**GRANT INVITATION TO BID (ITB) / CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

**A Support Service to the Free Schools Programme**

1. The Department for Education (DfE) is inviting bids for a grant to provide the above service in England. The level of the grant will be in the range of £1.4m to £1.7m each year for the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20. With the agreement of the provider, the Department may extend the grant for a third year (2020-21).
2. The Department and successful bidder will enter into a grant funding agreement that will be subject to the Department’s grant terms and conditions. The successful bidder must be able to comply with the grant funding agreement and terms and conditions in full. We aim to issue the grant funding agreement in February 2018.
3. Accompanying this invitation are four documents:

Document 1 - Instructions and Information on the Bidding Procedures

Document 2 - Specification of the Support Service to the Free Schools Programme

Document 3 - Evaluation Criteria

Document 4 - Qualification Questionnaire and Declaration.

1. These documents should be read in conjunction with the Department’s grant funding agreement terms and conditions which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grant-funding-agreement-terms-and-conditions>
2. References to the “Department” throughout these documents mean the Secretary of State for Education acting through her representatives in the DfE.
3. Please read the instructions on the bidding procedures carefully. Failure to comply with them may invalidate your bid.
4. Your bid must be emailed to FreeSchools.ExternalSupport@education.gov.uk no later than **23:59 on Friday 19 January**. Emails must be marked “Bid for Free Schools Support Service” in the subject field. Late bids will **not** be considered.
5. If, having read the enclosed documents, you decide not to submit a bid it would be helpful to understand the reasons for your decision. Please send your reasons to FreeSchools.ExternalSupport@education.gov.uk marked “No Bid”.