

## DPS FRAMEWORK SCHEDULE 4: LETTER OF APPOINTMENT AND CONTRACT TERMS

### Part 1: Letter of Appointment

Dear Sirs

#### Letter of Appointment

This letter of Appointment dated Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020, is issued in accordance with the provisions of the DPS Agreement (RM6018) between CCS and the Supplier.

Capitalised terms and expressions used in this letter have the same meanings as in the Contract Terms unless the context otherwise requires.

Order Number:	CR20115
From:	The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET
To:	IFF Research Ltd, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor, St Magnus House, 3 Lower Thames Street, London EC3R 6HD ("Supplier")

Effective Date:	Tuesday, 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2020
Expiry Date:	Wednesday, 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021

Services required:	Set out in Section 2, Part B (Specification) of the DPS Agreement and refined by: the Customer's Project Specification attached at Appendix A and the Supplier's Proposal attached at Appendix B of this letter of appointment;
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Key Individuals:	 ██ ██ ██
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Contract Charges (including any applicable discount(s), but excluding VAT):	As per AW5.2 Price Schedule response highlighted within the RM6018 Contract Terms, section; Annex 1 – Contract Charges. The total value of this contract shall not exceed £94,087.79 excluding VAT.
Insurance Requirements	<p>Additional public liability insurance to cover all risks in the performance of the Contract, with a minimum limit of £5 million for each individual claim</p> <p>Additional employers' liability insurance with a minimum limit of £5 million indemnity</p> <p>Additional professional indemnity insurance adequate to cover all risks in the performance of the Contract with a minimum limit of indemnity of £2 million for each individual claim.</p> <p>Product liability insurance cover all risks in the provision of Deliverables under the Contract, with a minimum limit of £5 million for each individual claim</p>
Liability Requirements	<b>Suppliers limitation of Liability</b> (Clause 18 of the Contract Terms);
Customer billing address for invoicing:	All invoices should be sent to should be sent to [REDACTED] or Billingham (UKSBS, Queensway House, West Precinct, Billingham, TS23 2NF).

**FORMATION OF CONTRACT**

**BY SIGNING AND RETURNING THIS LETTER OF APPOINTMENT (which may be done by electronic means) the Supplier agrees to enter a Contract with the Customer to provide the Services in accordance with the terms of this letter and the Contract Terms.**

**The Parties hereby acknowledge and agree that they have read this letter and the Contract Terms.**

**The Parties hereby acknowledge and agree that this Contract shall be formed when the Customer acknowledges (which may be done by electronic means) the receipt of the signed copy of this letter from the Supplier within two (2) Working Days from such receipt**

**For and on behalf of the Supplier:**

**For and on behalf of the Customer:**

Name and Title:

[REDACTED]

Name and Title:

[REDACTED]

Signature:

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Date: 24/11/2020

Signature:

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Date:

## APPENDIX A

### Customer Project Specification

#### 1. Background

##### **Introduction to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and demonstrator**

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) is part of a portfolio of investments being made by BEIS to upgrade the energy efficiency of the UK's housing stock as a key part of our transition to Net Zero. This includes the £1.5bn Green Homes Grant Scheme, which social housing landlords are also eligible to apply for and the £50m Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator project<sup>1</sup>.

The Conservative party manifesto included a commitment to a £3.8bn social housing decarbonisation fund (SHDF) over ten years. At the summer economic update, the Chancellor announced the £50m SHDF demonstrator focussed on delivering cost reduction in a whole house retrofit approach (due to deliver by December 2021). This demonstrator programme will support social landlords to demonstrate innovative approaches to retrofitting social housing at scale. It is an initial investment to learn lessons and catalyse innovation in retrofitting for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The demonstrator fund combined with the SHDF main fund make up the manifesto commitment.

The main fund will focus on delivering energy efficiency improvements to ensure that over half of the social housing stock that is currently below EPC C is brought up to that standard. It will deliver transformational change in the social housing sector, by upgrading around 1 million homes, saving on average £160 per home treated per year in 2030. It will mean warmer and more energy efficient social housing, a reduction in households' energy bills, and lower carbon emissions.

To help deliver the fund BEIS will explore contracting a delivery partner to run a technical assistance facility (TAF) to support social landlords in accessing funding and developing energy performance improvement plans. To maximise value for money and minimise disruption to tenants we would like to see social landlords build in retrofit works around their long-term maintenance plans. This will ensure that more expensive and effective fabric measures are tackled efficiently and that tenants are less likely to have a negative experience of retrofit.

There are 1400 social housing landlords in the UK. All of which are eligible for the SHDF main fund. Social housing landlords can be local authorities, companies or charities.

##### **Background to Retrofit in Social Housing**

With 44% of social rented homes below EPC C and only gradual improvements over recent years there is a clear market failure. Approximately 9% of households in the social housing sector are in fuel poverty, which jumps to 19% in properties below a Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER)<sup>2</sup> Band C compared to just 2% in those at FPEER Band C or above. Overall social housing houses the most vulnerable in society, with its tenants most likely to report that they struggle to meet their fuel costs, compared to other groups<sup>3</sup>.

While social landlords (and their tenants) want to improve the energy performance of their homes, due to wider pressures on the sector (e.g. rent reductions, fire safety and structural remedial works, housing supply), they are unable to invest significantly in energy performance upgrades. Whilst

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-housing-decarbonisation-fund-demonstrator/socialhousing-decarbonisation-fund-demonstrator-programme-overview>

<sup>2</sup> FPEER is similar to EPC, but includes the Warm Home Discount when calculating the cost of energy for the household

<sup>3</sup> Annual [Fuel Poverty Statistics Report](#), 2020 (2018 Data)

social landlords do include some energy efficiency within existing maintenance and renovation programmes (e.g. double glazing or boiler replacement), multi-measure approaches, and

installation of more expensive measures (e.g. wall / floor insulation, low carbon heat), typically occur only where external third-party funding (e.g. supplier obligation, grant funding) is available. This is because social landlords are also required to build new housing, and borrow to do this, giving them limited options to fund retrofit beyond standard maintenance, especially where social rents have been reduced in line with government commitments.

### **Introduction to this research**

This research project will inform how best to set up the TAF that will enable social landlords to make the most of the fund as well as contributing to meeting some of the UK's legally binding environmental and fuel poverty targets and be an important step on the path to net-zero carbon by 2050. It also has the potential to enrich the understanding of barriers and enablers to retrofit with tenants in the private housing sector.

This project is part of a portfolio of research that explores attitudes to retrofit amongst the general public. In social housing in particular:

- BEIS commissioned a report in 2018 on the barriers to retrofit in social housing<sup>4</sup> (however this only considered thermal retrofit),
- In 2015 Greater London Authority's RE:NEW project surveyed social landlords plans for retrofit and also asked about organisational buy-in and how this affected retrofit works<sup>5</sup>.
- BEIS have launched five technical assistance pilots in local energy hubs across England with the aim of learning what form of technical assistance social landlords will require from a technical assistance facility. These pilots will work with social landlords that are engaged with retrofit.
- the National Housing Federation (NHF) has conducted a survey of members to learn about their attitudes on decarbonisation<sup>6</sup>.

## **2. Aims and Objectives of the Project**

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<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/barriers-to-retrofit-in-social-housing](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/barriers-to-retrofit-in-social-housing)

<sup>5</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla\\_20pp\\_national\\_report\\_on\\_domestic\\_retrofit\\_2710\\_final.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_20pp_national_report_on_domestic_retrofit_2710_final.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [www.housing.org.uk/our-work/climate-and-sustainability/](http://www.housing.org.uk/our-work/climate-and-sustainability/)

To better design the fund criteria and the role of the technical assistance facility we need to understand:

- 1) Social landlords' attitudes to retrofit and how this ties in to their regular maintenance schedules
- 2) How decisions on retrofit projects are made within local authorities and housing associations. There are large differences between social landlords' knowledge of energy efficiency and the quality of their stock. Thus, we need to understand what support different groups will require in order to access SHDF funding and drive greater ambition in building decarbonisation.

The results of this work will feed into policy development of the SHDF main fund (currently at strategic business case). During the project's lifetime, the evidence and insights gathered will be used to inform the strategic business case for the fund, including on scheme design, delivery options, viability and risks. This process will run parallel to the research until March 2021. We expect this research to be completed before the SHDF main fund outline business case where we will seek permission to procure a delivery partner. Beyond the lifetime of this research project, the insights and evidence gathered will aid us design the procurement specification for a TAF delivery partner and to score applications, a process due to culminate in December 2021. This research, along with other relevant information, will then be shared with the successful TAF delivery partner to improve the technical assistance they will offer to social landlords.

Knowledge of the level of ambition of social landlords for energy efficiency improvements, and the challenge of net zero will help shape the fund criteria to better deliver against our fuel poverty targets and carbon budgets.

**1. What is the current state of the social housing stock (building on available MHCLG demographics)?**

- Demographics to include age, stock condition, EPC rating etc.
- Which measures are already installed in homes?
- How many homes are due to be demolished?

**2. How do social housing landlords engage tenants with Social Housing retrofit?**

- In which circumstances do tenants refuse maintenance/how often does this happen?
- What factors encourage tenants to accept maintenance?
- Are there particular technologies/types of maintenance that are more appealing to tenants?
- Is there an order of events or maintenance schedule that is more likely to ensure tenant agreement?

**3. How many social housing blocks are mixed tenure (also containing privately owned or rented properties)?**

- What will be the impact of energy efficiency improvement if these houses are left untreated?
- What would increase the likelihood of non-social housing properties in mixed tenure blocks participating in renovations? Would green finance help with these issues?

**4. How are social landlords likely to react to the scheme?**

- What is the social landlord decision-making process on property maintenance and improvement?
- How much do landlords currently spend on property improvements?
- How do social landlords plan and implement improvements to their properties? • Which supply chains do social landlords use to make improvements to their properties?
- What level of retrofit are social landlords likely to use the fund for (i.e. smaller measures or Whole House Retrofit)?
- Does the level of prominence given to climate change in the LA affect social landlord decision making? For example, do those landlords who are in a LA which has declared a climate emergency have different attitudes to retrofit/the proposed fund?
- For all of the above, do landlords differ by size/type?

**5. What is the best way to deliver the fund?**

- What are landlords' view on the different approaches available to administer the fund?

**3. Suggested Methodology**

A mixed methods approach will be required to gain insight to the attitudes of social landlords, as well as organisational approaches to retrofit.

**Qualitative Interviews:**

The first stage of primary research will comprise of approximately 40 in-depth interviews with social landlords. The interviews will likely be telephone or video conference interviews due to necessary social distancing measures to ensure safety of both the interviewer and participant. The interviews would last 30-45 minutes. This method would allow us to find in depth and detailed information, not just about the landlords themselves, the complexity of their decision making process around retrofitting of their homes, their experiences of maintaining properties, and relationships with tenants, but also their reactions to a social housing fund.

### **Quantitative Survey:**

The quantitative survey will be followed by a telephone survey with social landlords in order to gather information on how they undertake maintenance work, their spending habits, attitudes towards energy efficiency and their properties. The aim is to approach as many of the 1400 registered social landlords as possible (see sampling strategy below). The surveys should be approximately 20 minutes long. Although telephone interviews would be preferable due to generating better response rates, we welcome bids proposing alternative survey methodologies (such as online). The survey would be designed utilising the findings from the initial qualitative interviews, allowing us to tailor the questions in such a way that we will get the maximum utility from the answers. This survey will be used to gain a representative understanding of the actions and opinions of landlords, in order to best understand what means would be most effective at encouraging them to make energy efficient improvements to their properties.

### **Sampling:**

#### Quantitative:

The quantitative aspect of this work aims to engage with as many of the 1400 Social Housing Landlords as possible. We recognise that contacting all 1400 is not possible and therefore we suggest that between 600 and 800 is appropriate for the research's aims. BEIS does not hold the contact details of the Social Housing Landlords. The Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) has informally agreed to provide us with the contact details of social housing landlords (email address and telephone number), on an opt-out basis. This will allow the successful bidder to create a sample for both the qualitative and quantitative piece. We would like the sample to be as representative as possible, whilst recognising that a few very large landlords own 95% of the housing stock in this sector. Thus, a sample is likely to require a mix of random probability sampling and purposive sampling. Key characteristics might be: number of properties, organisation structure (entity/group), location, stock quality and transfer model. This is not an exhaustive list. The successful bidder will need to form a data sharing agreement with the RSH for the transfer of landlord's contact details and bids must set out how compliance with GDPR will be adhered to.

Whilst the RSH is our preferred sampling approach, should data sharing turn out not to be a viable option a sample could be created using the Inter-departmental business register (IDBR) in which the successful bidder would agree a micro-data release panel with the ONS to receive access to the relevant cut of this data. A matching service, such as Dun and Bradstreet, would need to be used to get up to date contact details.

#### Qualitative:

Depending on timelines, the qualitative component with landlords could be sampled from the contact details provided by the RSH. Alternatively, there is the possibility of approaching housing associations and asking them to put forward social landlords known to them that may be willing to participate. Successful bidders should comment on the advantages and disadvantages of each approach and if they deem it beneficial, suggest alternatives.

Both samples will exclude social housing landlords who have been recruited to take part in the Social Housing Demonstrator project to avoid research burden. We will need to know what

proportion of the sample applied for the demonstrator project and were unsuccessful as they are likely to be different from the general population. However, this only relates to a small number of landlords (under 20) and will not have a detrimental effect on the research.

**Ethical considerations:**

Proposals are required to indicate the steps that will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants and interviewers, as well approaches to address any further ethical issues they identify as relevant to this project. This should include GDPR and data protection considerations.

**4. Deliverables**

**Research Materials including cognitive testing report (November/December 2021):**

All topic guides and draft surveys should be provided to BEIS for review, prior to being used. BEIS and other stakeholders, such as RSH, should be provided opportunity to comment. Results of cognitive testing of the telephone survey should also be shared.

**Interim findings presentation (mid-January 2021):**

An interim findings presentation should be delivered, and slide pack provided, that summarises the key findings from the Qualitative Research. This will need to feed in to the first phase of the technical assistance facility which will be scoped in December/January to aim to be running early in the 21/22 FY.

**Anonymised dataset of survey results (February 2021):**

A clean (and quality assured) dataset containing coded survey results should be provided to BEIS upon completion of the quantitative telephone survey component. This must be provided in .xlsx format. Other formats may be appropriate however the successful bidder would need to discuss and agree this with BEIS.

**Final Report (March 2021):**

A final report summarising the key findings of the quantitative and qualitative research. This should include a recommendations section, for BEIS to consider, that translates the findings into their implications for the TAF. The report must be concise, focussed and accessible to a non-technical audience. The report will be published and therefore it must meet the standards for publication within Government Social Research and meet the accessibility guidelines for publishing on gov.uk<sup>7</sup>. We would expect to comment on two drafts of the report before the final version.

All bids must state the quality assurance processes that will be applied to different activities and outputs. Where necessary and deliverables that provide evidence of QA should be specified. Bids will benefit where they can propose peer review at key stages of the research.

Additionally, all bids must include a summary of their project management approach (including inception), proposed frequency of project management meetings and how progress will be reported to BEIS. Close working with BEIS should be expected as the first iterations of the Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) will be designed simultaneously to this research project and therefore for this research to be impactful the contractor will need to take a proactive approach to knowledge translation and transfer. Bids should include thoughts on how this approach might be undertaken.

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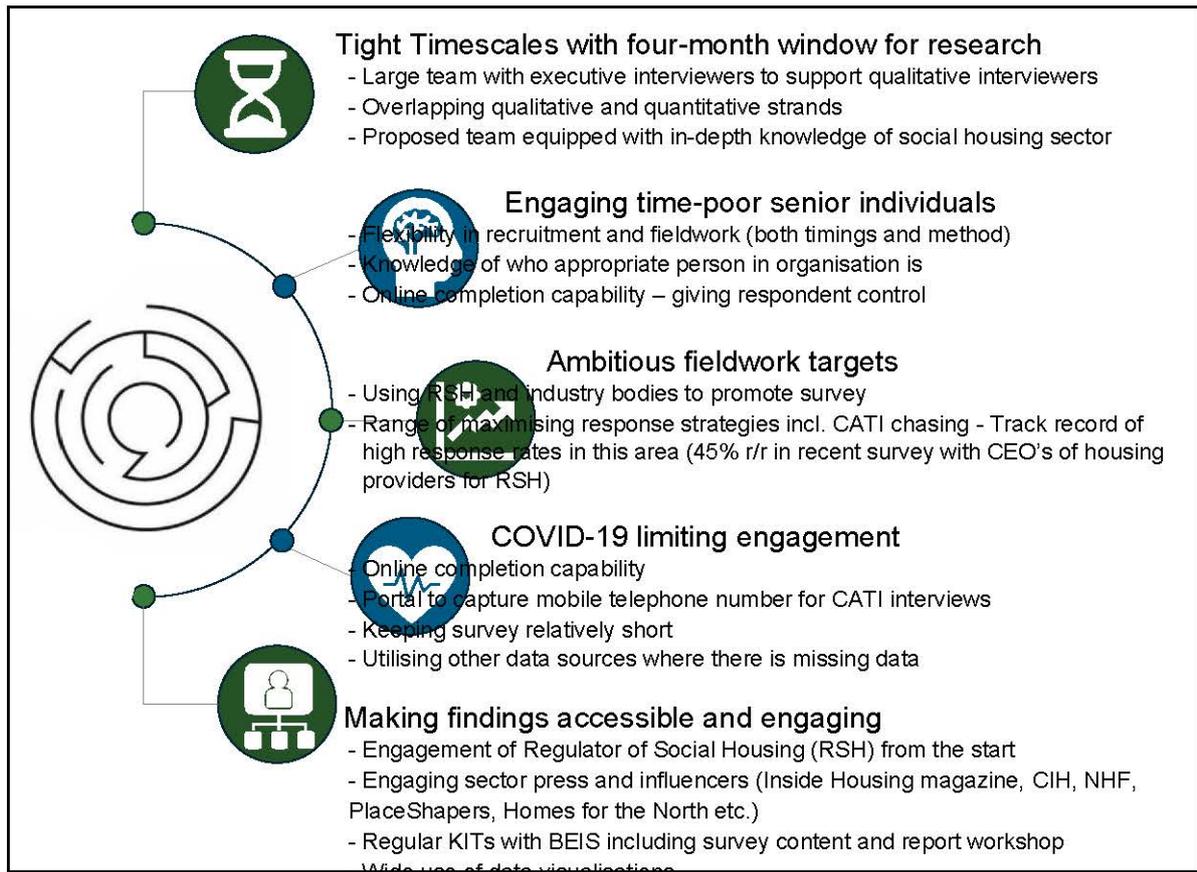
<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/style-guide>

**APPENDIX B**  
**Supplier Proposal**

## Proj 1.1 Approach

### Introduction

IFF Research are delighted to submit our proposal for undertaking research into social housing landlords' views and experiences of retrofit. With a proposed team that brings together an unparalleled understanding the social housing landscape, and familiarity conducting research to support BEIS funding programmes, we are highly confident that our proposal will fully meet your requirements, and overcome the study's challenges as presented below. Of particular note is our proposal for quantitative respondents to be able to undertake the survey over telephone or online, depending on their preference.



### Inception meeting

The inception meeting with BEIS stakeholders will set the foundations and parameters of this project. We also recommend a representative of the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) attends this. At the meeting, we will discuss and agree:

- Broader background to the study including its role in the development of the technical assistance facility
- The scope of the work, as laid out in our response
- Contacts available through RSH including, level of available data (contact details are vital, but also information that feed into our sampling criteria), timings and data transfer protocols
- Sampling structure for qualitative and quantitative strands
- Job role of ideal respondent
- Recruitment processes
- Confirmation on the format for the final report and presentation • Timeline and budget for the project, including the finalised project plan

- Project management arrangements, including reporting formats.

### Qualitative strand

As described in the brief we propose **40 interviews with social landlords, lasting 30-45 minutes**. These will be conducted via telephone, Zoom or similar video-conferencing technology. The core research team will undertake the majority of interviews, supplemented by a handful of our specialist executive interviewers, enabling us to undertake a sizeable number of interviews in a short space of time.

#### Sample Structure

Although there are circa 1,400 registered social housing providers in England, a large proportion of these providers own very few homes. At the other end of the scale, the five largest registered providers in the country (with more than 50,000 homes) own 13.1% of all social housing stock.

While it is important to hear views from across the sector, and smaller registered providers are likely to have different challenges to their larger peers in applying for and actioning decarbonisation funding, we have suggested weighting the qualitative sample towards **interviewing a higher proportion of larger providers**, as this is where the fund will have the greatest impact in relation to total homes modified.

We would also recommend a focus on the **management structure of the registered providers** within the sampling approach, as this is likely to have a significant impact on the perceived and actual barriers to accessing and actioning funding. The table below shows how we plan to structure our sample, pending sign-off from BEIS.

Sample sub-groups		Proportion of registered social landlords	Proportion of total social housing homes	Number of interviews
Stock size	0 homes	9%	0%	0
	Less than 250 homes	62%	2%	10
	251 to 1000 homes	10%	3%	10
	1000 to 10000 homes	14%	31%	10
	More than 10000 homes	5%	65%	10
Provider type	Housing Association	85%	unknown	30
	Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO)	<1%	unknown	5
	Local Authorities and Other	14%	unknown	5

We will also look to ensure a spread by region as there is substantial variation in terms of current energy efficiency levels<sup>1</sup>.

#### Recruitment

Ideally we will look to utilise the RSH database as our sample base for qualitative interviews as this will be comprehensive in its coverage. However, we are aware this may not be ready to share with IFF in time for the start of recruitment. There are then two options:

- *Option 1:* We request that RSH select a random sample of landlords in line with the sample structure proposed and distribute an IFF-created online portal. This would inform them of the research and invite them to opt in by leaving their contact details within the portal. IFF recruiters would then contact consenting landlords to arrange a time for the interview. This does however add some burden to the RSH.
- *Option 2:* IFF engage directly with housing associations and local authorities with whom we are already familiar (we have a pool of approximately 60 with whom we have existing relationships). This initial spurt of recruitment would enable us to make a quick start on interviews, and sense check the appropriateness of the topic guide.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/energyefficiencyofhousinginenglandandwales/2020-09-23>

However, to ensure we achieve a representative sample of social landlords, we would also look to feed in social landlords contained within the RSH database, once we are able to access this.

We can be flexible with whichever option we take, and look forward to discussing at the inception meeting. Whichever approach is taken, **we do recommend utilising the RSH database** as we will be less subject to response biases, and better able to achieve a representative sample.

We shall agree in the inception meeting who in each organisation will be best to speak to on this subject. This might be the Head or Director of Asset Management or in larger organisations it might be the Head of Sustainability or a senior individual with responsibility for decarbonisation. We acknowledge that the RSH database may well not have the relevant individual's contact details so have built in time and resource to account for identifying the most appropriate individual. We propose that any database transferred between RSH and IFF is done so via our secure file transfer protocol ("FileX"), which requires files to be encrypted. The data will then be stored in a secure folder on our drives, to which only the project team have access, ensuring we maintain GDPR compliance. We will likely also need to set up a data sharing agreement with RSH.

Recruitment will be undertaken by our specialist B2B executive interviewers who bring vast experience of engaging senior individuals in (often large) organisations and persuading them to take part in an interview. They will be briefed in full by the Project Manager in advance. We do not believe an incentive will be necessary as this study will feed into a programme that respondents' organisations are likely to benefit from.

#### *Topic guide content*

The primary aim of the qualitative stage will be to explore social housing providers' awareness of the SHDF, as well as their appetite and preparedness for applying. This will include examining their knowledge of their current stock condition, and the level of thought their organisation had given to how they would implement and use the funding. We will also identify the key perceived barriers providers may have to accessing and ultimately implementing the SHDF. We will develop the guide content in close collaboration with BEIS, drawing on the detailed coverage suggested in the brief.

The beauty of a qualitative approach is that it provides more flexibility in questionnaire content than a quantitative approach. We will meet as a team after the first 5-10 interviews and consider how well the guide is working, whether certain questions are redundant or unanticipated avenues and themes are being raised by respondents. In such cases we will propose adapting the guide accordingly, pending BEIS sign off.

#### *Analysis and communicating findings*

Qualitative analysis begins within the discussion itself. Within the session, the researcher continually weighs up the implications of what the participant says – and devises relevant follow-up questions (where this helps us draw out additional insight to meet the study objectives). Through this process of active listening and 'weighing-up' of feedback, the researcher exits the session with an initial view on the implications of the discussion. The researcher uses the interview recording to analyse the discussion, entering their reflections into an excel-based analysis framework, under headings relating to the objectives. Through this framework, which will collate all interviews we shall be able to compare attitudes, expectations and experiences, to determine commonality of themes and where and why exceptions apply. The framework would contain 'demographic' variables (e.g. location, number of properties etc.) to identify subgroup differences.

IFF then conducts a Director-led analysis session, in which researchers develop their thinking regarding the findings/their implications. Individual researchers bring to the session their tentative interpretation of the findings. This will be discussed, with careful reference to the evidence, to verify our interpretation of the findings through researchers applying a degree of scrutiny and challenge to each other's perspectives on what the findings mean. We welcome your participation in this session.

We will present key findings from the qualitative strand in mid-January and we understand these will feed in to the first phase of the technical assistance facility. These will be in the form of PowerPoint slides, and **BEIS will be steered through the findings by our Lead Director, [REDACTED]**. We suggest the findings are kept relatively short, to approximately 20-25 slides. This is for two reasons: firstly, time will be tight, so we shall be better off producing an output that does focus on key findings and implications. Furthermore, we have found over the past 6 months that the move to remote presentations necessitates a tweak to the way findings are communicated. Maintaining engagement and interest can – understandably – be trickier so we have found that a more concise presentation allied to a more conversational style generates a better energy and carries more impact for attendees. Prior to drafting the slides we shall liaise with BEIS to understand core audience needs.

### Quantitative strand

For the quantitative strand we shall target 800 responses with social landlords. This is an ambitious target, given the limited availability of contacts to c.1,4000. We will therefore **adopt a hybrid CATI-online approach**, in order to maximise our chances of engagement among this audience. Our rationale for this is set out below:

1. We have found from previous research with this audience that **many prefer to complete online**, as they can fit this in at a time that suits them. For example for our current work for the RSH, evaluating the social housing in-depth assessment process, we achieved a 45% response rate for an online survey with broadly the same audience as we are approaching here.
2. Furthermore, a considerable proportion of staff are **working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic**. We have found that solely relying on CATI methods to reach staff can result in some individuals not having the chance to complete the survey as there is no forwarding number for them.
3. However, simply relying on an online survey – especially where we have a short fieldwork window and we do not have a list of direct contacts (so it may take time to build these) – would likely see us fall short of the target.
4. We therefore also need to incorporate CATI methods to reach participants, and afford time to our interviewers to **persuade and encourage respondents to take part**.

Utilising an online survey will also support the collection of certain data. Some of the information like stock condition/ EPC ratings, age of stock, and spend on property improvements will not be 'top of mind' for some respondents, unless they have received advanced notification of survey coverage. An initial email invite, containing information on survey content, will mean respondents can look up some of this information prior to responding to the survey.

### *Sample structure*

As we are targeting 800 responses from a total population of c.1,400 we will essentially undertake a census, i.e. we will invite the whole population to participate in the survey. However, as discussed in the sampling for the qualitative strand, we are particularly keen to ensure participation from large scale providers (with more than 10,000 homes) who although making up only 5% of all providers (around 70 organisations), own 65% of the social rented homes in the country. In our telephone chasing (see Fieldwork section), we shall focus at least some of our targeting on these landlords in particular.

We anticipate the sample will be provided by RSH so long as we have appropriate data sharing protocols in place. Should this not be possible we will need to access relevant sample form the ONS' Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) and source telephone numbers from Dun and Bradstreet. This is an approach we regularly take for our public sector clients, although it comes with various limitations including: it can take up to four weeks to access disclosive data from the IDBR so we would need to factor this into our timetable; we are unlikely to achieve a 100% match rate with Dun and Bradstreet so will need to undertake desk research to ensure we have a comprehensive set of phone numbers; this option will not support email address provision so we will either need to rely on RSH disseminating the online survey and reminders (see *Fieldwork and maximising response*), adding to burden for them, or scale back the scope of the online survey. We will target the same individuals as approached for the qualitative strand. *Survey content workshop*

In order to design a questionnaire that fully meets the project objectives we recommend **holding a survey content workshop with the BEIS team and RSH representatives** near the end of the qualitative strand. Ideally this would occur once qualitative fieldwork completes, and findings disseminated, however we cannot afford this luxury owing to tight timescales.

In this session we shall review emerging findings from the interviews and consider which:

1. themes would warrant quantifying so we can more robustly determine how widespread these are (both across the full population and within certain subgroups),
2. research objectives are insufficiently answered from this first phase
3. themes are likely to have the greatest impact on the eventual success of the fund.

We shall agree on the broad structure of the survey and the key survey measurements as well. We shall also map how topics/measurements relate back to the research objectives, to ensure that we retain focus on the core aspirations of the study.

IFF will then utilise this survey structure to create a questionnaire document for BEIS review. We anticipate that this survey will take around 15 minutes to complete. Longer than this and we anticipate there will be substantial drop out for those looking to complete online.

#### *Cognitive interviews*

There will be value in conducting cognitive interviews, in order to ensure that: respondents interpret and understand the questions and response options as anticipated; the topic content is relevant to our audience; and we have not missed any areas of focus that affect organisations' attitudes towards and practices around funds and retrofitting.

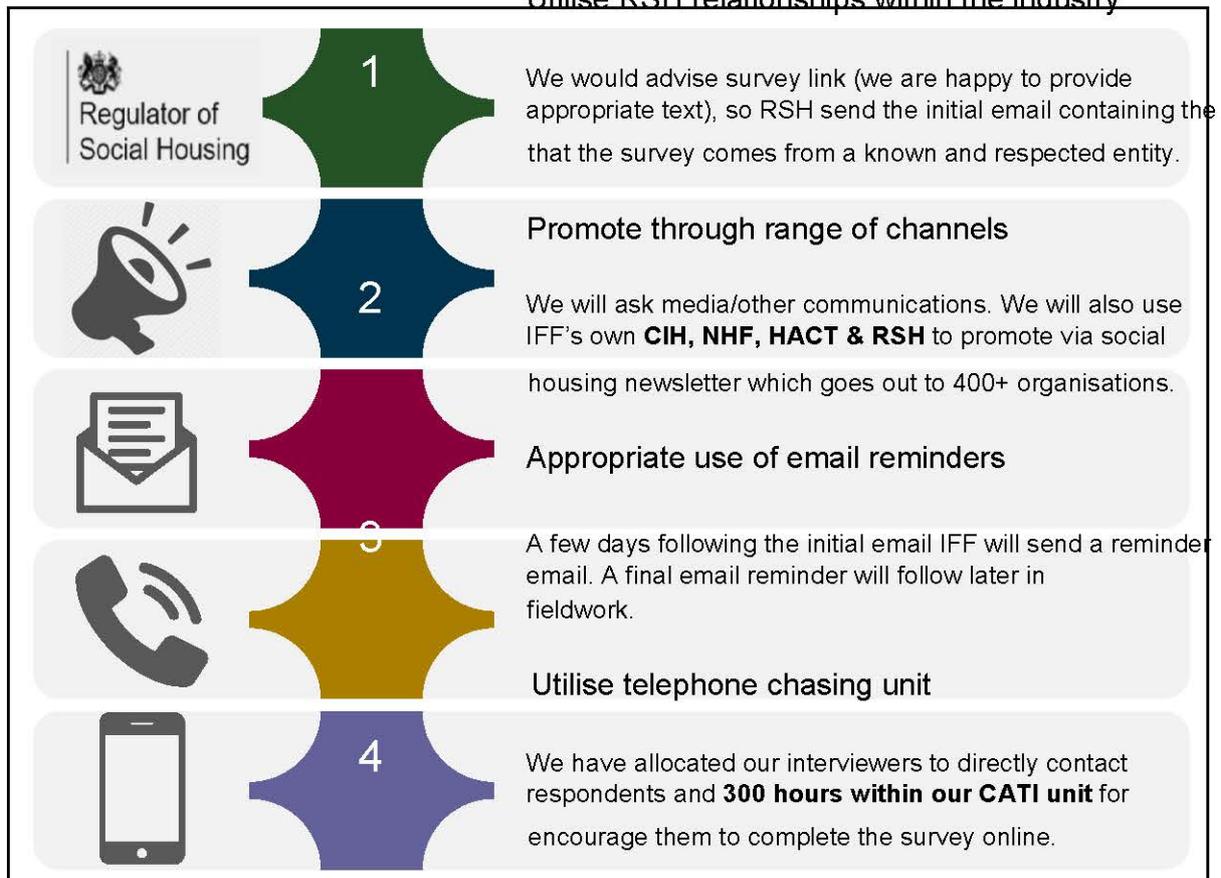
However, there is very little time to fit these interviews in the questionnaire design phase. We therefore propose to undertake a cognitive-lite exercise utilising our contacts in the sector. This will consist of approximately **five interviews with relevant individuals at Housing Associations, Local Authorities and ALMOs** with whom we already have existing relationships (as a substitute, we could follow up with those completing the qualitative interviews, should they give their consent to re-contact). Core members of the research team will run through the survey with the respondent before asking for their reflections. The interviews will last approximately 40 minutes and occur over a period of 2 days, as we finalise the draft questionnaire.

IFF Research has **huge expertise undertaking cognitive exercises** for new surveys and indeed regularly undertake bespoke cognitive studies for the likes of Office for Students, Office for National Statistics and NHS, and will fully utilise this expertise in designing a quick and effective cognitive exercise here. Upon sharing the draft questionnaire with BEIS we shall highlight through comments how the outcomes from the cognitive exercise have informed our thinking.

### Fieldwork and maximising response

Drawing on our experience we are confident of obtaining **approximately 300 responses** via the online survey, using the following mechanisms to boost response:

#### Utilise RSH relationships within the industry



#### A well designed, mobile-first survey

Respondents complete on a range of devices. Ensuring an engaging look that **dynamically adjusts** to the size of the device is important.

We shall also provide an FAQs page and set up a helpdesk to provide more information to respondents and confirm their rights in relation to GDPR (if respondents wish to amend or remove their data they are directed to a simple online form hosted on our website).

We have costed for the remaining number of interviews (500) to be conducted by telephone. Maximising the response rate will be critical in achieving a robust survey. At IFF we pride ourselves on our ability to achieve response rates to the highest industry standards and levels, and very often to exceed them. We regularly undertake B2B surveys, typically with senior leaders in organisations and our approach reflects years of refining processes to achieve a sufficient level of responses:

- **High quality and well-informed interviewers.** The extent to which interviewers can provide clarifications has a big impact on both response and data quality.
- **Interviewing training sessions** which go beyond the standard briefing. This will involve role-playing scenarios and we will have regular debriefs throughout fieldwork, to develop standard responses to common queries raised by respondents.
- **Flexibility with interviewing dates and times** so that we can fit around respondents – including weekends and early mornings/late evenings if requested.

- **Careful fieldwork management.** We will have a project controller dedicated to managing and checking sample daily and creating reports/recommendations to improve response rates. Our standard practice is to make a minimum of 10 calls at different times of the day.
- **Providing the option of online completion:** Should respondents prefer to complete in their own time, this option will be available to them.
- **Facility to capture individual mobile phone number.** Increasingly staff are working from home and are less easy to reach via a call to the office switchboard. Where this occurs we will ask gatekeepers for the relevant staff member's email address, at which point an automated email will be sent to that staff member, asking their consent to participate in an interview, and for an appropriate number to call on.
- **Offering to email a link to the report:** If this is suitable to BEIS, we will offer to send a mail-out of a link to the report after publication. We have found that sharing findings at the end of the project can be an effective incentive for participation.

#### *Data preparation and analysis*

Our process to preparing quantitative data is set out below:

- Data will be coded by our in-house coding team to a specification signed off by the Project Manager (nb we have costed on the basis of 3 open-ended questions and a handful of "other specify" responses in the survey);
- The specification for the data files will be signed-off by the Directors and agreed with you in advance including derived variables, variable names, labels and values;
- We shall also agree with you key cross breaks for analysis (likely to include size of housing stock, region, provider type etc.)
- We will create a raw data file and set of data tables in Excel. These will be checked by Research Executives and signed off by Project Directors before delivery.

It may be that we request certain information from respondents that they are not able to answer during the interview. If so we can make use of the **Statistical Data Return** to append useful information like maintenance spend per property, percentage of homes to decent homes standard at the quant analysis stage. An anonymised, coded and clean data file and data tables in Excel format will be provided to BEIS at the end of February. This will be fully GDPR compliant in that respondents will not be identifiable.

Analysis of the quantitative findings begins with multiple members of the research team immersing themselves in the survey data (typically the computer tabulations, though it can be the initial topline data), exploring key overarching themes, including:

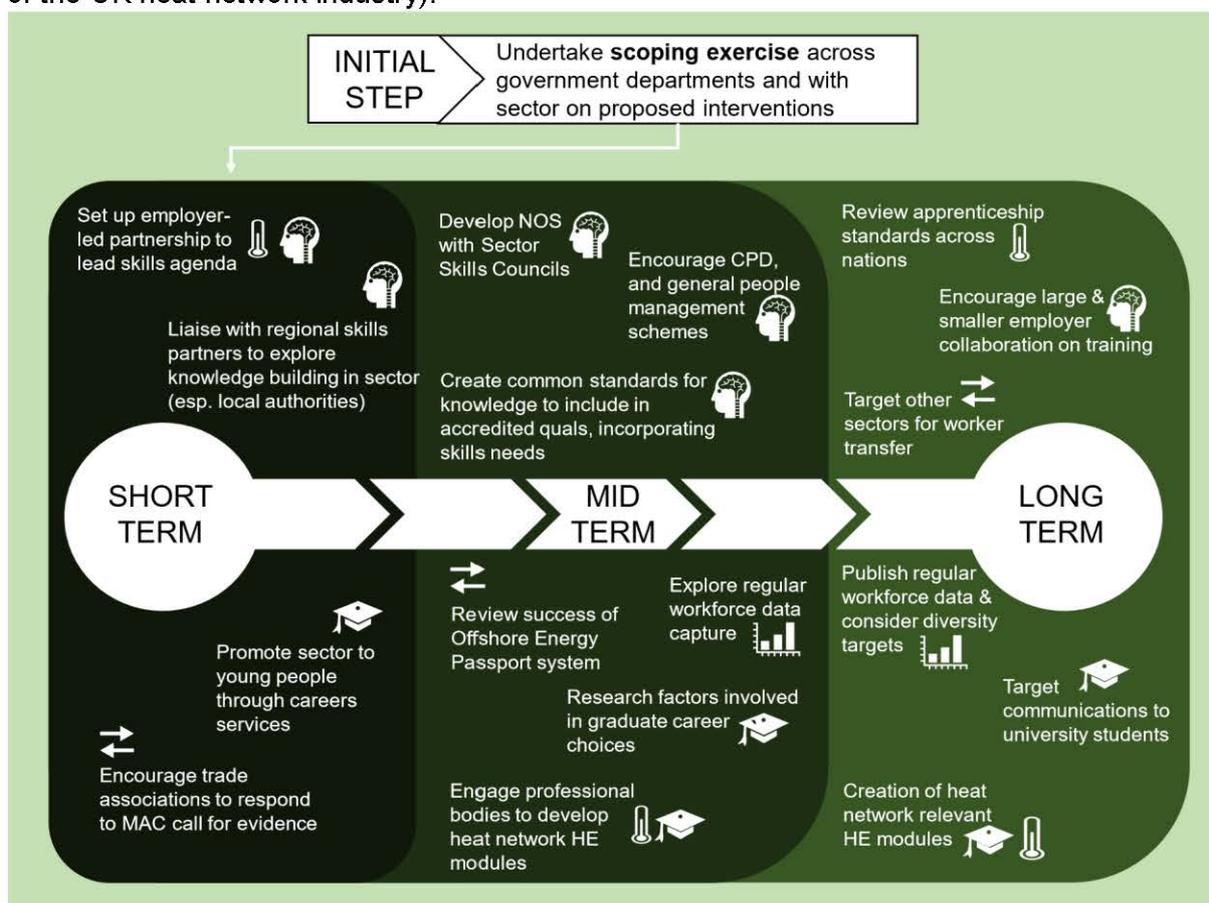
- In relation to the research objectives, what are the key overall emerging messages?
- How valid and reliable are these messages? What are the base sizes on which they are based and the degree of sampling error? How strong and consistent are these themes within the findings and is there 'counter evidence'?
- How do the findings / emerging messages compare to other published data or narratives? What appears new, different or surprising?
- How does the story differ by key sub-groups or between the different audiences covered within the research?

The researchers then meet in a director-led analysis discussion session in which the researchers compare and contrast their initial interpretation of the findings, discussing and scrutinising the evidence for these views. Typically, a consensus view emerges of the key themes. These are written up, and the data re-examined to check and verify these themes.

#### **Reporting and dissemination**

We will agree a **report blueprint** with BEIS prior to drafting the final report, ensuring alignment to the project objectives. This will not simply be a simple report structure; rather it will contain key findings and implications, as well as themes by subgroup. This will allow

BEIS to **engage with the findings early on in the process**, and review the structure in a considered fashion. Full agreement of the report structure will limit subsequent reporting amends to issues of analysis content and style rather than the order of findings. This is especially important in studies where we have a limited timeframe for reporting, as adapting the structure of the report following the first draft can be quite time consuming. We will synthesize the findings from the various strands by theme, so that a particular topic is dealt with in its entirety, drawing on all of the relevant evidence, in a single section. We will in particular look to draw out findings and recommendations for particular subgroups: the sector is not one homogeneous mass so there is unlikely to be a 'one size fits all' solution. Our report will incorporate all findings from both stages of the research, and will contain a short takeaway summary as well as detailed policy recommendations. We will prioritise **engaging data visualisations** where sensible, avoid jargon, harness appendices where there is important but detailed or technical information to convey, and make illustrative use of quotes and case studies. This will ensure the report appeals to a **wide-ranging, and nonexpert audience** (the example below is taken from our recent BEIS study reviewing the skills needs of the UK heat network industry).



We also propose to lead a **virtual facilitated workshop** following the first draft of the final report to share headline findings and **explore the potential for policy interventions**. We anticipate that this session will involve the direct BEIS team as well as a handful of key policy stakeholders. This will enable us to **devise a set of recommendations** that are more tailored towards expectations and which policy leads find more actionable.

We have costed for two rounds of BEIS comments prior to the final report delivery. Directors will be actively involved in writing the report, writing key sections and reviewing all sections.

#### *Wider dissemination*

We recognise the importance of disseminating findings to a wide audience, to help stimulate debate. There are key touchpoints throughout the study where we would look to achieve this,

including the interim qualitative findings discussion, the report workshop and the delivery of the final report.

We would love to support wider dissemination efforts however. This will include the creation of a press release and social media activity (leveraging our Marketing department), while we will look to promote awareness of the research by communicating its results to The CIH, NHF and sector publications such as Inside Housing magazine. We are happy to attend up to two subsequent workshops or meetings co-ordinated by BEIS where researcher input would support conversation. Finally, we regularly hold **seminars on issues affecting the housing sector**. These used to be held in our London offices but have since migrated online successfully. We would be more than happy (at no additional cost) to host one on future that focuses on retrofit in social housing (and would welcome both BEIS and RSH attendance).

## Proj 1.2 Staff to Deliver

### Support required

The project will be delivered **entirely in-house**, with **no need for subcontracting**.

As we set out in our approach and timings, the support we need from BEIS/RSH is limited to:

- Timely sign-off of methodology and research materials;
- Contribution to and input on questionnaire and recommendations workshops; and
- Provision of the database of social housing providers via RSH, containing c.1,400 records each with a named contact, telephone number and email address.

### Project team

Your core account team will be headed up by [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] who heads up IFF's Housing Sector and has worked with countless housing providers as well as government clients such as MHCLG, will be the Project Director, with overall responsibility for the study. It is our policy to assign a second "Shadow" Director to all projects; [REDACTED], a highly experienced business researcher with a particular interest in energy efficiency and a track record of successful delivery for several government departments, will act in this role. He will provide peer review at key stages in the project and senior cover in the event of [REDACTED] absence. [REDACTED], another experienced housing researcher who joined us last year from [REDACTED], will provide additional senior support, which will be necessary as we navigate tight timescales. Your day-to-day contact for management of the study will be [REDACTED], one of our most experienced Senior Research Managers. [REDACTED] will work closely with [REDACTED], Research Manager, who will lead on the qualitative interviewing phase. [REDACTED] will be supported by [REDACTED], Research Executive, and [REDACTED], Research Assistant. As a company for whom the vast majority of our work is for the public sector, we regularly conduct research and write published reports that inform policy development.

The following sets out a selection of the core team's relevant experience – this is abridged due to space constraints; full CVs are available on request, while number of days allocated by task and staff member is available in the pricing schedule.

[REDACTED] leads IFF's Housing sector. She has 18 years' research experience. She is a very experienced researcher currently specialising in research, evaluation and strategy development in the Social Housing sector providing strategic insight to housing providers across the UK; supporting and partnering with them to develop evidence-based strategies to continually improve the services they provide to current and future customers. Recent studies that [REDACTED] has led include a study to map the lived experience of applying for and receiving Universal Credit on behalf of Karbon Homes, to re-design and target their support services offered to customers along this journey and a study involving customers of The Pioneer Group and Castle Vale Community Housing in the design and specification of their 30 year strategic investment strategy, to ensure homes exceed the decent homes standard, are fit for future purpose and are developed in a fair and equitable way across the Castle Vale community. [REDACTED] experience of working with senior stakeholders includes an exercise collaborating with the Housing Quality Network to host and facilitate three events in London, Manchester and Birmingham, gathering social housing providers' feedback on the recent green paper including offering constructive challenge and identifying workable alternatives to the Government's proposals.

#### Key responsibilities

- Lead account director
- Attend all meetings
- Sign-off all research materials, data analysis, and output requirements
- Jointly lead the writing of all reports
- Delivery of the presentations

- Maintain the integrity of all IFF work and quality standards

■■■■■ leads IFF's work in energy and decarbonisation, and recently delivered the Heat Network Skills Review for BEIS, a fast-paced, policy-focussed study exploring the skills needs of the [UK Heat Network sector](#). Of relevance to this new tender he also brings a keen familiarity with the UK construction sector: in the last year he has led an evaluation of CITB training programmes, explored construction businesses' awareness of competition law for the CMA, and undertaken a qualitative review of waste crime in the industry for the Environment Agency. More widely than this, ■■■■■ regularly undertakes mixed methodological B2B research for the likes of BEIS (Regional Growth Fund Evaluation), AHDB (Stakeholder Engagement Research) and the SIA (Skills Needs Assessment). He recently gained a distinction in an Environment and Sustainability Masters' degree, focussing on energy efficiency in organisations. ■■■■■ also leads IFF's Environmental Working Group which explores ways of transitioning to becoming a more sustainable company.

**Key responsibilities**

- Second senior point of contact if ■■■■■ is not available
- Peer review all research materials, data analysis, and output requirements
- Jointly lead the writing of all reports
- Delivery of the presentations
- Maintain the integrity of all IFF work and quality standards

■■■■■ joined IFF Research in 2019 as a specialist Associate Director for the Housing Sector, bringing with her over 12 years of research experience working for various housing bodies. This work included developing research into housing-related policy for Peabody and develop a new approach to managing antisocial behaviour within social housing, recognised by the Home Office, Housing Ombudsman and the Victim's Commissioner's office as exemplar good practice. She has been extensively involved in developing consultation responses to a variety of high-profile public policies including the Social Housing Green Paper and the Domestic Abuse Bill. In her role at IFF, she provides strategic insight to housing providers across the UK, supporting and partnering with them to develop evidence-based strategies to continually improve the services they provide to customers. She currently leads numerous client accounts for our Social Housing Monitor, and is conducting research on customer journeys for Beyond Housing, research on the impact of Covid-19 for social housing residents for Paradigm housing, and is evaluating the new Rent-Flex trial from Learning & Work Institute, due to be launched across three housing providers in the UK. She has worked extensively with local authorities and used public and other housing data throughout her housing career.

**Key responsibilities**

- Additional senior support to ■■■■■■
- Input into/review all research instruments
- Co-lead analysis, contribute to debriefs/reports

█████ has worked in research for 12 years, and for five years for specialist housing consultancies. █████ has worked on numerous housing-related studies since the start of his research career in 2007, ranging from large-scale quantitative Housing Market Assessments to in-depth evaluations of housing policies and projects, gaining extensive background knowledge of social housing data sources and regulatory structures in the sector. At the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research, where he worked until March 2015, he took a leading role in a study of social and private landlord policies regarding poverty. He also worked on estimating youth homelessness in the UK, and comparing policies on self-built housing in the UK and European housing markets. At IFF Research, he has continued to work on research projects relating to housing. He managed the research component of an enquiry into disability and housing for EHRC, which comprised a survey of local authorities designed to explore the provision of housing and housing-related support to people with disabilities across England, and subsequent additional policy analysis. He also worked on a project for MHCLG analysing the availability of Supported Housing and related support services

in the UK, which included a census survey of social landlords, of the same sort proposed in this survey. His wider experience includes working on a range of surveys of business opinion, including surveys requiring a fast turnaround as well as long term evaluation projects, as well as surveys of customers of public services. █████ also has a proven track record with BEIS, his work including a mixed-method study among SMEs examining their behaviours around investment and borrowing

<b>Key responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lead day-to-day contact for BEIS</li> <li>○ Responsibility for all internal project management</li> <li>○ Sign-off weekly updates and chair fortnightly conference update calls</li> <li>○ Input into/review all research instruments</li> <li>○ Oversee quantitative fieldwork</li> <li>○ Co-lead analysis, contribute to debriefs/reports</li> <li>○ Lead data checking and edits</li> </ul>
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█████ has 3 years' research experience with IFF. Before joining IFF, █████ gained Distinction for her Masters' dissertation from King's College London on the use of temporary accommodation in London. She carried out depth interviews with managers in Local Authorities exploring the interaction of families and vulnerable people in housing need with the boroughs' homelessness and housing allocations policies. █████ also has six years' experience working in the housing sector and social services, in which she coordinated internal performance audits and community initiative projects. As Project Manager at Innisfree Housing Association she worked with Directors to oversee and analyse their Star Survey to measure customer satisfaction of Innisfree's housing management services. She also sat on the Customer Service Excellence working group to develop service improvements from the findings. █████ experience at IFF includes [qualitative research](#) into the experiences (including financial) and aspirations of DWP claimants in the ESA support group and a study for Sport England looking at the operation of the Troubled Families Programme in Wandsworth.

<b>Key responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lead on the qualitative interviews</li> <li>○ Input into design of discussion guides</li> <li>○ Input into qualitative design and analysis</li> <li>○ Qualitative fieldwork</li> <li>○ Fieldwork management (qualitative)</li> </ul>
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█████ joined IFF Research in 2017. During her time at IFF, █████ has built up considerable experience of surveying and qualitative interviewing. Relevant examples include the Annual Survey of Goods and Services for ONS, an evaluation of the Investment Programme for the British Business Bank, the extension of Advanced Learner Loans for DfE, and the Police Workforce Census for the Home Office. █████ will be supported by █████

Key responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sample transfer/management/preparation</li> <li>○ Interviewer briefings</li> <li>○ Initial checks on all data outputs</li> <li>○ Data preparation – creating charts, tables and figures</li> <li>○ Day-to-day support to [REDACTED]</li> </ul>
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IFF's experience extends well beyond the research team. The Data Services team will be responsible for the vital roles of managing the sampling, CATI (telephone) script writing, data validation, editing and producing the SPSS and tables outputs. This team is headed up by [REDACTED] **Associate Director**. [REDACTED] and his highly experience data services team of have and worked on all previous telephone studies that IFF have conducted and bring a wealth of technical and practical knowledge to the project.

[REDACTED], **Operations Director**, has worked at IFF for 19 years and have oversight of the timely and high-quality delivery of CATI fieldwork and qualitative recruitment.

As well as the core IFF team, the qualitative interviewing and recruitment will be carried out by a team of **highly experienced specialist qualitative interviewers** comprised of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] all of whom have more than ten years' qualitative interviewing experience.

### Quality assurance procedures

IFF has a strong track record delivering high quality research studies, and our commitment to quality was recognised in September 2020 when we were awarded the prestigious Operational Excellence Award by the Market Research Society. The award is given to the agency which "best demonstrates their application of modern management techniques aimed at improving efficiencies, promoting excellent quality and guaranteeing consistency of delivery".

*Interviewing:* IFF is an accredited member of the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS), the industry mark of fieldwork excellence. This membership can be evidenced by visiting the IQCS website at [www.iqcs.org](http://www.iqcs.org). However our interviewer recruitment, training and quality standards are higher than required by IQCS reflecting the more demanding nature of much of our work.

For qualitative fieldwork, to ensure quality of interviewing, we will treat the first few interviews as a pilot, meeting and discussing findings and agreeing any changes to the topic guides and interviewer notes. The research team will also review the first few interview write-ups produced by each interviewer to ensure that they provide the depth of information required. All interviews are recorded, and a random sample of interviews is listened-to by quality control staff.

*Data preparation:* Coding of open-end questions is undertaken to a specification signed off by the Project Manager; at least 5% of all coded verbatim are checked by another member of the team. The specification for data preparation is signed off by the Research Directors; all datasets are then checked sequentially by multiple members of the research team, before being signed off by a director.

*Analysis and reporting:* A report blueprint will be agreed with you before writing begins, which will cover order of content, key messages, approach to subgroup analysis, look and feel, and intended audience. Our aim is to ensure that the final report meets your needs by directly addressing the project objectives in an engaging and accessible way. We deliver reporting quality primarily through the experience/seniority of the team writing and quality checking the report. We will discuss key take outs with you before preparing reports, and host a recommendations workshop to create an opportunity to review analysis and explore recommendations, and identify any further work required. Directors are actively involved in writing reports, writing key sections and reviewing all sections. A Director will also undertake a final review before submission. In reality, the first 'client' draft is the second or third IFF-draft. The draft report is always supplied as if a final document, and ready for publication.

### Capacity and ensuring continuity of staff

In terms of the core team, changes in staffing are always possible. However, our staff turnover is well below industry averages (c.8%) and risks are mitigated by the size of the core team. In the

unlikely event that additional team members are needed, these could be drafted in at any level. Having two IFF Directors on the team for this study helps ensure continuity. We are able to deliver all of our working capacity, across all teams, remotely in the event of the continuation of the Covid19 pandemic. Resourcing level is monitored on a weekly basis by Research Directors

In terms of the survey fieldwork, we anticipate deploying c15 of our interviewers for this project, all of whom will have experience of working on business surveys for government bodies. However, we have a large pool of interviewers with appropriate experience, and we will be able to draw on them should that become necessary. Overall, this will take up less than 10% of our field capacity. This is a comfortable level of resource allocation for us. It leaves us with no concerns about our ability to resource the project through field, and we have plenty of contingency built in.

### **Proj 1.3 Understanding the project environment**

#### **Overview**

In August 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government reported that around 3.9 million households, accounting for approximately 9 million people, live in the social rented sector in England, just under a fifth of all households<sup>8</sup>. The social housing sector provides homes for the most vulnerable members of society; half of social households have at least one member with a long-term illness or disability, 7% of social rented households are unemployed, 27% are retired, while 21% are economically inactive (which includes those with a long-term illness or disability, and those looking after family members or the home). Almost three quarters of social renters are in the bottom 40% of the national income distribution<sup>2</sup>.

The social housing sector is also disproportionately impacted by fuel poverty, with statistics last updated in 2018<sup>9</sup> showing an average £210 fuel poverty gap in the social housing sector (the amount needed to meet the fuel poverty threshold); while in concrete terms this is a smaller fuel poverty gap compared to privately rented and owner occupied homes, in real terms as a proportion of household income this leads social housing residents to be significantly more likely to report struggling to meet their fuel costs than those in other tenure groupings.

Social housing providers routinely take measures to improve the energy efficiency of homes, including installing insulation, double glazing and central heating as part of their cyclical maintenance of homes. However, with competing budgetary constraints, particularly around fire safety upgrades in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy, there is limited funding for the social housing sector to proactively go further than this in retrofitting their homes.

The Government has therefore committed to a £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to be delivered over 10 years, including the £1.5bn Green Homes Grant Scheme, allowing social housing providers to apply for grant funding to make these improvements.

BEIS are currently exploring the need for a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) to support landlords in applying for and actioning this funding. The objective of the Social Housing Landlord Research is to therefore provide BEIS with a more detailed understanding of the social housing sector's awareness and preparedness for this funding stream, as well as perceived barriers to applying for and actioning the funding to inform the commissioning and development of an appropriately skills TAF.

#### **The current UK energy policy landscape and government ambition**

The UK was one of the first countries to recognise and respond to societal challenge posed by climate change. The Climate Change Act (2008) committed the UK to reducing greenhouse gas

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<sup>8</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/733605/A\\_new\\_deal\\_for\\_social\\_housing\\_web\\_accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733605/A_new_deal_for_social_housing_web_accessible.pdf) <sup>2</sup> English Housing Survey 2016/17

<sup>9</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/719106/Fuel\\_Poverty\\_Statistics\\_Report\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719106/Fuel_Poverty_Statistics_Report_2018.pdf)

emissions by at least 80% by 2050 when compared to 1990 levels. This was superseded in 2019 when the UK became the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end its contribution to climate change by 2050. The Scottish Government has gone further in terms of ambition, with targets to reach net zero by 2045.

The Clean Growth Strategy<sup>10</sup> set out the UK's ambition to reduce emissions from homes while ensuring that everyone has a home that is comfortable, healthy, and affordable to run, as well as pathways to 2032 that could see six to nine millions more homes insulated. The Strategy had a

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particular focus on fuel poor homes, with the aim of bringing all 2.5 million of these up to energy efficiency rating C or better. Social housing will, of course, be a key battleground in achieving this aim.

The Department's plans for social housing are operating alongside a number of related schemes underway in the sector. For example, the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) requires social housing providers in Scotland to achieve SAP rating targets for specified house types by 2020, with new targets being set up to 2050.

Similarly, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) provides funding for energy efficiency measures through three main obligations:

- The Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation (CERO), focused primarily on the installation of insulation measures in hard-to-treat properties, including loft insulation and cavity wall insulation.
- The Carbon Saving Community Obligation (CSCO), focused on low income areas.
- The Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO) (also known as 'Affordable Warmth'), focused on reducing heating costs for consumers on certain types of benefits as a way of targeting vulnerable households.

Furthermore, the HEEPS Loan scheme for Registered Social Landlords provides interest free loans of up to £1 million to help RSLs complete energy saving improvements to their housing stock. Applications closed on 30 November 2019, subject to available funding.

### Barriers to energy efficiency in social housing

The requirement to reduce social rents by one per cent each year from 2016/17 to 2019/20, has seriously impacted housing associations' ability to invest in their properties over the past 5 years, and interrupted not only their retrofit ambitions but also their global asset management investments such as delivering new kitchens and bathrooms.

Further to this, the phase 3 evaluation of the RE:NEW programme<sup>11</sup> across Greater London identified two key barriers to retrofit energy efficiency programmes in the social housing sector:

- **Imperfect information** - many landlords, housing associations and local authorities lack the right information and/or expertise required to make optimal decisions with regards to investment in energy efficiency measures. Lack of accurate and accessible information limits their ability to invest in the most appropriate low carbon solutions.
- **Split incentives** - a barrier to the deployment of energy efficiency measures in buildings where those responsible for paying energy bills (tenants) are not the same as those making the capital investment decisions (landlord or building owner). Therefore, the landlord may not be incentivised to carry out the required works to enable energy savings.

The wealth of activity in this area may itself also pose a challenge to the success of the TAF, with social landlords balancing multiple aspects of asset management planning. For example, in light

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<sup>10</sup> BEIS (2017) Clean Growth Strategy <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/renew\\_evaluation\\_-\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/renew_evaluation_-_final_report.pdf)

of Grenfell and the eagerly anticipated Social Housing White Paper, many housing providers have large-scale plans for fire safety improvements, some of which will be retrofitting. If the TAF funding lands at the wrong time, this could mean that many landlords may miss out on this opportunity as they will have recently undertaken large-scale retrofits.

Another key barrier may be the cyclical and short-term nature of political and funding cycles. It is an unfortunate reality that many local authorities try to avoid any long-term investments in housing stock due to the precarity of their own political tenure. If the funding is part-funding (i.e.

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there would need to be a percentage of the housing provider's own money invested), then some Local Authorities may be reluctant to go beyond regulatory requirements.

### Ensuring successful delivery

This project is not without challenges, as discussed in Proj 1.1. However, we have set out a mixed methodology approach that we believe will meet the objectives and we have absolute confidence that we can deliver this on time, and to a high standard.

Indeed, we believe we are uniquely well placed to deliver this for you. The proposed project team brings more than 45 years' combined housing research experience. Selected relevant examples of research to inform policies around housing and support include:

- **Evaluation of In-depth Assessments, Regulator of Social Housing (2020).** This includes a large-scale online survey of Chief Executives / Chief Financial Officers of registered providers across the country, followed by 12 in-depth online video interviews to gather more qualitative data. This evaluation will support RSH's internal work to strengthen the IDA methodology.
- **Housing Needs of the Older LGBT+ Community for Tonic Housing (2017).** We were commissioned by Tonic housing to provide information about the social housing needs and preferences of those aged 55+. Tonic Housing were aiming to provide the first residential retirement scheme in London where older members of the LGBT+ community can feel safe and secure at a time of greater vulnerability.
- **A current study for MHCLG which combines an early insights study into the provision of hostels and shelters and a wider exploration of the provision of housing-related support.** This is a mixed-method exploration using stakeholder interviews, a survey of local authorities and case studies of some local authorities. The study is looking to explore funding and commissioning agreements as well as issues around assessment of quality and outcomes achieved for service users. The research has involved a literature review, a survey of local authorities and housing providers and qualitative work in a selection of local areas.
- **An enquiry into the Housing Needs of Disabled People for the EHRC (2018):** This study looked at the approaches taken to meeting the needs of disabled people in the building and allocation of housing and in the provision of support services. The study involved an online survey of all local authorities and achieved a response rate of 83%. The survey collected some complex volumetric data about the nature of the authorities housing stock and the provision of different grades of accessible housing.
- **Research for the Close To Home Inquiry for the EHRC (2011-2013).** The initial research for this study involved survey work among both home care commissioners in local authorities and home care providers. The study looked at the commissioning process and the stipulations placed on contractors specifically exploring whether any of the processes could run the risk of infringing the human rights of home care recipients. The follow-up study conducted a year later tracked progress made by local authorities in implementing recommendations from the inquiry.

We also have a proven track record of high-quality delivery for BEIS. This includes the recent **Heat Networks Skills Review**, led by Andrew Skone James; this fast-paced study explored the

skills needs of the UK Heat Networks sector employing a literature review, qualitative interviewing, and workshops among energy companies, local authorities and housing associations. Other recently delivered projects for BEIS include projects for the Office for Product Safety and Standards looking at **industry attitudes to product safety and consumer views on fire safety when purchasing furniture**. We also recently completed a **survey of retail businesses exploring issues arising from using online platforms**, and the biennial **Business Perceptions Survey** which looks at the impact of regulation on businesses.

## **Proj 1.4: Project Plan, Timescales, and Risk Management**

### **Project plan**

You will see from the timetable below that we are able to meet the required timings for the project, namely:

- Interim findings presentation by mid-January (w/c 11<sup>th</sup> January);
- Anonymised dataset of survey results by the end of February (w/c 22<sup>nd</sup> February); and
- A final report by the end of March (w/c 29<sup>th</sup> March).

While the overall timeframe for the project is comfortable, the delivery of qualitative findings in the interim presentation by mid-January is tight. Achieving these milestones, and the interim findings in particular, will be dependent on input and sign off from BEIS at key points in the project – these are shown in royal blue below. We can provide a day-by-day timetable upon commissioning.

Task	Lead	30-Nov	07-Dec	14-Dec	21-Dec	28-Dec	04-Jan	11-Jan	18-Jan	25-Jan	01-Feb	08-Feb	15-Feb	22-Feb	01-Mar	08-Mar	15-Mar	22-Mar	29-Mar	
Inception meeting	Meeting																			
<b>QUALITATIVE STRAND</b>																				
Provide sample	RSH																			
Draft screener	Research																			
Screener programming	DS																			
Prepare sample	DS																			
Recruitment	Field																			
Draft topic guide	Research																			
Topic guide review	BEIS																			
Qualitative interviews	Field																			
Draft interim findings	Research																			
Interim findings presentation	Research																			
<b>QUANTITATIVE STRAND</b>																				
Survey content workshop	Meeting																			
Questionnaire drafting	Research																			
Cognitive interviews	Research																			
Questionnaire sign off	BEIS																			
CATI scripting	DS																			
Sample preparation	DS																			
Mainstage fieldwork	Field																			
Initial email invite from RSH	RSH																			
Telephone chasing and interviewing	Field																			
SPSS / tabs delivered	DS																			
<b>ANALYSIS AND REPORTING</b>																				
Report blueprint	Research																			
Reporting	Research																			
Report review	BEIS																			
Recommendation workshop	Meeting																			
Report amends	Research																			
Report comments	BEIS																			
Final report delivered	Research																			

**Ensuring timescale and budget are met**

We pride ourselves on our ability to deliver high quality research to time. Fieldwork and analysis processes are managed in-house giving us control and flexibility to ensure deadlines are met. We ensure on-time delivery by:

- Devising detailed project plans at inception. These are used to plan internal logistics and guide weekly internal project team catch-ups to plan next steps;
- Directors reviewing project resource weekly, and fieldwork progress daily, and increasing resource allocation as required;
- Sharing emerging findings with you iteratively to ensure findings answer your research questions.

Directors will maintain an overview of the entire study at all times. They will be responsible for quality assurance and will attend all key meetings.

As noted above, project timetables are tight, which reduces the time available for proof reading, quality assurance and peer review. In order to mitigate against this we have:

- Selected a team of individuals with sufficient ringfenced resource for drafting in March
- Included an additional senior member of the team to support proof reading etc.

- Proposed a recommendations workshop early in the process to make drafting more efficient.

You can also be certain that we will **deliver the project within budget** – the prices quoted in the schedule are fixed, as long as the key project assumptions remain unchanged. Project management fees are based on the study running for 18 weeks, and we have been able to apply discounts to our fees based on the timings suggested in our proposals. If we are unable to proceed to this timetable, then we may need to review whether we can still apply these discounts

In the event of changes to project scope, scale or timings, we would work openly and collaboratively with you to keep any changes to the project timetable or budget to a minimum.

### Approach to project management

Our project management philosophy is one of collaboration/flexibility; working with clients in partnership. We take a pragmatic solutions-focused approach, and our ethos is to balance keeping you fully informed while removing the burden of operational project management. Critically, our team is highly adept at managing project collaborations, recognising the value of bringing together unique expertise from partners to build a strong team, while maintaining clear project leadership.

We will provide you with a weekly written update, detailing project status, highlighting risks and listing imminent actions. Fieldwork progress reports will be to an agreed format, typically listing interviews completed, and key issues arising. In addition, we propose:

- Weekly diarised telephone calls to discuss progress, as we navigate a fast moving project (although we can postpone/forgo where there is little to discuss).
- Longer video-conference calls at key points in the contract lifecycle (we have costed for three, in addition to the inception meeting), to discuss findings and their implications.

We will set up a group e-mail for the study ensuring all correspondence is received by all team members, to ensure swift responses to urgent requirements. We have allocated a highly experienced Project Manager, Sam Morris, who will be your main point of contact.

We work transparently with clients, sharing all project materials. We welcome your attendance at internal briefings/debriefings and final analysis sessions. We will work closely with you to develop research outputs, agreeing not only structure/content of presentations/reports but also the 'look and feel' of the outputs to suit your audiences.

We are happy for a senior member of the team [REDACTED] to attend up to three separate meetings relating to the TAF, where they can feed in relevant findings from the research, and review relevant documentation as necessary. We would like to use the inception meeting to understand at what points this support might be useful, and how we might be best placed to help.

### Working flexibly with you

Many of our large-scale studies need to be delivered very flexibly to adapt to emerging findings or to changes in client priorities and we would envisage working similarly flexibly here. Flexibility is core to our project management ethos and our ability to respond quickly is ensured by:

- IFF's being set-up to respond in this way (so efficiency/speed are part of our corporate ethos). We are an ad-hoc agency regularly conducting short-turnaround tactical research for the public/private sectors;
- A large, senior team dedicated to the project;
- A wide range of resources in-house including a large telephone centre, coding, data services, qualitative interviewers etc.

## Data security procedures

IFF takes the issue of data security extremely seriously and takes all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and confidentiality of respondents' records and of management / administrative data provided by our clients and of survey data collected. IFF Research adheres to the GDPR / UK Data Protection Act 2018, we also hold ISO/IEC 27001:2013 certification (the international data security standard). We have also this year gained Cyber Essentials certification. We are happy to provide security policies/certifications on request.

IFF Research fully supports the aims of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Explicit consent of the data subject is established and documented at the start of each survey interview or qualitative discussion. This will be explicitly and separately obtained in relation to sensitive categories of personal data, in addition to our obtaining consent to participate in general. Our approach to establishing consent, and our processes for handling, collecting and processing personal (and sometimes sensitive) data is tailored to each project, in agreement with our client. Further details on our typical approach is outlined on our website: <https://www.iffresearch.com/iff-research-gdpr-policy/>. Any data received from RSH will be safely transferred via our secure transfer file site (where files need to be encrypted) and stored on our secure servers to which only the project team will be provided access.

## Risk management

The key to managing risk is to identify areas of potential risk at the outset, monitor these, keep vigilant for others, and put plans in place to address. Director [REDACTED] will be overall risk owner. We will assess and summarise the likely project-relevant risks in a detailed 'risk register', encompassing the nature of the risk, what it is caused by, its likely consequences, its degree of likelihood, its level of impact, mitigation steps and residual impact if these steps are taken. This risk register is then discussed and refined at the project inception, and is reviewed regularly. Key areas of risk align with the project challenges and include: the impact of Covid-19, maximising response and minimising attrition. These are elaborated on in the risk table below, each risk is graded as follows:

Grade: Combined effect of likelihood / impact					
		Impact			
		Low	Medium	High	EXTREME
Likelihood	Low	E	D	C	A
	Medium	D	C	B	A
	High	C	B	A	A

Risk	How risk might materialise	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation / risk reduction
We are unable to use the RSH database of social landlords	RSH may encounter GDPR/data protection concerns	Medium	High	As we set out in PROJ 1.1., we would then have the option of either requesting that RSH select a random sample of landlords in line with the sample structure and distribute an IFF-created online portal
Risk	How risk might materialise	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation / risk reduction
	preventing the database being shared in time			to these landlords. Or we could engage directly with housing associations and local authorities with whom we are already familiar.

Low response rate	Low engagement from social housing landlords, resulting in nonresponse bias	Medium	High	We outline in detail in our method strategies to ensure a strong response rate including a robust contact strategy to minimise non-response, reassurance letter to e-mail, and text about the survey on BEIS and our websites, at least 8 calls, careful sample management, and out-ofhours calling. If necessary we can increase the level of interviewer resource allocated to encouraging response. The other option is to extend fieldwork, but this would incur delays on final report delivery.
The qualitative strand is not finished in time	The timing for this strand is tight, and at risk of delay	Medium	Medium	We have the capacity to deliver the number of interviewers required in the timings we set out earlier. We also have a team of 40 qualitative specialists. They are all highly experienced (over 5 years in most cases) and have interviewed businesses/professional audiences and consumers on sensitive financial topics for a wide range of public sector organisations. The timetable is only at risk if key milestones are not met by BEIS.
Survey delivers an unrepresentative sample	Sample poorly drawn (underrepresentation of certain groups)	Low	High	We are proposing an attempted census, so the survey profile will be representative of the population of social housing landlords overall. However, we will – as set out in the method section – designate some landlords as “key responders” due to the size of their tenant base.
Errors on the survey data	Mistakes in tables or SPSS Programming	Low	High	Thorough, time-intensive checking of all outputs against each other (toplines against SPSS files against tables) by multiple members of the research team.
Covid-19 pandemic causes disruption to IFF’s ability to deliver the project	Potential impact on ability to deliver to specification / timescales	Medium	Medium	Our entire team, including field department, are set up to work remotely if required. We have inbuilt capacity both within the project team and within the wider business to cover in the event of illness. We have well developed systems from the last six months to deliver good response rates and continue fieldwork through national lockdowns. We have a full Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan

				in place, and this can be provided upon request.
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## Part 2: Contract Terms



Contract Terms v6.0

