



## CONTENTS

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



## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) invites tenders to evaluate the Supported Housing Oversight Pilots which aim to improve quality, oversight and value for money in short-term supported housing.
- 1.2 The project will analyse quantitative data provided by the 5 pilot local authority areas (Birmingham, Blackpool, Bristol, Blackburn and Hull) to capture the impact of the pilots.
- 1.3 Alongside this, qualitative interviews will be conducted with local authorities to identify successes and challenges in delivering the pilots; lessons learned; and best practice for each area.
- 1.4 The Supplier will feed provide early findings and learnings to the Authority throughout the project through a drip feed approach and will also produce a final report capturing:
  - 1.4.1 Analysis and assessment of the impact of each pilot area's activity
  - 1.4.2 The effectiveness of approaches to LA data collection and best practice by reviewing pilot authorities Needs and Supply Assessments.
  - 1.4.3 Lessons learned and best practice from the pilots
  - 1.4.4 Recommendations on the models / activities to test further, with considerations for any wider roll out, including identifying any gaps remaining in our knowledge.
- 1.5 The final report and information gathered will be used to feed into a central policy steering group. The evaluation will feed into future policy thinking on approaches to regulation or enhanced oversight of the sector and data collection, including options for testing certain models further.

## **2. BACKGROUND TO THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY**

- 2.1 Supported housing is housing provided alongside care, support or supervision to help people with support needs live as independently as possible in the community. Sufficient supply of good quality supported housing is critical to reducing rough sleeping, homelessness and reducing pressure on adult social care.
- 2.2 Whilst the majority of the sector provides good quality accommodation, the rising issue of poor-quality supported housing is a significant concern for MHCLG. Sub-standard accommodation and insufficient support deliver negative outcomes for individuals as well as poor value for money (vfm) to the taxpayer.
- 2.3 Over the last decade, changes to the funding landscape for support services and a reduction in local authority oversight of supported housing, has diversified the sector, bringing in new types and models of provider.
- 2.4 In August 2018, alongside an announcement on maintaining supported housing costs within Housing Benefit, the Government committed to introduce oversight measures to improve quality and value for money within supported



housing. Since this point, MHCLG has been working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the sector and local government to develop oversight measures.

- 2.5 Through our engagement with the sector, local authorities (LAs) have raised concerns with the quality and vfm of a specific small sub-group of supported housing providers. Typically, these providers do not deliver commissioned services on behalf of the local authority (are 'non-commissioned' providers); provide housing in the short-term sector for vulnerable individuals, for example those at risk of rough sleeping.
- 2.6 This engagement has revealed that some Local Authorities (LAs) are taking positive action in response. However, this work is ad hoc and has mixed success, and we understand many LAs lack the resources or knowledge to deal with the problems successfully. MHCLG developed a proposal to test approaches to investigating issues and enforcing good quality, and to capture knowledge and best practice from LAs.
- 2.7 In September, MHCLG invited five LAs to submit funding proposals to participate in pilot work to address issues of quality and value for money within this specific part of the non-commissioned supported housing sector, and to test approaches to improving quality and oversight. We selected these LAs based on the scale and severity of their local quality issues, previous LA action to address them, and proactive engagement with MHCLG and DWP.
- 2.8 On 19 October we announced £3,139,092 to go to 5 pilot areas (Birmingham, Hull, Bristol, Blackburn and Blackpool following a rigorous assessment and moderation process. The pilots will run for six months (ending 31 March 2021).
- 2.9 The pilot authorities will be expected to deliver against three key activities:
  - a. Enforcement activity, through a multi-disciplinary team, to improve quality of accommodation (including Housing Benefit scrutiny)
  - b. A review and assessment of care and support provided
  - c. A comprehensive local need and supply assessment.

### **3. BACKGROUND TO REQUIREMENT / OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENT**

- 3.1 The pilots will enable us to take immediate action where quality problems are most acute, through frontline enforcement and scrutiny activity. They will also enable us to test approaches to inform the case for, and possible shape of, any future regulatory change without creating any risk to supply. Unless carefully targeted, taking immediate action risks undermining more good providers than bad, with knock-on consequences such as increased rough sleeping numbers. Evaluating the impact of targeted action will be critical to making recommendations on further testing or roll out.
- 3.2 The pilots are part of a joint programme of work with DWP to improve oversight of supported housing. They have five strategic objectives:



1. Improving the quality of accommodation in short-term supported housing in the five areas;
  2. Improving value for money in supported housing and in particular ensuring better oversight of Housing Benefit claims;
  3. Testing the effectiveness of LA interventions to drive up quality and improve value for money that could be more widely adopted;
  4. Testing whether existing LA enforcement powers are sufficient to address poor quality, and understanding barriers to enforcement;
  5. Testing approaches to data collection and approaches for ensuring a better picture of local supply (what provision exists in each area) and local demand.
- 3.3 As these are pilots, they will be subject to thorough monitoring and evaluation to inform future policy. Evaluating the pilots will be essential to ensure that the allocated funding informs future policy and represents value for money by increasing efficiencies and for example, potentially reducing Housing Benefit spend.
- 3.4 The external evaluation will assess the impact of the different interventions, provide a robust evidence base to inform immediate policy thinking and inform decisions on rolling out tested interventions more widely.
- 3.5 Thorough evaluation of the pilots we will aim to:
- 3.5.1 Understand the effectiveness of interventions tested in the five LAs, and determine which has had the greatest impact
  - 3.5.2 Determine whether existing powers are sufficient to address poor quality or whether more stringent enforcement powers are needed
  - 3.5.3 Reveal the effectiveness of different methods of data collection, and determine which was the most successful
  - 3.5.4 Gather lessons learned from each LA's activity and set out recommendations for best practice that could be shared more widely

## 4. DEFINITIONS

Expression or Acronym	Definition
MHCLG	means the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Also referred to as the Department or the Authority.
DWP	means the Department for Work and Pensions
Supported Housing	means housing provided alongside care, support or supervision to help people with support needs live as independently as possible in the community.
Pilot authorities	Local authorities involved in the Supported Housing Oversight Pilots (individually identified as Birmingham, Blackpool, Bristol, Blackburn and Hull)



LA	Local Authority
----	-----------------

## 5. SCOPE OF REQUIREMENT

- 5.1 The Supplier will produce a final report based on evidence collected over the project period. The report will include conclusions drawn from both quantitative and qualitative data, capturing the impacts of local authority activity and gathering lessons learned. Case studies and clear recommendations should also be included.
- 5.2 The Supplier will be responsible for analysing quantitative data, collected and provided by the pilot authorities, to deliver quantitative conclusions, such as the extent to which quality of accommodation and support has improved, and any impact on Housing Benefit claims. Suppliers will also collect and analyse any other supporting data and evidence they deem appropriate to further inform their assessment.
- 5.3 Through undertaking interviews and developing case studies, the Supplier will also gather qualitative evidence to support conclusions and to further develop the proposed outcomes of the interventions put in place by pilot authorities.
- 5.4 The Supplier will establish facilities for face to face or video conference call meetings with MHCLG on a monthly basis. As well as other stakeholder groups as required to deliver updates and agree elements with MHCLG, and as required to deliver the project objectives.
- 5.5 The Supplier will also have an awareness of the wider Supported Housing sector to support in understanding how the approaches adopted as part of the pilots may be scaled up to address quality, oversight and value for money across the country.
- 5.6 Pilot authorities will also be undertaking their own evaluations to understand the effectiveness of their approaches and interventions at a local level. The Supplier will need to work closely with pilot authorities to understand their local evaluations to further inform this project, with an overarching and strategic focus.

## 6. THE REQUIREMENT

- 6.1 Tenderers are invited to submit their proposals for suitable research outputs linked to their preferred research design, incorporating how the following will be delivered.
- 6.2 The Supplier will need review delivery of the key strategic objectives to draw conclusions and recommendations on the outputs and outcomes of the approaches taken by pilot authorities that can be used to inform future policy decisions:

### 1. Improved quality of accommodation & Effectiveness of LA enforcement

Pilot authorities will collect (every two months):

- Number of properties inspected



- Number of Category 1 and Significant Category 2 hazards identified (including where removed or action is ongoing).
- Number and types of actions taken to improve conditions
- Number of complaints received
- Properties brought up to the Decent Homes Standard
- Number of landlord trainings completed [where relevant]

## **2. Improved quality of support & Effectiveness of LA enforcement**

- Number of complaints received
- Number of safeguarding concerns received
- Number of tenant support reviews completed
- Number and type of action taken to providers requiring improvements in tenant support
- Number of exempt status' revoked due to insufficient support or status' under review following inspection
- Tenants moved to alternative accommodation or other support plans due to insufficient support

6.3 The Supplier will review this quantitative data once collected to draw conclusions on whether the quality of accommodation itself has improved, as well as whether there are indications - based on action taken as a proxy - that the support within the five pilot areas has improved as a result of the oversight and interventions put in place.

6.4 The Supplier will also look at the effectiveness of LA interventions and whether existing LA enforcement powers are sufficient. The Supplier will also be expected to collect pilot authority views on sufficiency of existing local powers to address quality issues – including barriers to using powers – to conclude on whether current enforcement powers are sufficient and where there are areas that should be considered for further reform.

6.5 To further support this, the Supplier will work with LAs to develop case studies on individual cases where action has been taken or considered. These case studies should draw out themes identified through qualitative interviews, highlighting the benefits and limitations of existing regulations. Case studies to demonstrate the successes and challenges in deploying enforcement powers will be beneficial.

## **3. Improved value for money**

Pilot authorities will collect (every two months):

- Number of Supported Housing exempt properties claiming housing benefit
- Number of Housing Benefit claims assessed
- Housing benefit awarded (in total and average)
- Number of attempts to limit Housing Benefit awards
- Number of new housing benefit claims





- 6.6 The supplier will review this data to draw conclusions on whether value for money improved within the 5 pilot areas by looking at the average Housing Benefit award for the type of housing the pilots are focusing on.
- 6.7 In addition, the Supplier will undertake interviews with the pilot authorities to identify the barriers / enablers to authorities scrutinising Housing Benefit claims, including identifying potential gaps in knowledge, experience, confidence or unclear guidance - making recommendations about future areas that should be considered for reform.
- 6.8 Through the interviews with pilot authorities, the Supplier will capture success / challenges and lessons learned. They will also collect data on the number of new providers/schemes that have been set up in the area during the time period in order to proxy the deterrent effect on new providers in areas where there is an oversupply.

#### **4. Testing approaches to data collection and ensuring improved picture of local need**

Pilot authorities will need to complete:

- A local needs assessment – identifying and understanding the needs of those who need to access supported housing across the locality.
  - An assessment of supply – identifying the level of supported housing currently available within the locality (both commissioned and non-commissioned), including the differing types to understand whether there are any gaps.
- 6.9 The supplier will need to review the pilot authorities' approach to data collection, highlighting any successes and challenges in delivery. This will include reviewing the ease of which pilot authorities were able to conduct these assessments, the resource used and the system developed.
- 6.10 It is expected that the supplier will set out their proposed approach to achieving these objectives, identifying key tasks involved in each.
- 6.11 The supplier will be expected to produce:
- 6.11.1 A proposed methodology report including the planned approach to undertaking interviews and collecting case studies
  - 6.11.2 A final report summarising findings with clear recommendations
- 6.12 The Supplier will also be required to provide ad-hoc advice as requested by the Authority. They will be expected to present their findings to the central policy Steering Group at the conclusion of the evaluation.

## **7. KEY MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES**

- 7.1 The Supplier will provide and present to MHCLG the following specific deliverables:
- 7.1.1 A proposed draft methodology consisting of a report (electronic and hard copy where appropriate) detailing the scope of the project, methodology, key deliverables and any preconceived risks.



- 7.1.2 Interim midpoint progress report (electronic and hard copy where appropriate) detailing interim assumptions intended to shape the final report. The report should also include indications of next steps the Supplier will be taking and any risks to the project highlighted.
- 7.1.3 A final report (electronic and hard copy where appropriate) including all results / findings throughout the project, case studies, detailed assumptions intended to underpin analysis along with any other issues identified.
- 7.2 All reports (draft and final) should include a front cover and QA sheet including: the report title, the MHCLG and supplier reference numbers, the milestone identifier, the version number, the date, and checking/approving signatures. The front should be marked as a draft until an approved final version is requested by MHCLG. The front cover may be removed and replaced when reports are prepared for publication by MHCLG.
- 7.3 Final reports will be published on the GOV.UK website after review and quality assurance.
- 7.4 The following Contract milestones/deliverables shall apply:

Milestone / Deliverable	Description	Timeframe or Delivery Date
1	Commencement date: Start Date	Within week 1 of Contract Award
2	Methodology agreed	Within 1 – 2 weeks of start date
3	Collection / collation of pilot authorities' baseline data	Within 2 weeks of start date
4	Progress meetings with MHCLG	Monthly
5	'Before' interviews with pilot authorities to support evaluation of strategic objectives 1 & 2 (requirements set out under section 6)	Within 4 weeks of start date
6	Progress report	At midpoint of contract period
7	Skeleton report	No later than 01 March 2021
8	<b>Contract Break option review</b>	<b>31/03/2021</b>
9	'After' interviews with pilot authorities to support evaluation of strategic objectives 1 & 2 (requirements set out under section 6)	No later than 15/04/2021
10	Draft report provided	No later than 01/05/2021





11	Final Report provided	No later than 31/05/2021
12	Contract Completion	No later than 31/05/2021

- 7.5 MHCLG expects the supplier to determine their own approach and methodology to deliver these requirements.

## **8. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION / REPORTING**

- 8.1 The supplier must provide a midpoint progress report to MHCLG to ensure evaluation remains on track. A final report must be provided by no later than 30 May 2021.
- 8.2 The supplier must provide a single point of contact for day-to-day enquiries, with a nominated deputy to act in their absence.
- 8.3 A detailed escalation procedure must be outlined, with named individuals outlined on an organogram provided by the supplier.

## **9. VOLUMES**

- 9.1 The maximum budget for this work is £100,000 excl VAT.
- 9.2 As the project spans 2 financial years a 'contract break option' will be included into the contract, at the end of March 2021, to take account of the internal processes the Authority will need to undertake.
- 9.3 If any additional work of a similar scope arises, during or after the initial term, and the Authority requires the Supplier to undertake this further work, then this will be commissioned on the basis of the day rate(s) within the Supplier's price response in Attachment 4 – Price Schedule.

## **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 Authority during monthly check in meetings.
- 10.3 Changes to the way in which the Services are to be delivered must be brought to the Authority's attention and agreed prior to any changes being implemented.

## **11. SUSTAINABILITY**

- 11.1 N/A

## **12. QUALITY**

- 12.1 The supplier should operate under an appropriate quality management system, such as ISO (9000 series) or equivalent.



- 12.2 The supplier should adhere to Government Social Research standards, and adhere to the principles in the GSR guidance on research ethics (see [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/515296/ethics\\_guidance\\_tcm6-5782.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/515296/ethics_guidance_tcm6-5782.pdf))
- 12.3 The final research report should conform to the MHCLG publication template, and should be made available in an accessible format.

### 13. PRICE

- 13.1 The total price for this Contract is expected to be a maximum of £100,000 (excl. VAT) and be completed within 6 months of commencement.
- 13.2 Prices are to be submitted via completing Attachment 4 – Price Schedule excluding VAT and including all other expenses relating to Contract delivery.

### 14. STAFF AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

- 14.1 The Supplier shall provide a sufficient level of resource throughout the duration of the Contract in order to consistently deliver a quality service.
- 14.2 Relevant qualifications and experience [of staff assigned to the Contract by the Supplier] in working with local authorities, vulnerable people and supported housing is desirable in delivering the Contract to the desired standard.
- 14.3 The Supplier shall ensure that staff understand the Authority's objectives and will provide excellent customer service to the Authority throughout the duration of the Contract.

### 15. SERVICE LEVELS AND PERFORMANCE

- 15.1 The Authority will measure the quality of the Supplier's delivery by assessing each task, including meeting target dates, appropriateness of methodology, completeness of information and readability of reports.

KPI / SLA	Service Area	KPI/SLA description	Target
1	Delivery Timescales	Completion of Milestones to agreed timeframe	100%
2	Delivery of progress report	Completion of midpoint progress report, including early indications from data collected	One progress report delivered within agreed deadlines – format to be agreed with the Authority



3	Development of Methodology (inc. report)	Proposal and agreement of appropriate methodology	To be agreed with the Authority
4	Delivery of Final report	Completion of report to agreed standard as set out in the contract	Format to be agreed with the Authority

- 15.2 The supplier will be required to report regularly on progress toward achievement of targets. The supplier will need to explain how they will collect and record this information to maintain a fully evidenced audit trail. It should be noted that if a supplier fails to deliver contracted outputs, a performance review may apply which could lead to early termination of the contract.

## 16. SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS

- 16.1 There are no requirements for employees of the Supplier to have any level of security clearance.
- 16.2 The Supplier will be provided with contact details for the pilot authorities and will need to ensure this information is stored securely.
- 16.3 We do not expect personal data to be collected for this project. The Supplier will need to ensure that, in the event that personal data is recorded, any personal or identifiable information from pilot authorities' officers and / or tenants are stored correctly and not included in either progress or final reports.
- 16.4 **REDACTED.**

## 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 **REDACTED.**
- 17.3 Payment of invoices follows a process of checking and approval; milestone payments are subject to agreement with the Contract Manager.

## 18. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

- 18.1 The Authority will assign a Contract Manager for this project who will act as the formal point of contact between MHCLG and the Supplier.
- 18.2 The following will be agreed with the Contract Manager:
- 18.2.1 How progress will be fed back to MHCLG (including the frequency of face to face or video conference/telephone progress meetings with the Suppliers).
  - 18.2.2 The approach taken to collect qualitative data from local authorities.



- 18.3 Where outputs will be required and cleared by MHCLG, it will be important that the supplier is able to take into consideration the time for MHCLG to clear these outputs.
- 18.4 All data and supporting information used in draft or any interim reports and the final report will be provided to MHCLG in an electronic format at the end of the contract.

## **19. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 19.1 The requirement can be undertaken by a single firm or a consortium.
- 19.2 In case of a consortium, the Authority will enter into a contract with the lead contractor and all formal contracts between the Authority and members of the consortium should be made through the lead contractor. The lead contractor will be expected to enter into Service Level Agreements (SLA) with consortium members.

## **20. LOCATION**

- 20.1 The location of the Services will be carried out primarily at the Supplier's premises with potential visits to MHCLG offices (currently 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF) and fund recipients' locations if required and only where appropriate.
- 20.2 However we expect that all meetings and activity will be carried out virtually due to Covid-19 and the resulting restrictions.