

# Expression of Interest

# Title: Body Image – Qualitative Research to Inform Policy Interventions

**Project reference: GEO 2018/089**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 17.00 on Friday 11th January 2019**

## Summary

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) is seeking a contractor to (a) update our evidence on the impacts of negative body image, (b) test findings with appropriate audiences, and (c) to develop clear proposals for interventions.

## Background

Body dissatisfaction is an issue of growing concern to young people and their parents.[[1]](#footnote-1) The pressure on young people to achieve an idealised image is a serious issue, with wide-reaching consequences for their mental and physical wellbeing.[[2]](#footnote-2) It is also part of how gender stereotypes are reinforced, and is a significant barrier to young people developing and expressing their individual potential.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The growth of social and digital media has greatly increased exposure to images of beauty that are unrealistic and unattainable and has placed additional pressures on young people to conform to a particular body type or image. It is estimated that 70% of adolescent girls and 45% of adolescent boys want to change their body weight or shape.[[4]](#footnote-4)

We want all young people to grow up feeling confident and comfortable with their bodies. However, we recognise that parents, teachers and young people themselves often do not know where to find quality resources on improving their self-esteem regarding body image.[[5]](#footnote-5)

GEO have previously commissioned a review of evidence in this area, which we now wish to update to take account of the changing context. We are also aware that research in this area has historically focused on young girls and women, and are keen to broaden our understanding of the impact of body satisfaction on a diverse range of young people.

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) have committed to addressing these gaps in our recent response to the Youth Select Committee report on Body Confidence. This proposal outlines the work required to deliver on these commitments.

We may commission further work on additional outputs following on from this research.

## Project aims

In 2013, GEO commissioned a rapid review of the evidence base on body image.[[6]](#footnote-6) This was valuable in consolidating our understanding of the existing literature, but we now wish to update this to incorporate new research. We are also keen to develop proposals of interventions that could be piloted at a later date. We want these to be informed by work undertaken directly with stakeholders, including young people, which should identify specific support and information gaps, and to co-design solutions.

The original rapid review addressed the following research questions:

* What are the potential causes and consequences of negative body image?
* Who is impacted by negative body image?
* What can be done about negative body image?

This work should provide an update encompassing the post-2012 research in this area, which we would expect to include new research focusing specifically on the impacts of social media and edited images. We are also keen to ensure that our evidence base takes full account of the specific challenges faced by young men, LGBT people, ethnic minorities and those with disabilities or serious illnesses. As such, we are particularly interested in intersectionality, and improving our insight into the complexities of this issue, and what works to tackle the cause of, and harmful effects of, body dissatisfaction. We would like the updated review to consider this further, making reference to pre-2012 literature as appropriate.

To meet these requirements, this work should therefore respond to the additional research questions:

* What impact has the increased use of social media and edited images had on negative body image?
* How does negative body image impact different demographics? E.g.,men and boys, people with disabilities, BAME people, LGBT people.

The project should draw on the findings from research undertaken to propose policy interventions which could be taken forward.

## Methodology

The two main outputs from this project will be a report that includes:

1. A high-quality report of the research undertaken.
2. Proposals of workable policy interventions, co-designed with key stakeholders and Government Equalities Office officials that the Government may choose to take forward.

We would expect the work itself to consist of the following elements:

* A Rapid Evidence Assessment that updates the 2013 review, responding to the identified research questions.
* Qualitative work with key stakeholders, building on the findings of the REA.
* Co-design of policy interventions, involving both key stakeholders and Government Equalities Office officials.

However, we are open to proposals of alternative methodologies, and understand that the type of qualitative work that would be appropriate will be informed by the outcomes from the literature review.

## We would ask that bidders give clear, detailed proposals as to how they would engage with GEO throughout the project. For example, in consulting on search strategies, designing the qualitative research, co-designing practicable policy interventions, and in ensuring final products are fit-for-purpose, with recommendations that stakeholders and policymakers will be able to make active use of.

## Organisational Experience

We welcome partnership applications for this funding, however there must be a clear partnership lead outlined in your proposal, who will be the main point of contact on behalf of the partnership and will liaise with GEO officials across delivery.

If you are working as a formal partnership and we make a formal offer, you will be required to create a formal partnership agreement. We will advise you on this matter if you are successful.

We will alsoaccept consortium bids who outline that together they can provide the expertise and capability to reach the objectives of this research.

All partnership/consortium bids will be different depending on the partners and how they have agreed to work together, however successful bids should consider how they will demonstrate the following:

* The collective skills, experience and capacity required to manage and deliver the project.
* A suitable mix of organisations to enable the successful management and delivery of the project.
* The ability to collectively agree on how key decisions should be made and communicated.
* The roles and responsibility of each of the partners.

## Timing

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| EoI Issue | 18th December 2018 |
| EoI Deadline | 11th January 2019 |
| EoI Assessment | w/c 14th January 2018 |
| ITT Issue | w/c 14th January 2019 |
| ITT Deadline | w/c 4th February 2019 |
| ITT Assessment | w/c 4th February 2019 |
| Contract Award | w/c 4th February 2019 |
| Delivery of Draft Report | 31st March 2019 |
| Delivery of Final Report | May 2019 |
| Dissemination | August-October 2019 |

## Funding

The budget for this work is £50k. We are declaring the budget as we expect contractors to to deliver this work and produce a high quality output in short timeframes. Successful bidders should demonstrate their ability to meet the deadlines expected.

## Assessment criteria

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| **Criterion** | **Description** | **Weighting** |
| Evidence of relevant experience | Experience of having delivered high-quality qualitative research, preferably on similar topics. We are particularly keen to see evidence of bidders having delivered academic research where findings have been successfully translated into workable policy interventions. | 35% |
| Understanding of subject matter | Demonstration of outstanding expertise in the subject matter, including a track record of producing high-quality research in this field and familiarity with the existing evidence base. | 30% |
| Experience of designing policy | Experience of having designed policy interventions of other outputs that are suitable for real-world application, ideally evidence-based and targeted at similar audiences | 25% |
| Capacity to carry out work | Demonstrable ability to complete the required work, i.e., in employing or intending to recruit appropriately skilled staff. | 10% |

Submitted EoIs should be no more than 1,500 words in length. Only the top three scoring EOIs will be invited to tender for the work.

| **Closing date for EOIs: 17.00 on Friday 11th January 2019**  **Send your EOI form to: orla.mackle@geo.gov.uk** |
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## How to submit an expression of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the NEW EOI Form which can be found under attachments. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

All contracts are let on the basis of the [Department’s Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eoi-guide). You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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1. APPG on Body Image, Reflections on body image, May 2012, p7 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Body Image – A Rapid Evidence Assessment of the Literature” – Government Equalities Office,2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “A Body Confident Future – British Youth Council, Youth Select Committee, 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Smolak, L. (2012). Appearance in childhood and adolescence. In N. R. a. D. Harcourt (Ed.), Oxford Handbook of the Psychology of Appearance (pp. 123-141). London: Oxford University Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A Body Confident Future – British Youth Council, Youth Select Committee, 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/202946/120715\_RAE\_on\_body\_image\_final.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-6)