

Invitation to Tender: Guidebook user and impact research

Summary

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) invites proposals from external researchers to conduct mixed methods research into the EIF's fully searchable database of early intervention programmes that have been evaluated and shown to improve outcomes for children and young people, the [EIF Guidebook](#) (GB). The Guidebook is designed to support commissioners of early intervention services to use evidence in their decision-making, to encourage the implementation of evidence-based programmes that are likely to be effective and so improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

This research will investigate, who is using the Guidebook, how they are using it as well as the barriers and enablers to use. It will provide clear recommendations about how the Guidebook can best meet its objective of increasing the use of evidence in decision making in order to inform future work on the EIF Guidebook to ensure it has maximum impact with users.

Bids should include evidence demonstrating:

- Expertise in designing and delivering mixed methods research
- Familiarity with use of evidence in policy and practice with EIF's key audiences
- Familiarity with the work of the Early Intervention Foundation and the content of its Guidebook
- A summary of proposed methods, describing how they will meet the aims and objectives of the research
- The ability to deliver high-quality outputs to time and on budget, as demonstrated by relevant experience, a timetabled project plan, consideration of risk management and internal quality assurance plans.

We do not wish to be prescriptive about the design of the project, but expect outputs to include:

1. the design and completion of an online survey with EIF's key audiences
2. the design and completion of approx. 25 qualitative interviews with EIF's key audiences
3. a concise report summarising the key findings from the research.

The primary audience for this report will be key stakeholders at EIF itself (including EIF's senior management team, and the team who develops the Guidebook). However, it will also need to be appropriate for other interested parties including other What Works centres.

EIF's expectation is for the core proposal will cost between **£40,000 and £55,000 inclusive of VAT**.

The deadline for bids is **5pm, Monday 5 October 2020**.

Background

About the Early Intervention Foundation

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) was established in 2013 as a research charity to champion and support the use of effective early intervention to improve the lives of children and young people at risk of experiencing poor outcomes.

Effective early intervention works to prevent problems from occurring in the first place, or to tackle them head-on when they do, before problems get worse. It does this by supporting children's physical, cognitive, behavioural, and social and emotional development. It also helps to foster a whole set of personal strengths and capabilities that prepare a child for adult life. This is where we believe early intervention can make the biggest difference and can provide the greatest lifelong benefits.

As a member of the government's What Works Network, EIF has a pivotal role as the go-to source for evidence and advice on effective early intervention for children and young people. Our work focuses on the developmental issues that can arise during a child's life, from birth to the age of 18, including their physical, cognitive, behavioural and social and emotional development. As a result, our work covers a wide range of policy and service areas, including health, education, families and policing.

- We make the case for effective early intervention, to ensure it is prioritised and invested in at both the national and local level.
- We conduct research, bringing together and synthesising the evidence from scientific studies, tests and evaluations of early intervention programmes and practices, and the expertise and experiences of people working in early intervention.
- We publish reports to disseminate the findings, conclusions and recommendations from our research, and produce resources to translate this research into practical guidance and tools.
- We work with government and all levels of the early intervention sector to ensure this evidence is used in decisions about how early intervention is supported and implemented, from national policy to frontline practice.

About the EIF Guidebook

The EIF Guidebook provides information about early intervention programmes that have been evaluated and shown to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The EIF Guidebook is a fully searchable online database which provides a wealth of information about over 100 early intervention programmes that have been shown to improve child outcomes.

To help you make the decisions that impact upon the lives of children and young people in your area, the Guidebook helps to answer questions like:

- Is there evidence that this programme has achieved positive outcomes for children and young people?
- How strong is that evidence? How confident can we be that these positive outcomes are real and more likely to be replicated as a result?
- What specific child outcomes has it been shown to achieve in the past?
- What does it cost, compared to other programmes?

- What else do I need to know about how it works and how it should be implemented?

The Guidebook serves as an important starting point for commissioners to find out more about effective early interventions, and for programme providers to find out more about what good evidence of impact looks like and how it can be captured. Its key audiences are:

- Local Commissioners
- Local and national providers of early intervention
- National policy makers
- Sector and workforce bodies
- Funders of early intervention
- Early intervention programme developers

As just one of our key resources for commissioners and practitioners, the Guidebook is an essential part of EIF's work to support the development of and investment in effective early intervention programmes.

Rationale, objectives and research questions

Aims and objectives

The key aim of the work is to understand more about how EIF's stakeholders interact with the EIF Guidebook to ensure that it has the biggest impact possible.

This work aims to:

- Increase EIF's understanding of who uses the Guidebook and how they use each of the core elements of the Guidebook.
- Understand how the GB influences decision making and if it is achieving its objectives of supporting the commissioning of evidence based interventions.
- Provide insight into the behavioural barriers and facilitators to the use of evidence from the Guidebook to inform EIF's work to drive use of evidence based early intervention in policy and practice.
- Provide a set of clear recommendations about how the Guidebook could be improved to encourage evidence-informed decision making.
- Inform the development of decision-making tools to accompany the Guidebook which we plan to work on over the coming two years.

Research questions

This piece of work should answer the following research questions:

- Who uses the EIF Guidebook? What type of organisation do they work for and what is their role? How well does this match the Guidebook's target audience?
- How well do stakeholders understand the core elements of the Guidebook? How could these be improved to aid comprehension?
- How do stakeholders use the core elements of the Guidebook in their work? Which elements do stakeholders find most/least helpful?

- What is the impact of the Guidebook? To what extent does the Guidebook influence decision making and how? To what extent does it support the commissioning of evidence based programmes? Are there any other ways in which it influences stakeholders work?
- What are the barriers and enablers to the Guidebook's impact (framed in behavioural terms)?
- How could the Guidebook be improved to increase its impact? What additional content could be usefully added?
- What tools could accompany the Guidebook to increase its impact?

Out of scope

Given the restraints of Covid we do not expect that face to face qualitative work will be possible.

Research design, timeline and reporting

We do not wish to be too prescriptive about the research methodology and are happy to consider innovative ideas, as long as they meet the aims and objectives that we have outlined above. However, we envisage that the research will include the following elements:

User survey

Task 1: Develop long list sample and identify channels to promote the survey as widely as possible, working with EIF comms and partners to develop this plan.

Task 2: Refine and agree key questions for the survey which should be no more than 10mins in length.

Task 3: Test and launch survey.

Qualitative follow up

Task 4: Develop topic guide and sampling for qualitative work based on early findings from the survey and key questions.

Task 5: Undertake interviews with approximately 25 stakeholders.

Analysis and reporting

Task 6 Develop analysis framework bringing together the quantitative and qualitative work. Populate this and triangulate the findings.

Task 7: Internal facing report which provides recommendations for future Guidebook development.

This work should be completed to meet the following milestones:

Table 1. Key milestones and indicative delivery date

Milestones	Delivery Date
ITT issued	14th September 2020
Deadline for submission of tenders	5pm 5th October 2020
Bidders notified of interview	9th October 2020
Interviews	w/c 12th October 2020
Notify successful bidder	w/c 12th October 2020
Kick off meeting	w/c 19 th October 2020
Conduct and complete survey	by w/c 11th January 2020
Conduct and complete qualitative work	w/c 25th January 2020
Summarise Early findings presentation	w/c 18th January 2020
Draft report for EIF comment	w/c 22 th February 2020
EIF to provide formal feedback	w/c 1nd March 2020
Final report presented to EIF	w/c 15th March 2020
EIF sign-off on final report	w/c 22 March 2020

Reporting

We are open to proposals on the reporting outputs and their content but have preliminarily set out below an outline of outputs in line with the draft milestones.

Emerging findings presentation

The findings will be useful for informing the direction of other EIF projects. It will therefore be useful for the project leads to present emerging findings as soon as feasible after the survey is complete and before undertaking any qualitative work.

Report of publishable standards

We believe that the findings of this study will be of interest to a wide range of audiences, as well as support our work internally on the Guidebook. We therefore expect that the winning bidder will produce a report that could be published in part, or in full on our website covering all aspects of the survey, including its background, design, findings and recommendations. Guidelines on formatting and structure will be provided.

EIF will work with the project team to comment and edit the final report given that any published outputs will be the intellectual property of EIF.

Project management

The project manager for this project from the EIF will be Hannah Wilson. It is envisaged that the winning bidder will have one lead project manager responsible for the project and at least one other team member to complete this work.

The project will not have a formal advisory group but it is expected that the EIF project manager and other colleagues will have input into the project at key milestones and to be agreed between the EIF and the bidder when confirming milestones.

Once the bid is confirmed, EIF and the evaluators will work together to agree timings and frequencies for more regular catch-ups and project updates. As a general guide, the EIF will aim to turnaround minor requests within a day and commenting on more major one such as draft outputs within a week. The evaluator should factor this into project timings and indicate clearly in any project timetable when such outputs will be submitted for clearance.

Data collection, sharing and management

We expect that the survey participants will be recruited in a manner that is courteous, ethical and in keeping with general data protection regulations (GDPR) standards. This means that participants will be informed about the purpose of the study and how their data will be stored and used before their consent is obtained.

We also expect that the raw survey data can be shared with EIF in a manner in keeping with current GDPR standards, including the anonymisation of personal information and the retention of data for no longer than is absolutely necessary.

Budget

The EIF is looking for the most competitive bid that can deliver maximum value for money. The core proposal should be costed at or below £45,000 inclusive of VAT, although we will entertain bids up to £55,000 with additional costed options where appropriate. Bidders should specify what they would charge for their proposal to meet the research aims and pricing should include a detailed breakdown of how the proposed sum was arrived at. Figures should be inclusive of all financial costs incurred, including expenses.

Risk management

The contractor will be required to implement a structured approach to risk management, outlining the key risks to project delivery identified and how these will be managed.

As part of the regular progress reports the provider should report on performance against relevant milestones and include an update on risks identified and how these are being managed.

Bid requirements

Content

The format of the application is at the discretion of the bidder. The five elements of the bid that will be assessed with equal weighting include:

1. **Understanding of research background and objectives:** Bidders should demonstrate a good understanding of content and objectives of the EIF Guidebook. Bids will also need to demonstrate they have reflected on the research aim and objectives, as well

as setting out what they consider to be the key questions and sub-questions that the study should seek to address.

2. **A summary of methods:** Bidders should respond with a detailed summary statement of methods to be used that can provide rigorous evidence to help answer agreed research questions. This should include demonstrating their expertise in conducting high-quality mixed methods research.
3. **Delivery of high-quality outputs:** Bidders should demonstrate their ability to produce high-quality outputs including presentations and publishable reports engaging a wide range of audiences. This should include how they plan to work with EIF to produce these outputs.
4. **Delivering to time and budget demonstrating relevant experience:** Bidders should include:
 - A list of the staff that will be involved in the project and should list relevant experience; their role in the project; their estimated time to be spent on the project and the length of time they have spent working with your organisation.
 - A detailed timetable/project plan for carrying out the work based on the proposed approach and method. This should highlight key milestones and deadlines, and any interdependencies, including suggested meetings and progress reports. This should include a statement that the timetable for delivery can be met.
 - Bidders should set out their approach to risk management and provide a draft risk register, including proposed mitigating actions to risks identified.
 - Bidders should also detail what internal quality assurance will be in place and how this will align with the governance specified above.
 - Relevant experience and references: Evidence of at least two previous relevant research projects should be included and along with two referees from clients that the bidder currently or in the recent past has provided services to.
5. **A reference for similar work:** Bidders should be able to provide the details of a reference for one organisation for whom they have successfully delivered similar work. The reference will be contacted after the successful bidder is notified, but before the contract is confirmed.

Submission

Interested bidders should submit their tender via email by **5pm 5 October 2020** to Hannah Wilson at hannah.wilson@eif.org.uk. Tenders submitted after this date will not be considered.

If you have any queries about your application, please feel free to get in contact with Hannah, who will happily answer all questions.

Early Intervention Foundation is a registered charity, number 1152605 and a company limited by guarantee number 8066785. Registered office 10 Salamanca Place, Vauxhall, London SE1 7HB.