DfE for review	30 th September 2025
WS2- data and evidence review specifications	Agree specifications for data review informed by suggestions in the ITT Agree specifications for evidence review informed by suggestions in the ITT	30 th September 2025
WS2- internal policy interviews	Interviews with ~4 DfE policy stakeholders Analysis and findings shared with DfE	30 th September 2025
WS2-consultation	Online external consultation with ~20 consultees from organisations representing the post-16 sector Analysis and findings shared with DfE, including list of consultees who would be willing to be involved in the future expert group supporting the longitudinal study	30 th September 2025
WS2- internal data interviews	Interviews with ~4 DfE data leads Analysis and findings shared with DfE	17 th October 2025
WS1- survey sampling and recruitment	Sampling and recruitment of FE providers to take part in the survey including GFEC, SFCs and ITPs, achieving a large and representative response rate	22 nd October 2025
WS1- cognitive testing	User/cognitive testing with ~5 providers, covering at least one GFEC, one SFC and one ITP including one teacher, leader and manager from each. Findings shared with DfE	22 nd October 2025
WS1-survey sign off	Final survey coded in Questback, with final sign off from DfE	31 st October 2025
WS2-evidence review	Completed literature review exploring relevant longitudinal studies, teaching workforce and FE research. Summarise findings for DfE	28 th November 2025

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WS2- review dataset	Completed review of datasets as listed in the ITT and any promising options identified in the literature review. Assess key features of each and produce recommendation to DfE for future research sample frame. Analyse and summarise findings for DfE	28 th November 2025
WS1-survey fieldwork	Survey launched 3/11/25 Weekly updates to DfE reflecting response rates Targeted follow ups to achieve ~6-7% response rate from the national population, covering 30% of all FE providers and 19-22% of teachers, leaders and managers in FE.	12 th December 2025
Interim findings presentation	Presentation to DfE summarising findings from data review, evidence review, internal stakeholder interviews and online consultation responses	19 th December 2025
WS1- analysis survey	Survey closed Review of response rates provided to DfE Draft survey analysis plan shared with DfE	19 th December 2025
Break clause		
WS2-focus groups	Complete ~3 focus groups, one with FE leaders, one with FE managers and one with FE teachers, exploring barriers and enablers for longitudinal research Analyse and summary of findings shared with DfE	20 th February 2026
WS1- analysis survey	Data cleaning Survey analysis QA	27 th February 2026
WS1-high level survey findings	Presented to DfE	27 th March 2026
WS2- feasibility report first draft	Shared with DfE for first round of comments	27 th March 2026
WS2- feasibility report second draft	Shared with DfE for further comments	20 th April 2026
WS1-survey report first draft	Draft survey findings report shared with DfE for first round of comments	24 th April 2026

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WS1-survey report second draft	Survey findings report, technical annex and college feedback report drafts shared with DfE for further comments	11 th May 2026
WS2-finalised feasibility study report	Submitted to DfE	8 th May 2026
WS1- finalised survey report	Final survey report and technical annex submitted to DfE College feedback reports disseminated to FE providers	29 th May 2026
Final key findings presentation	Key findings from both workstreams presentation for DfE stakeholders	19 th June 2026

Liaison Agreements

Minimum requirements throughout the research project include:

Inception: the supplier will attend a virtual inception meeting. This will be held with relevant DfE teams.

Workplan for the project: The supplier will develop a workplan including a timeline for input from DfE (including time for sign-off for all research materials and reports).

Project management: The supplier will attend regular online meetings with the DfE project manager (and any other relevant DfE team members as necessary) with an initial agreed frequency of a virtual meeting every week. These meetings will be accompanied by a brief written project update monthly. Both the supplier and the DfE are willing to allow flexibility around the frequency of meetings to accommodate busy or quieter periods of the work.

Data collection: The supplier will be expected to clear any data collection tools with the DfE before engaging in fieldwork.

Interim presentations: For the FE workforce survey (work strand 1), there will be an initial findings presentation to the buyer. For the feasibility study (work strand 2), a summary of the data and evidence review, stakeholder interviews and online consultation will be presented to the DfE. Findings from the focus groups will also be summarised and shared- the DfE is open to how these findings are best shared (e.g. presentation or brief written summary).

Break clauses

We have included one break clause within our payment milestones. This clause is applicable following the completion of the FE workforce survey fieldwork for

workstream 1. The break clause may be enacted if the response rate for the survey does not meet the required numbers for robust analysis including of sub-groups as outlined in the ITT. Regular reviews of the survey data collection will take place during fieldwork to keep track of response rates and consider whether targeted methods are needed to increase response rates for certain groups.

If methods to improve response rates are not successful, a decision to enact the break clause must be made by the 22nd December 2025 (or if the survey is delayed, this decision deadline will be moved in-line with the new survey timetable). The exact outcome of the break clause will depend on the survey response rate. A discussion will be held between the Department and the supplier at this stage to discuss any changes to the analysis or reporting plans, and payment milestones will be revised accordingly through a contract variation. If the survey responses are too low for any meaningful analysis, the Department reserves the right to not proceed with the analysis and reporting of the survey data. In this case, the supplier will complete the data cleaning and college-level reports (providing sufficient responses are received for this), but all payments for analysis, reporting and project management for WS1 will be stopped once this work is completed. The supplier will share this data with the Department for internal use. The feasibility study (work stream 2) would continue.

Data collection

- The supplier will be expected to clear any data collection tools with the Department before engaging in field work. Suppliers should include Data Privacy Notices for research participants via respondent documentation and/or interviewer briefing notes and clearly state what the data is being collected for and on behalf of the Authority and that no reference is made, implied or otherwise, to the data being used solely by or available only to the supplier.
- The supplier will establish with the Department the legal basis for the data processing under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- The respondent documentation and/or interviewer shall ensure that the respondent clearly understand (before they give their consent to be interviewed, contribute to the online consultation or attend a focus group), the purpose of the interview, consultation or focus group, that the information they provide will only be used for research purposes and, in the case of interviews, consultations or focus groups (telephone or face-to-face), that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Where consent is used as the legal basis for data processing, consent procedures should ensure RM6126- Research and Insights
DPS Project Version: v1.0 48 Model Version: v1.0 compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Burden

The Department seeks to minimize the burdens on Further Education teachers, leaders and managers taking part in research. When assessing the relative merits of data collection methods, the following issues will be considered:

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- Only data essential to the project shall be collected
- Data should be collected electronically where appropriate and where leaders/managers/teachers prefer this
- Questionnaires should be pre-populated wherever possible and appropriate
- Leaders, managers and teachers must be given at least two working weeks to respond to the exercise from the date they receive the request.

Consent Arrangements

All participants should be informed of:

- The purpose of the research
- That the supplier is acting on behalf of the Department
- That they have the option to refuse to participate (opt out). Where opt-in consent is used, the approach should be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.
- The suppliers contact details should be provided to all participants.

Incentives

- The use of incentives to support response rates or participation in research (beyond what is already described in the methodology section) must be funded within the agreed budget for work.
- There will be no additional budget for extra incentives if the required response rate is not met.