

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY (NOT GUARANTEED): This is a discussion document, awaiting formal approvals, and is not a statement of government policy

Products for Change Programme and Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) evaluations

Summary

A Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Change Programme will be delivered to test and refine a package of system level reforms in nine Regional Expert Partnerships.

DfE requires a mixed method, multi-informant evaluation of the process, implementation and impact of the Change Programme reforms. This may involve surveys, interviews, case studies, as well as analysis of monitoring and admin data.

DfE is also looking to commission a separate evaluation of the ELSEC pathfinders.

We require an evaluator or consortium with expertise in evaluating complex interventions focused on system change in a delivery environment with a wide range of stakeholders.

We will be holding a virtual market engagement event from 13:00-14:00 on Tuesday 16th May 2023 to provide more information and answer questions. We would like to invite you to this market engagement event.

What is the Change programme?

The [SEND and AP improvement plan](#) committed £70m to deliver a Change Programme that will both test and refine key SEND and AP system level reform proposals across England to inform the development of 'ordinarily available provision' and support the development of National Standards. The reforms aim to achieve local improvement on financial stability of the SEND system, and the experiences and outcomes for children and young people and their families.

The Change Programme will create up to 9 Regional Expert Partnerships (REPs), one in each region. The lead LAs will work in partnership with 2-3 LAs who are geographical neighbours to the lead LA in their region to form the REPs and, where possible, all the of the LAs within a REP will be located within a single Integrated Care Board (ICB) to ensure close collaboration with health partners. Each REP will simultaneously test the same national package of reforms consisting of policy reforms in four areas: National Standards,

Partnerships and Plans, AP services and Commissioning Reform as set out in the Improvement Plan. ELSEC is one of the reforms to be tested, however the evaluation of ELSEC will be separate to the Change Programme, see below.

In addition to a DfE implementation unit, a delivery partner will be appointed. The delivery partner will provide logistical/administrative support, facilitate joint working between DfE policy teams and REPs on test and learn, support the design and strategic delivery of the programme, and deliver national and regional training and events.

The Change Programme tests how the reforms work as a whole and where possible the contribution individual reforms make to this. It further seeks to understand any barriers to local areas to deliver the new system and whether the reforms generate any unintended consequences.

The Change Programme evaluation

The evaluation aims to understand the lessons from implementation of the Change Programme and demonstrate the efficacy and impacts of the Change Programme reform package and for whom and how these are being achieved.

The evaluation will evidence the emerging impact of the package of reforms as a whole. It will not evaluate the impact of individual policy reforms within it (but see section on ELSEC below), however it will look to understand as far as possible the relative contributions across the range of policy reforms.

The requirement

We anticipate that the evaluation will be a multi-informant, mixed method process and implementation evaluation.

The evaluation will gather evidence on implementation and how the reforms are landing with stakeholders. The evaluation will seek views from a range of stakeholders across LAs, education settings, health and social care representatives, and children and young people and their families.

It will also utilise monitoring data on SEND provision metrics to demonstrate emerging impact on key outcomes. We are also likely to be looking to assess the feasibility of conducting quasi-experimental impact evaluation if the reforms were rolled out nationally, e.g. based on available admin data.

Other methods are likely to include case studies, interviews and surveys.

Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)

The ELSEC pathfinders are being delivered as part of the Change Programme.

ELSEC aims to improve identification and support for children with speech, language, and communication (SLCN) by establishing community intervention teams to work directly with early year settings and primary schools. Enabling swifter access to specialist support should prevent an escalation of need and improve the experiences of children and families engaging with the SEND system.

We currently anticipate that the ELSEC pathfinders are evaluated separately to capture evidence from relevant stakeholders and data, in particular health. The evaluator will have to work closely both with the Change Programme delivery partner and the proposed Change Programme Evaluator.

This evaluation seeks to understand how ELSEC was implemented and what impact ELSEC has had on child outcomes and demand for specialist services (in particular referrals and waiting times). It will collect evidence through case studies and interviews from a range of stakeholders including health and education professionals and families. A data collection tool will also be developed to capture monitoring data which will be used for a quasi-experimental impact evaluation, which will compare outcomes in ELSEC pathfinder sites, with those areas that are similar but that were not part of the pathfinder.

What kind of organisation are we looking for?

We expect the supplier to have:

- Understanding of the policy and delivery context of the project
- Expertise of conducting evaluation in complex system change delivery
- Expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Experience of working with delivery partners when conducting evaluation
- Experience of evaluating across a wide range of stakeholders, including health professionals and children and young people and their families
- Experience in producing engaging and accessible reports

We would welcome consortiums who meet the requirements above. Lead providers need to be registered on RM6126.