



Qualitative research understanding the experiences of NEETs in Blackpool

Clarification Questions

Date: 20/01/2026

Q No	Question	Response
1	Could you please advise if all information is contained within the Find-a-Tender notice, or if there is a specification document that you would be able to send over?	Please find the link to the Find a Tender notice , which has the document linked in the notice.
2	<p>"Sections 1 - 4 should not exceed 10 sides of A4 and sections 5 - 6 should not exceed 3 sides of A4, for a combined total of 13 sides. Any bids above that will not be considered. The font size should not be smaller than 10. Embedded links will not be considered, nor will Annexes that exceed the 13-page count."</p> <p>However, in the sections described above this text, there doesn't seem to be a Section 6 - just wanted to check that nothing had been missed out or whether Section 7 had been mislabelled.</p>	Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.
3a	<p>"In the document you reference that we should set out proposal out under specific section. You reference section 6, but any detail of what's required seems to be missing".</p> <p>As shown below, it goes from section 5 and skips to section 7.</p> <p>Can you provide the missing document/section please?</p>	Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.
3b	Can you also share what level of detail you require for references and how many?	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4; therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail.



Social Mobility Commission

Q No	Question	Response
4	In section 18 it mentions a document 4 containing terms and conditions, but this does not seem to be included. Would it be possible to send the T&Cs to me so that we can review them please?	Please note that the Social Mobility Commission uses the Government Standard Contracts for Procurement. For this procurement, the Social Mobility Commission will use the Short Form Contract, available here .
5a	Does the Commission have any internal guidance on appropriate incentivisation payments for interview/focus group participants, or are you happy for suppliers to propose this?	Please refer to Government Social Research guidance. We anticipate incentives being used in this research and suppliers can propose a suitable approach in their bid.
5b	Would the Commission be able to provide a room for in-person interviews taking place in Blackpool?	We envision interviews taking place in local service provider facilities and young people's homes. Suppliers need not cost for providing a room.
5c	Please could the Commission clarify if there is a Section 6 for the proposal format? The instructions reference Section 5 'Security and Safeguarding' and Section 7 'References' but do not mention Section 6.	Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.
5d	Can the Commission confirm what is required for Section 7 references? Is this something suppliers need to complete, or just a section to reference the page requirements for the submission?	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4; therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail.
5e	Is there a page limit for section 7? Is it included in the combined total of 13 sides for sections 1-6 or additional?	As per the answer to 5d,
5f	Would the Commission be open to suppliers using AI-assisted methods for transcription of interviews/focus groups and for analysis?	Yes. In line with the Government's AI Playbook , we are open to the use of AI for transcription and analysis, with appropriate consideration for data security and validation.
5g	Can the Commission share the contract this opportunity will be governed by?	Please note that the Social Mobility Commission uses the Government Standard Contracts for Procurement. For this procurement, the Social Mobility Commission will use the Short Form Contract, available here .
5h	Are we able to submit our response as a PDF?	The Social Mobility Commission will accept both PDF and Word/ Excel Documents.
5i	Will the Commission provide a template for pricing, or are you happy with us using the format in Section Cost and Charging Arrangements?	The Social Mobility Commission is happy for suppliers to use the format in the cost and charging arrangements section.



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Q No	Question	Response
5j	<p>Can we please submit the gantt chart as a separate attachment (rather than a table or image in the main proposal document)? This will allow suppliers to present the necessary detail in a more reader-friendly way.</p> <p>If you are happy with the additional attachments, can you please confirm that the page limit for the main proposal document will remain at 13 pages?</p>	<p>The Social Mobility Commission will accept this, and the page limit will remain 13 pages.</p>
5k	<p>Can suppliers include a contents page that will be exempt from the 13 page limit?</p>	<p>The Social Mobility Commission will accept this.</p>
6	<p>Could the Commission clarify its expectations and planned approach for feeding back findings to the young people who participate in the research? In particular, we would welcome clarity on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether SMC intends to be directly involved in participant feedback, or whether this should be delivered via the research supplier/s;• the form that feedback to participants is expected to take; and• the anticipated timing of this feedback (for example, whether this would occur prior to publication or within a reasonable timeframe following fieldwork, such as the month following submission of the final report).	<p>We do not specifically ask the supplier to provide feedback to participants. We encourage a supplier to submit a suggestion for a participatory element and/or focus groups, which could be used to discuss and validate findings.</p>
7a	<p>In Document 2 Clause 19, Section 6 is missing. Are the references supposed to be Section 6 or should there be another one here? If it is the case that Section 7 is the references, then what is the page limit for this?</p>	<p>Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.</p>
7b	<p>In Document 2 Clauses 17 and 18, there is mention of a Document 4 and Document 5, but neither these are included in the ITT. Please can you share both with us so that we can access 'the terms and conditions in Document 4 Attachment 1' and</p>	<p>Document 4 Attachment 1 is the Terms & Conditions used as part of the contract. Please note that the Social Mobility Commission uses the Government Standard Contracts for Procurement. For this procurement, the Social Mobility Commission will use the Short Form Contract, available here.</p>



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Q No	Question	Response
	understand the tender period 'specified in Document 5'?	Document 5 is no longer applicable, apologies for the confusion.
7c	When do we need to have the enhanced DBS checks completed by?	These have to be completed by the completion of deliverable 1 and the project can not progress to deliverable 2, until these are in place.
8a	The ITT states the requirement for 30 in-depth interviews plus optional focus groups/co-participatory design. Are you open to the inclusion of additional methods or audiences if we feel it would add value to the core approach (within budget)?	We are seeking proposals in line with the interview and potential focus groups/co-participatory approach as outlined in the ITT. Proposals for methodology which does not capture these core elements will not be successful. Additional proposals to strengthen the rigour of the qualitative methodology (in line with Government Social Research Standards) will be considered.
8b	With regards to gaining ethical approval, does the SMC have an ethics board or would the supplier be expected to arrange that separately?	The SMC does not have an ethics board and we expect the supplier to propose and complete suitable ethical arrangements.
8c	For any co-participation element, the ITT mentions utilising a local youth panel in Blackpool - does such a panel already exist that we could be put in contact with?	The SMC does have contacts with existing panels that could be utilised by a supplier.
8d	On page 7 the ITT notes "the independent expert advisers who we are contracted with" - could you tell us more about this/who they are? For example, might we be able to consult with them at the outset of the project?	We are collaborating with a range of cross government and academic professionals for this research. We intend this project to be developed collaboratively with SMC primarily, but there may be opportunities to utilise our wider contacts to ensure the research is robust.
8e	In format of bids, Section 7 References - how many references do you require? And do you require written references to be included in our bid, or rather provide contact details for referees?	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4; therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail.
8f	Is there a requirement for a PowerPoint presentation of findings, or is the final output purely a written report?	The final output (deliverable 3) should be a written report. High-level findings under deliverable 2 can be presented in a slide deck or a more succinct format than deliverable 3.



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Q No	Question	Response
8g	Do you anticipate meetings with the successful supplier being online or face-to-face?	The Social Mobility Commission anticipates that meetings will primarily be online.
8h	If successful, would there be any scope to hold the initiation meeting either the week commencing 9 th or 23 rd given the week of the 16 th Feb is half term in many areas?	The Social Mobility Commission is happy to discuss with the successful supplier when the initiation meeting happens to ensure it works for both.
9a	Based on our experience recruiting NEET young people (16-24), in-person interviews with this cohort can be challenging. While we share your preference for face-to-face engagement, would there be flexibility to offer remote options to help ensure we achieve the target sample?	We would prefer for interviews to be face-to-face as online interviews may not gather the depth of experience we are looking to understand.
9b	In line with the Commission's response to question 2, would we be able to use local service provider facilities for the focus group discussions?	Please see answer to 5b.
9c	In line with the Commission's response to question 11, can suppliers have a cover page and contents page outside the 13 page limit?	Yes, this will be accepted.
10	We have only one: the 'format of bids' references 7 sections, but Section 6 seems to be missing. Is this merely a typo, where section 7 is, actually, section 6? If you could confirm, we would be very appreciative.	Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.
11a	Please can you provide some more detail about what you are ideally looking to get out of the research - for example, is it solely about identifying barriers and opportunities, or would the supplier also be expected to recommend interventions?	The supplier is not expected to recommend interventions or make wider policy recommendations. We may seek to include case studies on promising interventions but do not expect the supplier to lead this. We intend to use the research findings to inform policy recommendations developed by the Social Mobility Commission.
11b	I just wanted to double check the numbering of the sections - page 14 refers to Section 5 (Data security and safeguarding), then jumps to Section 7 (References), but the text below then refers to a Section 6. Please can you confirm the sections we need to complete and their numbering?	Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.



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Q No	Question	Response
11c	Are you expecting a minimum number of references to be included?	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4; therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail.
11d	Please can you confirm exactly what you would like to be included in references - e.g. should this be contact information only, or would this ideally also include projects worked on, project values, case studies etc?	Please see response to 11c. .
12a	What is the validity period of a completed enhanced DBS check?	This would be expected to be in place throughout the duration of the research fieldwork.
12b	If a primary objective is to test the methodology prior to rollout, what level of flexibility is there in adapting the recommended approach? For instance, could an initial phase include a small ethnographic study and stakeholder interviews such as a local councillor (internal and external)?	See 8a. We are seeking to understand the lived experiences of young NEET people. Other stakeholders such as local councillors are unlikely to provide this insight. We intend to design and test the methodology within this pilot.
12c	Participatory research is recommended and welcomed within the tender. One potential approach would be to use insights from the initial in-depth interviews to inform the content and structure of subsequent focus groups. Shared motivations, behaviours, and barriers would be surfaced and explored, with the groups having a core aim of deliberating and arriving at potential solutions. Would this approach meet the participatory requirement, or is a more active level of participation expected?	This approach would meet the participatory requirement for the research, but we encourage suppliers to outline any other proposed methods.
12d	The tender mentions collaboration with a Blackpool youth panel. Would you be able to facilitate an introduction to the appropriate contacts?	Please see response to 8c.
12e	What criteria would you explicitly classify as hard to reach and therefore unlikely to be available for recruitment through partner organisations?	We specifically expect that participants who are not accessing services or support already as hard to reach. However, this definition is not exclusive and it may include particularly vulnerable young people.



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Q No	Question	Response
12f	What proportion of young males to females is expected for the research—for example, 70% male and 30% female?	We are not setting an exact proportion of respondents but expect the sample to cover the following demographics and risk factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age group (16-18, 18-24),• Sex,• Disability status, (disabled/non disabled)• Care responsibilities, (carer/non carer)• Ethnicity (minority group, white British),• Service user (accessing services/hard to reach),• Qualifications (low attainment/other)• Family composition (single parent family/dual parent family/care)• NEET duration (<12 months/>12 months)
12g	Do you have any guidance on appropriate and ethical forms of incentivisation for this audience? In particular, would cash incentives be considered suitable, or should we explore alternatives such as career- or lifestyle-related benefits, or some kind of incentivisation delivered through a social value component offered by members of the team, for example?	Please see response to 5a.
12h	Any more background data on the history of the issue, especially in this area of England: any social, economic and cultural patterns that we can look at/dive into?	Please refer to the footnotes in the tender document for further information.
13a	The specification lists a range of characteristics to be reflected within the 30-interview sample. Could you clarify whether there are any minimum coverage expectations or priority characteristics and/or combinations (for example, those referenced as understudied, such as older NEETs or young men) that you would particularly like to see represented, should trade-offs be required for feasibility?	We do not have any minimum coverage expectations or priority combinations, but are aiming for analytical coverage, allowing for meaningful sub-group comparison and achieving illustrative depth across key experiences. We do not expect to achieve full data saturation within every single subgroup, but aim to ensure key demographic factors are considered.
13b	As the pilot is intended both to generate local insight and to test a methodology for potential future roll-out as part of a place-based strategy, could you clarify how you would like suppliers to balance depth of place-based insight against methodological standardisation and transferability?	We aim to develop a method which can be utilised in different locations in future. As such, we would like to use semi structured interviews to introduce widely applicable topics (e.g. local education/employment opportunities) before exploring the role of the local situation in more depth. The supplier is expected to work with SMC to develop the interview questions.



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Q No	Question	Response
13c	The ITT asks that costs be shown separately by methodology and/or deliverable. Would the Commission prefer bidders to present costs solely at the methodology/deliverable level, or would you consider it helpful to also break these down into labour (e.g., number of days x day rates) and hard costs within each line item?	Please outline the cost per deliverable.
13d	Could you please clarify your expectations for references, for example whether you require named referees with contact details, brief written testimonials, or simply project descriptions that can be verified on request?	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Bidders do not need to include contact details, but may include written testimonials.
13e	The ITT notes that suppliers may be asked to present emerging findings at different stages, including to Commissioners and advisers. Could you clarify the anticipated frequency and format of these engagements, to support proportionate planning?	Deliverable 2 sets out a requirement for a high level summary of findings in a format such as slide deck. This is intended as a succinct method to share emerging findings as a project milestone. Deliverable 3 requests a written report and constructive engagement on feedback. As a minimum, we request monthly project updates by email, and would like timely collaborative engagement with the SMC research team to support the project development. Contact may be more frequent during periods such as interview design, and less during routine phases. Meetings are anticipated to be virtual.
13f	The ITT notes that suppliers will work with the SMC and its pre-existing contacts in Blackpool Pride of Place and Blackpool and Fylde College. Could you clarify the anticipated level of collaboration with these partners (e.g., introductions and facilitation versus joint recruitment planning), and the degree of autonomy suppliers should assume in managing recruitment?	We would expect the anticipated level of collaboration to be introductions and facilitation with contacts in Blackpool. The supplier would be given autonomy in managing recruitment.
13g	Where suppliers propose the use of specialist or alternative recruitment pathways for hard-to-reach participants, could you clarify whether named organisations are expected to be confirmed at tender stage, or whether it is sufficient to outline the types of partners and overall approach, with final selection agreed post-award?	We would expect suppliers to outline the name and costing of any proposed recruitment partner, particularly as there are safeguarding concerns with the vulnerable population of young people. We understand that the use of different recruitment pathways may be beneficial to accessing a robust sample.



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Q No	Question	Response
13h	Could you clarify whether the Commission has any organisational policies relating to participant remuneration, such as the Living Wage, and any preferred payment mechanisms or approval processes?	Please see response to 5a.
14a	Is 'social mobility lens' referring to a specific framework or our interpretation?	We are not referring to a specific framework but we expect suppliers to outline their approach in the bid in line with wider research on social mobility.
14b	How detailed / long would you expect the supporting literature review to be?	We do not expect this to be exhaustive but rather to provide context to the research.
14c	Are you expecting to recruit a minimum number of individuals for coverage of the different demographics listed in the brief (e.g. disabled individuals, range of ethnicity, care responsibility etc.), or is aiming for a range across these subgroups on a best effort basis acceptable?	Please see response to 13a
14d	You mention covering a range of NEET duration (<12 months/>12 months) - is there a minimum?	We do not have a minimum duration of being NEET.
14e	Is ethics/safeguarding approval reviewed internally by the SMC or is independent ethics approval required?	Please see response to 8b,
14f	Do you have contacts for a youth panel in Blackpool for the co-participatory design?	Please see response to 8c.
14g	There doesn't seem to be a Section 6 in the 'Format of Bids' section, so just wanted to check we're not missing anything?	Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.
14h	Would you require anonymized transcripts of the interviews?	Yes, this is set out in the research tender.



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Q No	Question	Response
15a	Can you provide guidance on what is required for 'Section 7 References'. Is this intended to be a bibliography for work that is references, or references in terms of past work that can referenced?	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4; therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail.
15b	Can you provide guidance on what is required for 'Section 1 Summary of Proposal'. The ITT does not provide any guidance.	The SMC expects a short introduction outlining your understanding of the project requirements and context. It is basically an introduction to the bid.
15c	The specifications states "sections 5 - 6 should not exceed 3 sides of A4", however there is no section 6 in the wording. Is section 6 meant to be 'Section 7 references'?	Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.
15d	The invitation to tender reference documents 4 and 5, but these are not included in the pdf available on the website. Can you please share these documents?	Document 4 Attachment 1 is the Terms & Conditions used as part of the contract. Please note that the Social Mobility Commission uses the Government Standard Contracts for Procurement. For this procurement, the Social Mobility Commission will use the Short Form Contract, available here . Document 5 is no longer applicable, apologies for the confusion.
15e	Are SMC able to provide any support with securing venues to support interview and focus groups being held in person in Blackpool, or will the winning organisation need to source and budget for venues?	We envision interviews taking place in local service provider facilities and young people's homes. Suppliers need not cost for providing a room.
15f	Does SMC have any minimum requirements or preference for the type of incentives or reimbursements provided to participants for the qualitative research?	Please refer to Government Social Research guidance. We anticipate incentives being used in this research and suppliers can propose a suitable approach in their bid.
16a	I noticed that the format section numbering jumps from 5 to 7, with section 6 missing. Could you clarify whether this is a typographical error or if there is an additional section we need to consider?	Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.
16b	In section 7, does the reference pertain to previous projects we have developed? How many references should we include, and what type of information	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4;



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Q No	Question	Response
	are you expecting (e.g., a short summary of the project, budget details)?	therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail.
17a	Could you confirm whether SMC and or the local partners you have in mind have existing relationships with young people in Blackpool that can be mobilised to support recruitment (particularly for those not currently engaged with services)?	The local partners we have do have existing relationships with young people in Blackpool, but we expect suppliers to outline proposal to recruit participants through alternative/blended recruitment pathways/the use of specialist recruitment partners and to submit a plan outlining this - see response to question 13g.
17b	Can you clarify the SMC's expectations around methodological flexibility if recruitment proves more challenging than anticipated? Specifically, if we are unable to reach 30 interviews with young people can we supplement with interviews with local service providers or other stakeholders, provide incentive, or a smaller number of deeper interviews?	We are looking for interviews with young people to capture the lived experiences of being NEET and interviews with local service providers or other stakeholders will not provide this insight. We anticipate suppliers may want to submit a plan for incentives (please see response to 5a) and include mitigation against risks.
18a	We understand that we are required to provide references in our response. Please could you confirm how many are required, and what information is required at this point; i.e., contact details for referees, or written references.	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4; therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail.
18b	On page 15, Is 'Section 7' a typo, and should read Section 6?	Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.
18c	Please could you confirm whether the Gantt chart should be included within the page count or can be submitted as an Annex? I am concerned that any attempt to fit into into A4 may make the content difficult to read.	The SMC will accept the Gantt chart outside of the page count, and it can be submitted as an Annex.
18d	The ITT refers to a budget template; do you wish tenderers to use a SMC template, or their own?	The SMC is happy for suppliers to use their own.
19	My colleague, who is based in Lancashire near Blackpool, will be visiting next week. We would appreciate your advice on whether there are any individuals he should meet, or any community centres or similar organisations it would be beneficial for him to visit?	We do not expect suppliers to meet with contacts prior to any contract being awarded.



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Q No	Question	Response
20	<p>References. Could you clarify what kind of references you hope to see here?</p> <p>For example, these might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testimonial quotes from relevant named individuals / organisations who are familiar with previous projects, and can testify to the quality of our work• Names / emails of relevant individuals / organisations who are happy to be contacted for reference• Academic references to any works cited in the proposal	<p>For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Bidders do not need to include contact details, but may include written testimonials.</p>
21a	<p>What role do you see Blackpool & Fylde College having? Do they have sample of local NEET young people? I.e. do they have contact details for former students who Destinations data shows to be NEET? What role do you see them and Blackpool Pride of Place having? Would they be able to directly contact potential recruits (with content we provide)? Or would they be more advertising the research to their whole audience?</p>	<p>We would expect the anticipated level of collaboration to be introductions and facilitation with contacts in Blackpool. The supplier would be given autonomy in managing recruitment.</p>
21b	<p>You request in-person face to face interviews. We do not believe this will be the best method of working with all of the target group you are looking to engage (due to accessibility) Would you be open to suggestions around other methods?</p>	<p>Please see answer to 9a</p>
22	<p>The Format of Bids, in Section 19 (p.13), includes headings for Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7. There is no Section 6. Is this an omission, or is the 7 meant to be 6?</p>	<p>Apologies, section 7 is meant to be section 6 in the text.</p>
23a	<p>We wanted to double check that the college and other partner you mentioned during market engagement are committed to supporting referral of young people to the study to support recruitment?</p>	<p>Please see answer to 17a</p>
23b	<p>Would these partners be willing to host activities (workshops, and interviews) on their premises?</p>	<p>Please see answer to 15e</p>



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Q No	Question	Response
23c	Can we double check that the literature review and quantitative data, can form a small, targeted piece of desk research to ensure the scale of the NEET issue by place is documented to be current in reporting. This means the literature review would be small and selective to provide sufficient context to the study?	Yes, that is correct. Please see answer to 14b.
23d	In the sample structure for the youreng people, you note sex as a stratification rather than gender. Is this intentional?	We would like the sample to capture both males and females. As the primary sample of NEET young people are a hard to reach group and the sample is small, we have not stipulated that the sample must reflect further disaggregation of gender, though inclusion is welcomed where feasible.
24a	Would you be able to provide more information on whether there will there be named contacts from the organisations listed for recruitment help? And do you have any other contacts in relevant local organisations e.g. mental health support, disability support services etc, that you could provide, that may also be useful?	We will provide access to contacts but please see answer to 17a.
24b	Are you open to suggestions of other methodological approaches/ways we believe that the brief can potentially be developed - E.g. an alt to focus groups?	We are looking for interviews with young people to capture the lived experiences of being NEET and interviews. We encourage suppliers to submit proposals for a participatory element of this research, including supplementary focus groups as set out in the research proposal. As long as the primary requirements of the study are met, a proposal considering additional approaches can be considered.
25	On page 14 the ITT indicates the number of pages for each section. However, references are mentioned but not included in the number of pages. Can you please clarify if references are outside the number of pages to be submitted.	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4; therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail.
26a	Can the Commission clarify the practical role of Blackpool Pride of Place and Blackpool and Fylde College in participant recruitment (e.g. introductions, referrals, venue access), and whether any minimum recruitment support is guaranteed? This will allow	Please see answer 17a.



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Q No	Question	Response
	accurate costing of any external recruitment required.	
26b	Can you confirm the operational definition of NEET to be used for recruitment purposes (e.g. minimum duration, treatment of short-term gaps, informal work, volunteering)?	The NEET population includes young people who are unemployed or who are economically inactive but not in education or training (or waiting to start). The supplier will work with SMC to ensure the definition of NEET captures varying risk factors and characteristics and agreement is reached on issues such as minimum duration.
26c	Are participant incentives expected as part of this research? If so, is there guidance on incentive type or value, and should these costs be included within the £80,000 budget cap?	Please see answer 5a. Costs of incentives should be included within the budget.
26d	While interviews are described as intended to be face-to-face for 1 hour, would SMC accept other face to face approaches to meet the needs of the cohort, as well as a small proportion of interviews being conducted remotely where required for accessibility, safeguarding, or recruitment feasibility?	Please see answer to 9a.
26e	Specifically, within the suggested 30 interviews with NEET young people, is illustrative coverage across the specified demographic and risk-factor categories sufficient, or is SMC expecting more structured comparative analysis between sub-groups listed? Additionally, to what extent is successful recruitment of NEET young people not currently accessing services considered essential versus aspirational?	Illustrative coverage is sufficient. Similarly, we wish to include harder to reach individuals, but recognise they are more difficult to access and will likely form a smaller part of the sample.
26f	How many substantive rounds of feedback should the successful supplier anticipate during analysis and reporting, and should this be explicitly built into our project timelines?	The supplier is expected to work collaboratively with SMC throughout the project and respond constructively to feedback on all deliverables. Time should be included in work plans for this engagement. A maximum of two feedback rounds, minimum of 1 should be anticipated on the final report.
26g	Beyond interview transcripts, would SMC welcome the use of structured observational or contextual field notes (e.g. relating to place, environment, and interaction) to support interpretation	Please see answer to 24b.



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Q No	Question	Response
	and analysis, provided these are anonymised and ethically collected?	
26h	To what extent does SMC expect place-based context (e.g. neighbourhood, local infrastructure, seasonal economy) to be explicitly integrated into analysis, beyond being treated as background setting?	Participants' comments on structural (including local context) and individual factors related to their circumstances should be reflected in the analysis. Potential suppliers can view our previous Deep Dives research for an example of other location based reporting.
26i	Given the stated intention to roll the methodology out to other high-NEET areas, how important is it that the Blackpool pilot tests adaptability to different local contexts, rather than optimising solely for Blackpool-specific conditions?	We would like to develop research materials which are applicable to different locations while sensitive to the experiences within a location. It is beyond the scope of this pilot to test methodology beyond Blackpool.
27	Does SMC want the research to cover just Blackpool specifically or both Blackpool and Fylde?	We are specifically interested in Blackpool as an urban coastal town, rather than the wider geographical area.
28a	Firstly, due to a high volume of tenders with due dates around the end of January for our team who focus on this policy area, we would really appreciate if a small extension to the deadline could be granted to allow us to submit the highest quality bid possible. Would you be willing to extend the deadline to the end of next week, 30 th January 4pm?	Due to the project timeline, the Social Mobility Commission is unable to extend the deadline for bids.
28b	Are you open to bidders suggesting alternative research approaches/methodologies to those set out in the brief?	Please see answer to 24b.
28c	Could you provide any further detail on how you plan to use the final outputs? We note that the audiences will likely be policy-makers, social mobility researchers/academics/NEET practitioners, and the public, but it would be helpful if you could expand on this further, particularly how this work will feed into potential policy interventions.	The final report will be published on the SMC website. It is anticipated that it will include a forward from the Chair of the SMC and SMC's policy recommendations. We are working closely with stakeholders, both at the front line and cross government. These stakeholders will be informed of the findings with the intention of influencing both policy and practice for NEETs.
28d	Section 2 specifies that short staff profiles should be included in the main body of the proposal. Would you be willing to allow 1-page CVs for each	Annexes above the 13 page allowance will not be considered, we recommend that you include a short staff profile in your section 2.



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Q No	Question	Response
	staff member to be included as an annex to this section to provide further detail?	
28e	Please could you clarify how many references we should provide, and details you would like us to provide? (e.g., contract value, duration etc.). Or alternatively, whether this section refers to space for citations.	For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4; therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail. Bidders do not need to include contact details, but may include written testimonials. This section is not related to citations.
29	Can you confirm that this is an open procurement and that we are able to submit a proposal, and that we do not have to have already expressed interest or been specifically invited to submit a bid?	We can confirm that this is an open procurement and anyone is welcome to submit a bid.
30	'We would like to apply a social mobility lens to help understand the interaction between individual circumstances and structural constraints in the context of risks and outcomes'. Could you expand on the centrality of a social mobility lens in this study?	Please see answer to 14a. We are looking to understand the lived experience of young people who are NEET from a social mobility perspective.
31a	What's the name of the local youth panel mentioned on p4? We would like to include a participatory element, but ideally we would like to do some research into the proposed group to understand the extent they are similar to NEETs. Also, would you also be open to alternative suggestions for lived-experience expert advisers?	We are unable to provide the name of the local youth panel prior to the contract being in place. Please see answer to 8a, and we encourage suppliers to submit their own proposals for a participatory element of the research within the bid.
31b	The brief is very specific about the methodology that should be used. Would the SMC also be interested in the views of people who work with NEETs being incorporated into the context review, e.g., officers from the Council and VCSE organisations? If so, are you able to make warm intros to those you have relationships with?	Please see the answer to 8a. Where we have relationships in place, we can facilitate introductions.



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Q No	Question	Response
31c	<p>In previous commissions, we have worked with 'lived-experience expert advisers' to co-design engagement materials, support with analysis and draw out key themes, and explore whether learnings and recommendations resonate and are actionable in the local context. We have also trained lived-experience expert advisers in basic research skills and supported them to survey and interview their peers. This skills capacity-building has provided social value and left a legacy beyond the research commission. For this project, we don't think it would be appropriate to train peer researchers to interview NEETs on their own, but we could train them in research skills and support them to shadow the interview team - with permission of the interviewee. Would the SMC be interested in this approach?</p>	<p>Please see the answer to 8a.</p>
32	<p>Would it be possible to provide a little more clarification on the Commission's expectations around the requirements for ethics approval as part of the recently issued Blackpool NEETS research ITT?</p>	<p>Please see answer to 8b.</p>
33	<p>In regard to client references - do we just have to provide a name and email or are you expecting a paragraph from them on us?</p>	<p>For the references, the SMC requires relevant examples of similar projects you have completed and how they are similar to this tender. Sections 5 and 6 are not to exceed 3 sides of A4; therefore, the SMC is happy for the bidder to determine the number of relevant references and the level of detail. Bidders do not need to include contact details, but may include written testimonials.</p>