**Provision of Item Writing Services - Key Stage 1 English Reading Call-Off Contract**

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| **Item Writing Framework Agreement – STA 0128** |
| **Call-Off Contract No: STA-0128/01** |
| **Title: Provision of Item Writing Services for Key Stage 1 English Reading Work Package 2** |
| **Supplier: AlphaPlus Consultancy Ltd** |

**Pursuant to the terms of the Item Writing Test Framework Agreement (STA 0128):**

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| **Service Commencement Date:** | 25 October 2016 |
| **Call-Off Contract End Date:** | 30 June 2017 |
| **Call-Off Contract Value:** | £76,758 |
| **Relationship Manager for Department for Education:** |  |
| **Contract Manager for the Department for Education:** |  |
| **Relationship Manager for the Supplier:** |  |

1. **Background**

This call-off contract is for the provision of item writing services for Key Stage 1 English Reading (Work Package 1), including the drafting of potential items and their mark schemes, ready for formal trialling.

1. **Functional Requirements**

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| **Subjects:** | English Reading |
| **Level (or Other Measure) Assessed:** | N/A |
| **Key Stage or Other Measure:** | Key Stage 1 |

The functional requirements are set out below and can also be found in the original ITQ document.

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| **Functional Requirements** | |
| **Assessment type:** | National curriculum Assessment – for pupils at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 |
| **Item Development and Design:** | The number of marks stated for each work package outlined below is the total number of marks which must be provided at final handover. Suppliers will need to ensure sufficient items are created to allow for any losses during the process. |
| **Item Writing requirements for each subject:** | **Key stage 1 English reading** |
| The items are destined for tests which assess the new National curriculum programme of study for key stage 1 English.  **Final test format**  There are two test components: One integrated reading and answer booklet and one separate reading booklet with associated reading answer booklet.  *Reading booklet 1*comprises 2-3 texts with questions interspersed. The total word count will be approximately 400 – 700 words. This component contains 20 marks. Questions in this booklet are based on the sections of the text on the same or the facing page. Texts in reading booklet 1 should focus on the low to middle end of reading difficulty.  *Reading booklet 2* comprises 2-3 texts, totalling approximately 800 - 1100 words. The associated reading answer booklet will contain 20 marks. Texts for reading booklet 2 should focus on the middle to upper end of reading difficulty.  **Work Package 2**   * **Booklet 1 –** One non-fiction and two narrative texts (with 20 associated marks for each text) * **Booklet 2 –** One non-fiction and two narrative texts (with 20 associated marks for each text)   The items will be based on a stimulus reading text. The supplier will be required to source stand-alone texts assessing English reading to match the cognitive demand ratings as described in the new test framework for 2016 for complexity and item response. These texts must be appropriate for a national cohort of pupils in year 2, free from sensitive or controversial subject matter and likely to be appealing or engaging to pupils at the end of key stage 1. They should provide a rich source for eliciting items across the content and cognitive domains.  Items should be presented in two separate sets (to match the two versions of test booklets that will be taken to IVT). There should be no items appearing in both booklets and no enemies (questions that would not appear together in a final test paper) within an item set. Additionally, the number of enemies must be kept to a minimum – that is no more than 3 questions in each set that have an enemy in the other set. Where items are ‘clones’, these count as one item only.  Suppliers should specify which of their texts are assessing low, medium or high reading difficulty. The texts should remain in this category throughout the development cycle.  Non-fiction texts should feel authentic with a clear purpose and audience. They must be factually accurate and evidence of fact checking should be available on request. Please avoid subjects that may advantage certain children or that some may be more familiar with.  **Items**  Total requirements will be discussed after text selection but will be approximately as per the tables below.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Booklet 1** | **Per text** | | **Total word count** | 100 - 250 | | **Total marks** | 20 | | **Required marks for Making inferences** | approximately 50% | | **Required marks for Comprehension** | Approximately 50% | | **1 mark items** | 100% | | **2 mark items** | 0% | | **Open response** | 70 – 80% | | **Closed response** | 20 – 30% |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Booklet 2** | **Per text** | | **Total word count (booklet 2 texts)** | 250 - 500 | | **Total marks** | 20 | | **Required marks for Making inferences** | approximately 50% | | **Required marks for Comprehension** | approximately 50% | | **1 mark items** | 17 - 18 marks | | **2 mark items** | 6 - 12 marks | | **Open response** | 70 – 80% | | **Closed response** | 20 – 30% |   Approximate breakdown of requirements for cognitive demand in terms of **D: task specific response**:   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Cognitive demand (D task specific response)** | 25 – 35% at D1 Multiple choice/ matching | 25 – 30% at D2 Short answer | 25 – 30% at D3 Short answer | 15 – 20% at D4. Open response |   Any additional items created under this contract which are intrinsically linked to the selected texts should be also be presented at Interim Handover. |
| **Mark schemes** | Mark schemes must be developed for all items.  The mark schemes must provide sufficient and clear guidance for teachers and markers to:   * allow marks to be allocated reliably, with consistency and accuracy * enable marking to be manageable * enable the marking of the tests to be effectively standardised * have a principle to define what is correct * include examples of responses that illustrate the range of correct responses and possible incorrect or insufficient responses. Ideally, mark scheme exemplars should be drawn from informal trialling, where the items have been trialled.   The mark schemes should:   * Clearly and succinctly communicate the marking principles for creditworthy and possible non-creditworthy responses to each item * Be straightforward to apply and recognise and reward pupils' responses appropriately   Mark schemes must also include comments gathered in internal review meetings and findings from informal trialling. This element replaces the requirement to produce a separate informal trial report. |
| **Item and mark scheme design** | Prior to Interim Handover, items and mark schemes should NOT be presented in InDesign format, with Microsoft Word (or equivalent) being preferred.  From Interim Handover onwards, the items must be designed, using Adobe InDesign (STA use Adobe Creative Cloud or equivalent subject to prior agreement), such that they match as closely as possible the style of the supplied key stage 2 tests in relation to all design elements including font, font size, spacing, diagram style and illustration style. Templates will be provided to all winning bidders at the pre-trialling meeting, and the requirements of the Design Specification. It is not expected that materials used at informal trialling will be produced in design templates when being informally trialled.  Mark schemes should be submitted in Microsoft Word 2010 (or compatible subject to prior agreement) at Interim and Final Handover (see below). All content in mark schemes handed over to STA should be fully editable in Microsoft Word 2010 (or compatible subject to prior agreement) with the exception of any complex artwork or diagrams which should be embedded in the appropriate place in the document. The mark schemes should also match the style and layout of the supplied key stage 2 mark schemes as far as possible. |
| **Artwork, texts and other external materials** | **Written test item texts, artwork or data**  NOTE: Provision of artwork/illustrations is optional. Costings should be provided as appropriate.  All graphics that are fundamental to the questions and mark schemes (e.g. data sources, diagrams, photographs) must be produced and supplied at Final Handover.  Where texts, artwork or data **have been commissioned**, please include the original material, contact details for the creator of the material, and a statement confirming assignment of the intellectual property rights (“IPR”) in the material from the creator to DfE. The formal assignment of the relevant IPR in the commissioned work must be completed by the Final Handover Date.  Where there is a **third party owner** of any materials, it should be referenced as described below.  **Referencing source materials and artwork**  Any materials using externally sourced **texts**, **artwork** or **data** need to be fully referenced; including title, name of copyright owner, name of the author/editor/creator, details of the edition, publisher and page/location of the material within the source. If sourced from the web, a print out of the original website, showing the relevant artwork or data must be included with the handover materials.  Where using texts from a secondary source, e.g. a book or magazine, a copy of the original source material must be purchased and provided to the STA on handover. |
| **Item classification** | The Supplier must accurately classify all items according to the fields on the item classification spreadsheet, and present the item information on the spreadsheet template supplied. An example spreadsheet is provided in Annex B and final version will be provided to successful supplier(s) at or before the start-up meeting. This spreadsheet must be finalised and included with the materials presented at Final Handover (see below). |
| **Quality Assurance (English reading only)** | Accuracy checks must be carried out on all the information texts submitted. This check should be carried out by a researcher / expert in the field of the subject matter.  Readability checks are also required on individual texts. The checks required are:   * Word count * Flesch-Kincaid * New Dale-Chall * New Fog Count * Spache * SMOG   The results of these checks must be reported in writing to STA. In reporting of the readability scores, please detail any dependencies or assumptions made in calculating the scores. Please also include details of the methodology used, and why that method was chosen. |
| **Informal Trialling** | The primary aim of informal trialling is to aid development of mature items and mark scheme development. Suppliers must ensure that as far as possible those individuals, or the key individual, who have devised the items (the Item Writer) conduct trialling personally so they get first hand feedback on the language being used, area being assessed, and the interpretation and understanding of the items by pupils and teachers[[1]](#footnote-1). Whether or not a pupil answers correctly is of secondary concern, rather that they understand what is being asked of them regardless of their answer.  For English reading, 20% of the items associated with each text must be informally trialled with at least 15 children.  Pupils should be of an appropriate age and overall should show the range of abilities expected at the end of key stage 2. The items should be discussed with pupils in small groups of 4-6 pupils.  Suppliers should provide details of the volume of items they will be able to trial with their Item Writers conducting the trialling and any interviews, and provide detail of their trialling model to ensure items and mark schemes are improved or validated as a result of the trial. Suppliers should also provide the following costs:   * Informal trialling – fixed costs   Informal trialling – variable costs based on trialling all texts and 20% of the items written for this contract. There is **no requirement to collect quantitative data** as a result of this trial as the nature of the samples will not be representative. Any feedback from the trial will consist of qualitative data and evidence only.  STA staff may wish to accompany the agency on a small number of visits to schools to observe so dates and locations of schools where trialling is taking place are to be provided to STA at least two weeks in advance of the first trial taking place.  Informal trialling should be completed in order for findings to feed into the interim handover deadlines.  Expected outputs from the trials should be by exception only and should include:   * Child-level feedback from discussion in small groups with the administrator on their experience of the items and their level of understanding * Teacher feedback on the same * Detailed amendments to items and mark schemes as a result of the trials   Qualitative feedback from the informal trial will be presented at the interim handover meeting within the Microsoft Word version of the mark scheme. |
| **Interim Handover** | Interim Handover must occur no later than **week beginning 24 April 2017** (see table in section titled “Project Deliverables/Outputs and Critical Steps” above)**.**  If insufficient items are selected for Final Handover to fulfil the requirements of the work package, the supplier must provide substitute items which have been through the full process including informal trialling.  To provide copies of all materials – including amendments following informal trialling – that are proposed to go forward to final handover. Where final versions are not available, a sketched outline or layout of any proposed illustrations or graphics (if you choose to include artwork) should be provided, or a suitable placeholder graphic.  The following materials must be sent to STA:   * InDesign files (STA use CC 2014 or equivalent subject to prior agreement) of at least 10% of the test items in order for STA to check their compliance with the Design Specification and software compatibility. For this purpose, the files need to be submitted according to the specification and the template (provided at the start-up meetings) but do not need to be the latest or final versions of the files. Remaining items should be supplied in InDesign or MS Word (or compatible) format. * Microsoft Word 2010 (or compatible subject to prior agreement) files for all mark schemes * PDF versions of all items and mark schemes – the PDF of items and mark schemes should be compiled into two files only; one containing all test items/questions and the other containing the mark schemes. * Informal trialling comments integrated into the mark schemes for each item * Item classification spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel 2010 (or compatible), with summary table(s) showing coverage across Attainment targets and levels and any other information as indicated by the supplied template (Annex B) * For the materials being presented, provide a summary table showing coverage across the content and cognitive domains in all subjects and coverage across the assessable elements in English Reading.   As a result of informal trialling, item writing agencies will need to send to STA the following documents prior to the interim handover meeting:   * Three clean hard copies of all the Informal Trialling booklets and mark schemes / coding frames. * A set of materials containing the suggested mark-ups or amendments as a result of the informal trialling and any other items that were not trialled * A report listing the points specified and other feedback obtained during informal trialling.   For English reading, any additional items created under this contract which are intrinsically linked to the selected texts, such as images, should be also be presented at Interim Handover. |
| **Interim Review** | STA will review the materials submitted at Interim Handover. A meeting will be held between STA and the item writers to review those materials and outputs from informal trialling.  Any further changes to materials will be agreed at this meeting. The Supplier will complete these and any other agreed amendments prior to final handover. Where a text is not felt to be of sufficient utility to go forward, an alternative text must be provided with its required number of items for final handover, having been through all of the relevant processes.  Feedback will be provided at the Interim Review meeting on adherence to the Design Specification for those items submitted in InDesign format. As a result of this feedback, the Supplier may be required to provide an additional set of all materials prior to final handover to ensure compliance with the Design Specification. |
| **Final Handover** | Final Handover Meeting must occur no later than **the week commencing 12 June 2017**.  The following materials must be handed over by the Final Handover Meeting:   * **35 hard copies** of the following:   + all texts, combined items and mark schemes   + Classification spreadsheets classifying items in terms of the attainment targets item type of each item, and other information using the template supplied.   + Copyright statement (including all formal documentation for copyright transfer) * Electronic copies of the following:   + A single Adobe InDesign (STA use Adobe Creative Cloud or equivalent subject to prior agreement) file for each individual test item with associated links and files   + Microsoft Word 2010 (or compatible subject to prior agreement) files for the mark schemes   + Individual PDF files for each question and its associated mark scheme (i.e. two files per question).   + A combined PDF of all items and another combined PDF of all mark schemes.   + A reference document that details the sources of any data and artwork/images used in the test items   + All artwork/images used in the test items as unflattened files with all layers intact within the image file where applicable. Please ask for clarification on specific file types which are acceptable   + A copy or copies of the updated classification spreadsheet(s), including a table summarising the number of marks assessing each content domain reference.   + For the materials being presented, provide a summary table showing coverage across the content and cognitive domains in all subjects and coverage across the assessable elements in English Reading. * Assignments and/or licences of IPR in the commissioned and other third party works to be completed by the Final Handover Date – as stated in the PQQ and the Contract, and all documentation relating to IPR. * In addition to the handover of the above materials, the purpose of the Final Handover meeting (which will last at least one full working day) is to discuss the items and the rationale for all amends made. The meeting will be chaired by STA and take place in STA offices in Coventry or London |
| **Acceptance of Final Handover** | Following Final Handover, STA will check the provided materials. If any errors are found, all materials will be returned to the supplier for a full check and for amendments to be carried out. An error free set of materials should be returned to STA no later than two weeks after the Final Handover Date. |

1. **Required Service Elements**

The table below sets out the Service Elements and Deliverables the Supplier shall provide under this Call-Off Contract.

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| **No.** | **Deliverables/Outputs** | **Acceptance Criteria** | **Due Date** |
| 1 | **Start-Up Meeting – FIXED DATE**  Supplier will provide:   * Detailed plan for item and mark scheme production for review and joint sign-off, including proposed dates for any meetings outlines in this specification * Detailed plan for when checkpoints will be held for review and joint sign-off * Detailed project risk and issue log (Risk Log) for review and joint sign-off * Project Initiation Document (PID)   STA will provide:   * Clarification of any item writing requirements * Guidance on criteria to consider when selecting quality texts will be discussed – information is provided in this ITQ | Project Director / Project manager (or equivalent) attend the Start-Up Meeting and provision of listed documents by agreed date. | **17 November 2016** |
| 2 | **Text submission**  Submit 200% of the required texts from which the final texts will be selected for further development and item writing. If sufficient questions of quality cannot be written for a text, then a substitute text will be required at a later stage.  Provide assurance that the texts submitted have the potential to generate sufficient items for coverage of the curriculum and with limited enemies. Texts should be highlighted and annotated to demonstrate which sections provide the potential for questions.  NOTE: Provision of illustrations is optional in this package. Please provide costings as appropriate. If intending to provide illustrations then examples or proposals for illustrations to accompany the text should also be provided.  Proposed texts highlighted and annotated for potential items to be submitted to STA at least one week in advance of the text selection meeting.  Note – for narratives texts, the complete book should be read to ensure that the themes and events are suitable for inclusion in a national test. | Project Director / Project manager (or equivalent) attend the text selection meeting and provide texts and potential questions a week in advance for consideration. | **w/c 16 January 2017** |
| 3 | **Text selection meetings**  Attend meeting to discuss and explain text selection choices and to agree which texts will be taken forward into development.  This guidance should be referred to when explaining the suitability of the materials.  For narrative texts, once these are chosen, after the text selection meeting a copy of the complete book should also be provided to STA.  If there are not sufficient texts that are deemed to be fit for purpose to go forward to item writing stage, the supplier may be asked to identify alternative texts. | Texts of sufficient quality submitted and selected | **w/c 30 January 2017** |
| 4 | **Checkpoint Meetings and Management Information**  To attend regular Checkpoint meetings at least once a month, although they may need to be more frequent at some stages of the project. These meetings may be held as telephone conference calls. Checkpoint reports to be submitted to STA two working days in advance of each Checkpoint meeting. | Project manager (or equivalent) attends each Checkpoint meeting on agreed date and submission of Checkpoint report two working days in advance of each checkpoint meeting. | Timing and frequency to be agreed at start-up meeting |
| 5 | **Item writing, internal review and handover of materials for the pre-trial meeting**  Following text selection, all texts and items should be internally reviewed.  At least 20% of items should be marked up as suggestions for informal trialling.  All items should be written at this stage.  All materials written for the project to be handed to STA in both electronic and hard copy versions.  There is an expectation that the item writing agency (IWA) write more items than needed because of attrition following review and informal trialling. | Sufficient materials submitted to be able to handover the required material at the end of the project and allow for some attrition throughout the process. | One week prior to the pre-trial meeting |
| 6 | **Pre-Trial Meeting**  To agree which items need to be informally trialled and to agree any amendments required to items prior to trialling taking place.  To agree the format and content of the informal trialling report.  The outcome of this meeting will determine the final cost for informal trialling.  This meeting may be via telephone, or face-to-face. Format to be agreed at the start-up meeting.  Design templates and guidance documents will be available no later than this stage. | Project manager (or equivalent) attends meeting on agreed date. | **w/c 6 March 2017** |
| 7 | **Informal Trialling – Critical Step**  Items amended as per pre-trial meetings and agreed items informally trialled with specified number of pupils.  Handover of two hardcopies of all Informal Trialling booklets and mark schemes/coding frames. | Required amendments completed before trialling.  100% of agreed items trialled with specified number of schools and pupils.  STA are notified of trialling locations two weeks before the start of the trial and are consulted re dates of visits to allow dates to be agreed that enable STA staff to attend some visits. | To be agreed at start-up meeting |
| 8 | **Interim Handover – Critical Step**  Provide electronic copies of all draft item and mark schemes, and draft item classification spreadsheet(s). Items and mark schemes to include suggested mark-up or amendments as a result of feedback from informal trialling, and there should be clear evidence of how those amendments are intended to improve item functioning. If items are rejected as a result of trialling, the supplier must ensure that there are alternative, viable questions that have been presented and discussed at the pre-trial meeting. Additional item writing should not be necessary at this stage.  Provide a summary table demonstrating the coverage of the interim handover materials against the number of marks, response types, content and cognitive domains specified. Please also provide text mark ups, mapping the questions to the specific areas of text.  Suppliers must ensure that there are no clones of items or items assessing the same thing, albeit in a different question format in the final handover questions. These types of questions will be counted as one item for the purposes of the final handover package.  Suppliers should minimise the number of enemy questions assessing any one text.  Handover three hardcopies of all Informal Trialling booklets and mark schemes/coding frames.  The Contractor must handover InDesign files (STA use CC 2014 or equivalent subject to prior agreement) of at least 10% of the total marks required at the interim handover stage in order for STA to check that the materials meet the Design Specification (see Annex G). The remaining items to be handed over in InDesign or MS Word (or compatible) format. | 100% of drafts of all materials required for completion of work package(s) received electronically by agreed date and to criteria specified in section 4.5.  All items informally trialled and being considered for Final Handover have received positive feedback from teachers and / or pupils; or are submitted with amendments and supporting evidence from trialling for those amendments. | **w/c 24 April 2017** |
| 9 | **Interim Review meeting**  Meeting with STA and item writers to review materials and outputs from internal review and informal trialling.  Meeting will be used to discuss informal trialling – key messages, problems, discuss the report, resolve issues identified with items and agree any changes to items.  In the report the agency must say why the change is suggested and what evidence there is for the change.  Any further changes to materials will be agreed at this meeting. The Supplier will complete these and any other agreed amendments prior to final handover. | Project Manager / Lead Item Writer attend Interim Review meeting on agreed date. | **w/c 8 May 2017** |
| 10 | **Final Handover – Critical Step**  **Hard Copy Handover** - Supplier to hand over hard copies of the items, mark schemes and item classification grid. Please also provide a mark up for each text, mapping the questions to the specific areas of text being assessed.  A template for the item classification grid is provided at Annex B.  **Electronic Handover** – Supplier to hand over materials using the DfE portal but an encrypted memory stick (provided by STA) containing electronic files of the items and mark schemes, source references, artwork, copyright statement and the item classification grid can be used as a contingency. Assignment / licences of IPR for DfE’s benefit completed.  The handover is to take place in a meeting at STA offices wherever possible. | 100% of specified hard copy materials received at STA by agreed date and materials are of appropriate quality as listed under Performance Requirements.  Receipt of electronic materials specified and attendance at Final Handover meeting on agreed date (“Final Handover Date”) | **w/c 12 June 2017** |
| 11 | **Acceptance of Final Handover materials – Critical Step**  Materials must be handed over as per specification, so that materials match templates as required and all other instructions are followed.  If any errors are found following Final Handover or the materials are not compliant with this specification, all materials will be returned to the supplier for full checking and correction. Final payment will be withheld until this is completed. Fully checked and corrected materials should be returned no later than two weeks after the Final Handover date.  STA will notify Suppliers once all Acceptance Criteria have been met. | 100% of specified of materials with STA no later than two weeks after Final Handover Date. All materials to be error free. | **w/c 26 June 2017** |

1. **Key Milestones**

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| iD | **Description** | **Key Milestone Acceptance Criteria** | **Completion Date** | **Evidence Required** |
| 1 | Interim Handover | 100% of drafts of all materials required for completion of work package 1 received electronically by agreed date and to criteria specified in section 4.5 of the ITQ.  All items informally trialled and being considered for Final Handover have received positive feedback from teachers and / or pupils; or are submitted with amendments and supporting evidence from trialling for those amendments. | w/c 24/04/2017 | Materials delivered on time and to standard. |
| 2 | Final acceptance | 100% of specified of materials with STA no later than two weeks after Final Handover Date. All materials to be error free. | w/c 26/06/2017 | Materials delivered on time and to standard. |
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1. **Key Payment Milestones and Key Payment Milestones Dates**

Payment will follow the completion of the Key Milestones listed at section 4. Key Payment Milestones are:

[Redacted]

1. **Contract Management Arrangements**

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| The Supplier shall be fully engaged on an on-going basis in regular Contract Management Reviews relating to this Call-Off Contract and the overarching Framework Agreement. These reviews provide an opportunity for the Department and the Supplier to discuss the end-to-end delivery of the Services which shall include but not be limited to:   * planning; * progress; * risk management; * issue management; * continuous improvement; * proposed changes; * lessons learnt; * exit management.   Reviews will be carried out with Senior Management on a six month basis where the Department and the Supplier will meet to discuss Supplier performance, lessons learnt, continuous improvement, value for money, exit management and any other issues considered relevant by the Department. |

1. **Supporting documentation**

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| The 2020 Key Stage 1 and 2 English Reading ITQ document sets out the full specification of requirements including the project deliverables, functional requirements and performance requirements. The original English Reading ITQ and the supplier’s response are appended to this contract document.  [Redacted] |

**In witness** whereof this Call-Off Contract has been duly executed.

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| Signed for and on behalf of the Department for Education: |
| Name and Title: |
| Date: |

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| Signed for and on behalf of the Supplier: |
| Name and Title: |
| Date: |

1. People trialling items must have prior knowledge, preferably through integral involvement in origination, but minimally through having reviewed and discussed the materials with the Item Writers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)