



CONTENTS

1.	PURPOSE.....	2
2.	BACKGROUND TO THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY.....	2
3.	BACKGROUND TO REQUIREMENT/OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENT.....	2
4.	DEFINITIONS.....	3
5.	SCOPE OF REQUIREMENT.....	4
6.	THE REQUIREMENT.....	4
7.	KEY MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES	6
8.	MANAGEMENT INFORMATION/REPORTING	7
9.	VOLUMES.....	7
10.	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	7
11.	SUSTAINABILITY	7
12.	QUALITY.....	8
13.	PRICE	8
14.	STAFF AND CUSTOMER SERVICE.....	8
15.	SERVICE LEVELS AND PERFORMANCE	9
16.	SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS	10
17.	PAYMENT AND INVOICING	10
18.	CONTRACT MANAGEMENT	10
19.	LOCATION.....	10



1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), herein referred to as the “Customer” or “Authority”, is undertaking a procurement exercise to award a Contract to a Supplier to undertake a qualitative project exploring perceptions of overcrowding in the South Asian community.
- 1.2 Overcrowding in English homes is higher than it has ever been before. South Asian households (particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani households) are disproportionately more likely to be overcrowded. However, no research has been undertaken to determine whether, and to what extent, residents of overcrowded homes feel negatively about their living situation or the cultural drivers which affect these perceptions and circumstances. The Customer would like to address this gap.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

- 2.1 The Customer is a ministerial department, supported by 13 agencies and public bodies.
- 2.2 The Customer is responsible for housing in England and its job is to create great places to live and work, and to give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area.
- 2.3 The Customer’s key objectives include: driving up housing supply; increasing home ownership; devolving powers and budgets to boost local growth in England; and supporting strong communities with excellent public services.
- 2.4 This research is linked to the Customer’s aims of supporting strong communities and driving up housing supply.

3. BACKGROUND TO REQUIREMENT / OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENT

- 3.1 The customer seeks to better understand why overcrowding is increasing and its drivers by commissioning a qualitative research project that examines the South Asian community perceptions of overcrowding. The focus on the South Asian community is driven by the much higher rates of overcrowding found within Bangladeshi and Pakistani households, compared to White British households.
- 3.2 Overcrowding is typically measured using the bedroom standard. This is essentially the difference between the number of bedrooms needed to avoid undesirable sharing (given the number, ages and relationship of the household members) and the number of bedrooms actually available to the household. According the English Housing Survey, the level of overcrowding in English homes is higher than it has ever been before. South Asian people (particularly Bangladeshi and Pakistani people) are disproportionately more



likely to live in overcrowded homes. For example, Bangladeshi households are 12 times more likely than White British households to be overcrowded. We also know that overcrowded housing tends to be concentrated and clustered in particular localities, where strong community ties have been formed over several generations. Overcrowding has increased further during the COVID-19 pandemic¹ and overcrowding has been associated with increased household transmission of COVID-19.

- 3.3 Usually, when overcrowding is discussed, there is an focus on associated problems (e.g. poorer educational and health outcomes). However, no research has been undertaken to determine whether, and to what extent, residents of overcrowded homes feel negatively about their living situation or the cultural drivers in place (such as the benefits of multigenerational living). There is an important distinction to be made between overcrowded housing and households where several generations choose to live together. Benefits may include allowing cohabitants to share costs, reducing loneliness and isolation, allowing older family members to help with childcare and younger generations benefitting from more affordable housing. The customer is especially interested in understanding how these attitudes have changed in light of COVID-19.
- 3.4 Findings from the project will be used to inform DLUHC policies on overcrowding and housing more generally.

4. DEFINITIONS

Expression or Acronym	Definition
DLUHC or the Customer	means the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Overcrowding	Households are said to be overcrowded if they have fewer bedrooms available than the notional number needed according to the bedroom standard definition. See bedroom standard (below)
Bedroom standard	The 'bedroom standard' is used by government as an indicator of occupation density. A standard number of bedrooms is calculated for each household in accordance with its age/sex/marital status composition and the relationship of the members to one another. A separate bedroom is allowed for each married or cohabiting couple, any other person aged 21 or over, each pair of adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex, and each pair of children under 10. Any unpaired person aged 10-20 is notionally paired, if possible, with a child under 10 of the same sex, or, if that

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-resilience-study-wave-2>

	<p>is not possible, he or she is counted as requiring a separate bedroom, as is any unpaired child under 10.</p> <p>This notional standard number of bedrooms is then compared with the actual number of bedrooms (including bed-sitters) available for the sole use of the household, and differences are tabulated. Bedrooms converted to other uses are not counted as available unless they have been denoted as bedrooms by the respondents; bedrooms not actually in use are counted unless uninhabitable.</p>
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5. SCOPE OF REQUIREMENT

- 5.1 The Customer is commissioning a qualitative project exploring perceptions of overcrowding in the South Asian community.
- 5.2 The research should take a qualitative approach and answer the following four research questions:
 - 5.2.1 How do South Asian respondents living in overcrowded accommodation perceive their housing situation?
 - 5.2.2 What factors lead to overcrowding in South Asian communities and influence respondents' perceptions of it? e.g. the interplay between housing availability, cultural drivers, occupation etc.
 - 5.2.3 To what extent has COVID-19 affected how South Asian respondents feel about living in their current housing situation?
 - 5.2.4 How might DLUHC tailor policies to address overcrowding in a culturally sensitive way?
- 5.3 This will require a project team that has experience of successfully working with the South Asian community, is knowledgeable and sensitive about cultural practices within the community, and willing to work with community organisations (e.g. to recruit participants).

6. THE REQUIREMENT

- 6.1 The customer anticipates a combination of focus groups and semi-structured interviews, but are happy for the supplier to suggest their own approach to conducting this research project. Bidders are welcome to suggest alternative approaches, providing a rationale for the proposed approach and methodology, and a demonstration of how they will ensure their approach can be delivered within the project timeline and budget.



- 6.2 If the proposed approach is taken, the customer would like the supplier to conduct focus groups and about 50 semi-structured interviews with Pakistani and Bangladeshi people from a range of backgrounds (including tenure, ethnicity, income, region, age, immigrant generation) to explore if perceptions of overcrowding differ across different characteristics, including those who live in overcrowded accommodation and those who do not. To ensure the research is conducted in a culturally sensitive way and that a wide range of views are captured, interviews will be conducted in English and languages other than English (e.g. Urdu and Bengali). The supplier should work with local community organisations to recruit participants. Some interviews with LA and RSL housing officers, with experience of working with the South Asian community in areas with high levels of overcrowding should also be undertaken.
- 6.3 The focus groups would be used to generate ideas for how the customer could tailor policies to address and discuss overcrowding (research question 4). In summary, the supplier will:
- 6.3.1 Design research materials
 - 6.3.2 Recruit and manage the research sample
 - 6.3.3 Conduct qualitative interviews and focus groups
 - 6.3.4 Analyse the data to produce and deliver a presentation and report of main findings
- 6.4 The table below sets out the range of activities that we anticipate will be required for this study and how responsibility will be assigned:

Owner	Activity
DLUHC	Share reports and findings that have been gathered to support desk-based research and development of research materials. Support the supplier with advice and knowledge on the issue and methodological expertise.
Supplier	Management of recruitment and fulfilling sampling quotas with support from DLUHC. Work with DLUHC to agree and finalise the design of the research to be undertaken, including data collection method and analysis strategy. Preparation of research materials such as interview guides and stimulus. Conduct research to address the research questions set out above, which will include:



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with the South Asian Community living in overcrowded housing Interviews with the South Asian Community not living in overcrowded housing Interviews with LA and RSL housing managers, particularly those with a BAME focus and experience <p>Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings held via video conference or telephone and written updates detailing recently completed tasks, upcoming activities and notifying DLUHC of important developments on the project. Respond to questions from DLUHC, providing clarifications. Present findings to DLUHC, outline and explain key insights. Use quotes and examples from participants to illustrate findings. Produce a final report that will be published on gov.uk
DLUHC	Publish report on gov.uk

- 6.5 The successful supplier will be expected to respect any social distancing rules set by the government to stop the spread of Covid-19 throughout the project management and research process. The successful supplier will be free to adjust their methods, in line with national and local restrictions.
- 6.6 The project will be overseen by policy officials and analysts. The successful supplier will be expected to have regular Project meetings with DLUHC to discuss progress and expectations. The successful supplier will have access to expert knowledge of the programme and it is expected this will be utilised. DLUHC will provide necessary information to the supplier relating to previous findings and methodology.

7. KEY MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES

- 7.1 We would hope to start the contract in December and that the project would take no longer than six months to complete. The following Contract milestones/deliverables will apply:

Milestone / Deliverable	Description	Timeframe or Delivery Date
1	Project set up; write interview guides; start recruitment.	December 2021



2	Sign-off of interview guides; start of fieldwork and interviews	January 2022
3	Completion of fieldwork and interviews	February 2022
4	Analysis/coding; drafting final report	March-April 2022
5	Report QA and sign off	Early May 2022
6	Presentation of main findings and report publication	End May 2022

8. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION/REPORTING

- 8.1 The Supplier will be required to interview guides for Customer sign off prior to any fieldwork.
- 8.2 The Customer will require regular progress reports throughout the project as required, with updates to changes in risk or the success of the project. We require any issues to be raised promptly with the lead contact for the Customer.
- 8.3 The Customer will require the Supplier to appoint a Project Manager for the project who will act as main contact for the Customer.

9. VOLUMES

- 9.1 Volumes expected under this contract are detailed in sections 5, 6 and 15. The exact requirements (e.g. the number of focus groups and interviews) will be finalised once the methodology is confirmed.

10. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- 10.1 The Supplier will be expected to continually improve the way in which the required Services are to be delivered throughout the Contract duration.
- 10.2 The Supplier should present new ways of working to the Customer during contract review meetings.
- 10.3 Changes to the way in which the Services are to be delivered must be brought to the Customer's attention and agreed prior to any changes being implemented.
- 10.4 The Customer will monitor and approve progress and quality of outputs.

11. SUSTAINABILITY

In line with the Government's commitment to take account of social value in the award of contracts, the supplier will need describe the commitment their organisation will make to ensuring that opportunities under the contract tackle workforce inequality. In particular, Theme 4: Equal opportunity; Policy Outcome: Tackle workforce inequality. Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts>.

12. QUALITY

- 12.1 All reporting and guidance produced must be of publishable standard. Reports, papers and guidance are expected to have been proof read by a senior official/director before submission to DLUHC, and must be in accessible formats. The reports should be in DLUHC's template, which DLUHC will supply. Content and design will adhere to the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps> .

13. PRICE

- 13.1 The maximum budget for the project is £120,000 (excl VAT). Suppliers should provide a detailed breakdown of pricing as part of the bid (i.e. per interview/per focus group/translation costs etc.)
- 13.2 Prices are to be submitted via the e-Sourcing Suite (Attachment 4 – Price Schedule) excluding VAT and including all other expenses relating to Contract delivery.

14. STAFF AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

- 14.1 The Customer requires the Supplier to provide a sufficient level of resource throughout the duration of Contract in order to consistently deliver a quality service to all Parties.
- 14.2 The Supplier's staff assigned to the Contract shall have the relevant qualifications and experience to deliver the Contract.

- 14.3 The Supplier shall ensure that staff understand the Customer's vision and objectives and will provide excellent customer service to the Customer throughout the duration of the Contract.

15. SERVICE LEVELS AND PERFORMANCE

- 15.1 The Customer will measure the quality of the Supplier's delivery by:

KPI / SLA	Service Area	KPI/SLA description	Target
1	Communication	Progress reports by email according to agreed work programme milestones circulated to deadline.	100%
2	Fieldwork	Achieved number of interviews and focus groups	100% (62 in-depth interviews; 6 focus groups)
3	Data	Delivery of data (interview and focus group transcripts).	100%
4	Reporting	Delivery of a presentation and report of findings	100%
5	Risk Management	Risks monitored regularly and any concerns brought to the attention of the contract manager within 24 hours of identification.	100%
6	Social value	Increased diversity in the workforce employed under this contract	Proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) people from groups under-represented in the workforce employed on a permanent basis under the contract is greater than the wider NatCen workforce.

- 15.2 The Authority will maintain a record of provider adherence to the agreed service level and performance timelines. Any non-adherence will result in performance review meetings between the Customer and the successful Provider, to provide a full debrief and explanation as to why the service level agreement was not met. Improvement plans will also be established here.
- 15.3 Failure to meet the service level requirements outlined above could result in the Customer choosing not to continue the contract for further waves of the

polling. For continuous requirements, such as those concerning risk management or progress reports, failure to meet service level agreements is defined as missing targets twice within any rolling three-month period.

16. SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS

- 16.1 The Supplier will be required to collect and securely store data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Details on how this will be delivered should be provided within written proposals.
- 16.2 The Supplier will be required to provide assurance to the Customer that all data will be destroyed within a reasonable timeframe from completion of the project.

17. PAYMENT AND INVOICING

- 17.1 Payment can only be made following satisfactory delivery of pre-agreed certified products and deliverables.
- 17.2 Before payment can be considered, each invoice must include a detailed elemental breakdown of work completed and the associated costs.
- 17.3 Invoices should be submitted via email to the appropriate contact within DLUHC, provided upon award of Contract.

18. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

- 18.1 Attendance at Contract Review meetings shall be at the Supplier's own expense; however, meetings are likely to be online for the duration of the project.

19. LOCATION

- 19.1 The location of the Services will be carried out at the Supplier's address (or suitable alternative in the case of continued home working due to COVID-19). Project management and progress meetings will take place online using a suitable videoconferencing platform, likely for the duration of the project.