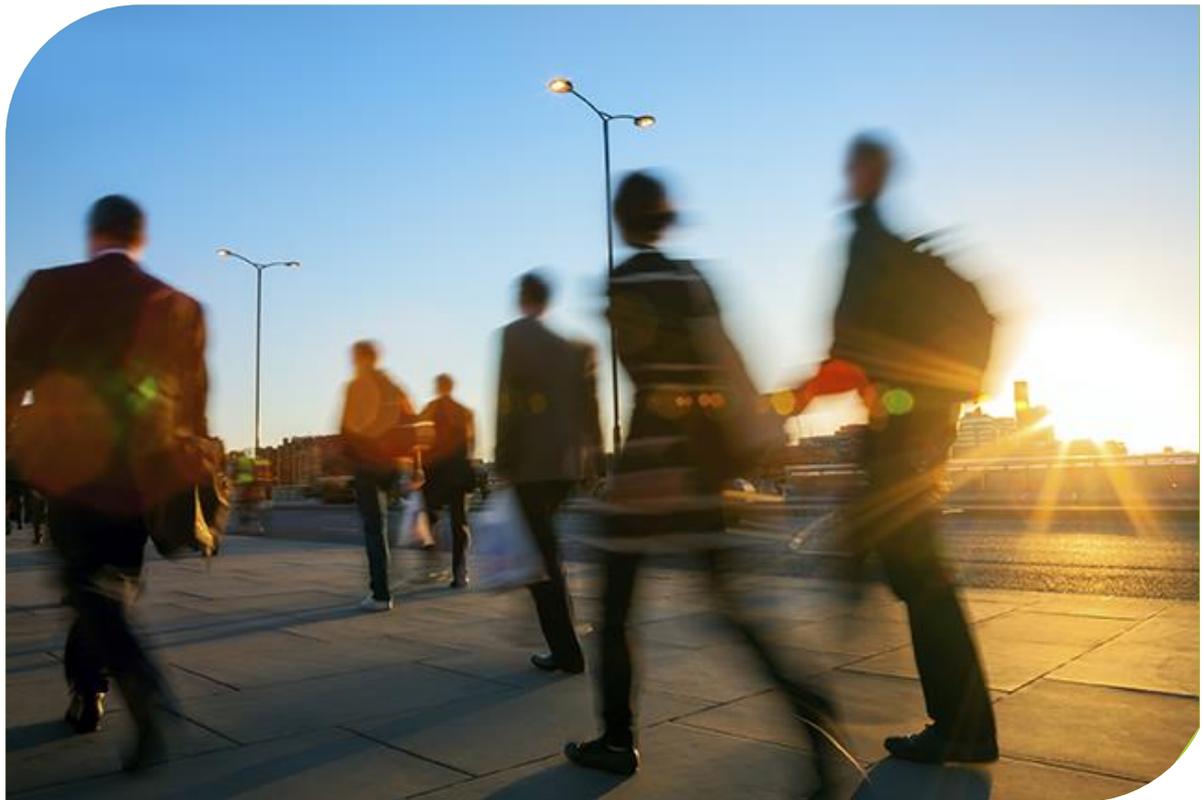


Fair Start Scotland Evaluation

Element 1: Participant Telephone Survey

The Scottish Government

22 January 2019



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Fair Start Scotland Evaluation

Element 1: Participant Telephone Survey

Proposal prepared for The Scottish Government by
IFF Research

1 Service Delivery & Approach (50%)

(2.2.1) Summary

Please provide a brief summary of the overall approach taken to meeting the requirements. The response should briefly outline the research design and introduce all partners involved in delivering the proposal, highlighting core functions and relevant areas of specialism, and explaining their relevance to this requirement.

Please note that responses to this question will be limited to 1500 Words including any diagrams charts or tables, any additional text beyond this limit will not be considered.

Introduction

The Scotland Act 2016 devolved responsibility for contracted employment support for disabled people and those at risk of long-term unemployment. The Fair Start Scotland (FSS) service launched in April 2018, following a year of transitional programmes Work First Scotland (WFS) and Work Able Scotland (WAS)¹. IFF Research and Cambridge Policy Consultants (CPC) conducted a process and outcome evaluation of WFS and WAS, giving us unique insight into the platform that these transitional programmes created for successful delivery of FSS.

An evaluation is now required of FSS. As part of this, three waves of CATI research is required among FSS participants, conducted annually, commencing in Spring 2019. The aim is to provide a representative picture of how participants are experiencing FSS and the outcomes they achieve.

IFF Research would deliver all elements of the survey research and analysis in-house. CPC would provide consultancy services at each wave to ensure continuation of learning from the Transitional Employability Services Evaluation.

The IFF team would be led by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Directors. **Between them they have extensive experience of designing, delivering and analysing CATI research to evidence the outcomes of employability services**, including heading up the recent Scottish Government (SG) Transitional Employability Evaluation surveys; the **Partnership for Continuing Employment (PACE) Customer Survey**; the **Evaluation of Employment Advisors in IAPT Services for the Work and Health Unit (longitudinal surveys to track outcomes from increasing the employment adviser:therapist ratio in IAPT services)**; **Universal Credit Full Service Survey for DWP (a two-wave longitudinal survey involving 1,000 telephone interviews per wave)**; **Evaluation of Group Work / JOBS II for DWP (conducting longitudinal JSA/ESA claimant surveys as part of an RCT to build on previous international trials)**; **Evaluation of the Personalisation Pathfinders for the DWP (Participant surveys involving 3,300 telephone interviews soon after joining the Pathfinders and then 2,000 longitudinal interviews conducted around 12 months later to look at longer-term outcomes)**.

Overview of approach

¹ As of September 2018, there had been just under 4,500 starts on WFS and just over 1,000 on WAS (Scotland's Devolved Employment Services (Experimental Statistics), Scottish Government).

We will conduct 1,000 interviews per wave. The survey sample will be stratified to be representative of participant numbers per Lot, with the ability to disaggregate findings by demographic characteristics and eligibility criteria.

The core data collection method will be a telephone survey, with alternative formats offered to support accessibility/inclusivity. The interview will last 20 minutes on average at each wave.

To maximise our ability to achieve the desired 1,000 interviews, and thus the potential for analysis, we propose a semi-longitudinal approach i.e. conducting a mix of longitudinal and cross-sectional interviews, by re-contacting Wave 1 completers for Wave 2 and 3 to explore longer-term outcomes, but also 'topping-up' the available sample for future waves by also contacting fresh cohorts of FSS participants.

Telephone interviews will be conducted from IFF's 120-station CATI centre. Interviewers will receive a detailed briefing (with written notes). Members of the SG team would be very welcome to attend (and assist with) the briefing.

Survey data will be weighted (for non-response bias and for longitudinal interviews a non-response weight will be applied to correct for differential likelihood to complete the follow-up survey among the Wave 1/2 respondents), coded and validated by our in-house Data Services team.

Data outputs at each wave will be a full set of data tables that cross-analyse all questions by a series of cross-breaks that we will agree with the SG team in advance. Key sub-groups for analysis will include demographics (e.g. gender, age, condition, ethnicity) and contract area/provider. We would generally expect to include derived variables, for example, to measure distance travelled. We will also produce a full-labelled SPSS dataset at each wave.

Reporting outputs for each wave will comprise: a findings debrief (presented face-to-face and a final report of publication standard (SG style-compliant)). The debrief and report will answer questions such as:

- What are the outcomes of FSS for participants (both 'soft' outcomes such as confidence, motivation and job-search skills, and 'hard' outcomes such as employment entered/sustained)?
- How does this differ by area/Lot, provider, and participant type?
- How do outcomes vary by elements of the programme taken up? To what aspects are outcomes attributed? What does this tell us about 'what works'?

Our key strengths and expertise:

We have conducted a considerable amount of survey work using the same approach as proposed above among similar audiences, including the initial survey for the Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation, the Universal Credit Full Service survey, the initial survey for the Evaluation of Group Work / Jobs II which surveys JSA, ESA and UC claimants participating in a peer support scheme for those at risk of developing mild to moderate mental health conditions and the initial survey for the Personalisation Pathfinders which surveyed ESA and JSA claimants with a disability marker who participated in a voluntary package of 12-month support.

Our methodological learnings from these studies give us confidence in our ability to:

- **Predict and maximise response rates:** we are confident in achieving 30-40% for Wave 1 and fresh participants at Waves 2 and 3; c.40-50% for the longitudinal follow-up surveys at Waves 2 and 3. Our expertise will be brought to bear in: the design of the opt-out letter; sending advance emails to FSS Service Providers to make them aware of the research and to ask them to encourage participation (which was a successful strategy on the Transitional Employability Evaluation surveys); design of the survey introduction with appropriate reassurances; interviewing briefing; quality and experience of our telephone interviewers; the effort we put into contacting participants and the flexibility we offer them to reach harder-to-engage participants, thorough collection of contact details for longitudinal interviewing, to ensure we maximise response rates.

We will use our experience of activating behavioural levers (for example, by emphasizing the opportunity to help improve support for others in similar circumstances) to ensure that this is an opportunity to maximise interest in the survey. Where we can tell from the sample that this is required, we will provide both large print and EasyRead versions (for individuals with learning difficulties). Otherwise these will be available on request.

- **Design a survey instrument that engages participants and generates high-quality data:** To ensure that the 'customer journey' and terminology presented in the questionnaire is recognisable to survey participants, we recommend that FSS providers provide input upfront, by describing the stages and elements of the participant experience, using terminology that participants will recognise. This could be achieved efficiently by providers giving us a 'journey diagram' for their Lot(s). Where possible, we would use information provided within the sample files to tailor question wordings, using text substitutions, to ensure that participants recognise their local version of the FSS programme. This is important given that many FSS participants may have experienced other work support programmes so, when contacted for research, we need to make it as easy as possible for them to differentiate between programmes and recognise FSS. It is also key in the context of FSS being delivered across multiple Lots/contractors, meaning there may be no one standard description of the support provided.

Added value

To meet your budget for this work we offer several added value elements, which we offer free of charge or at a heavily discounted rate. These include:

- **Production of the survey in alternative formats to support accessibility / inclusivity** (included without extra charge). This might include paper self-completion options; BSL interpreters, TextPhone, Text Relay, assisted interviews; and a face-to-face completion option for those who explicitly express a preference for this.
- **Efficient sampling processes.** Our nominated team's experience of running the Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation survey means we are familiar with the process of receiving and assembling sample from multiple FSS providers, allowing us to 'hit the ground running'. We know how to brief providers on sample format and content to ensure we have both the information needed to review the claimant population profile and identify how best to stratify the sample; and the details of programmes/elements experienced, to allow us to tailor question wordings to participants.

- **Use of tried and tested survey modules and standardised metrics.** For example, we have several ways of capturing 'distance travelled' meaning we do not need to 'reinvent the wheel' in questionnaire design. We are experienced in using a number of different standardised metrics that cover relevant questionnaire areas such as for Job Search: The Job Search Self Efficacy Index and the FIOH Job Seeking Activity Scale; and for measures of the well-being the WHO-5, ONS4, GAD-7, GHQ-12, PHQ-9, EQ-5D-3L, WEMBWS. We have used these metrics within, for example, the DWP Evaluations of IAPT and Group Work/Jobs II.

(2.2.2) Understanding of Requirement

Please provide a statement demonstrating a full and clear understanding of the overall requirements as detailed in the Technical Specification. The response should highlight recent experience of similar research and explain why your approach and project team are best positioned to deliver this contract.

Please note that responses to this question will be limited to 3000 Words any diagrams charts or tables, any additional text beyond this limit will not be considered.

IFF Research has conducted extensive survey research with out-of-work groups, including recent longitudinal surveys of Universal Credit Full Service claimants for DWP, and we are familiar with the approaches and language that achieve the highest levels of response. We understand the research design and analysis needs of Fair Start Scotland (FSS) specifically, through our work in delivering the Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation. We understand the wider economic and labour market conditions in Scotland through our body of qualitative and quantitative work with the PACE Partnership (supporting individuals recently made redundant). We will be drawing on a track record of research among people with long-term health conditions and disabilities for DWP, including evaluating the Personalisation Pathfinders (for ESA claimants), PIP user-centred customer journey design, ESA Support Group qualitative research and survey research exploring Long-Term Sickness Absence and techniques to manage conditions in work.

IFF offers tried and tested questionnaire approaches to discussing health conditions, capturing customer experience, measuring distance travelled and collecting destinations data on occupation, salary, job quality/sustainability. IFF’s interviewing team is trained in Disability Awareness and experienced with this audience thereby ensuring an engaging and inclusive experience and ensuring informed consent. We use sample management processes to ensure that harder-to-reach claimants are given equal opportunity to participate. We also offer formalised recruitment procedures to arrange an interview in an alternative format or using assisted technology.

Our understanding of the **specific requirements for Element 1, the Participant Telephone Survey**, are set out below. In each case we explain how our team’s experience and approach enable us to deliver. In doing this, we make reference to the experience/expertise of our nominated project team, i.e.:

- [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

Requirement	A) To provide robust, independent evidence of the outcomes of employability services, via three waves of CATI research amongst FSS participants. Waves to be conducted annually commencing in Spring 2019; on each occasion the sample should be representative of FSS starts within the previous six months, with 1,000 interviews to be achieved per wave.
Our project team’s experience/expertise	Our nominated team’s experience and expertise of designing, delivering and analysing CATI research to evidence the outcomes of employability services are demonstrated by the following:

Requirement	<p>A) To provide robust, independent evidence of the outcomes of employability services, via three waves of CATI research amongst FSS participants. Waves to be conducted annually commencing in Spring 2019; on each occasion the sample should be representative of FSS starts within the previous six months, with 1,000 interviews to be achieved per wave.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation: Mixed methods research in conjunction with Cambridge Policy Consultants to measure the success of two programmes of support aimed at helping those with health conditions to find and sustain employment, including IFF-led surveys of participant experiences and outcomes achieved (2017–18). [REDACTED], [REDACTED] • Scottish Government: Partnership for Continuing Employment (PACE) Customer Survey: Over 1,000 telephone interviews with clients accessing PACE services to assess satisfaction with services and areas for improvement; with 285 follow-up interviews with PACE clients made redundant prior to 2014 to assess long-term employment and training outcomes. [REDACTED] • Evaluation of Employment Advisors in IAPT Services for the Work and Health Unit: Longitudinal quantitative surveys to track outcomes, as part of an IFF-led mixed-method evaluation of the work and health outcomes of increasing the employment advisor:therapist ratio in IAPT services (current). [REDACTED] • Universal Credit Full Service Survey for DWP: A two-wave longitudinal survey involving 1,000 telephone interviews per wave, to build understanding of how the fully-digital delivery of Universal Credit is meeting its wider objectives in changing claimant behaviours and labour market engagement (current). [REDACTED] • Evaluation of Group Work / JOBS II for DWP: An evaluation of the Group Work/Jobs II model in improving wellbeing and job search activities/outcomes among claimants who have or are at risk of developing low to moderate common mental disorders (CMDs). IFF are conducting longitudinal JSA/ESA claimant surveys as part of an RCT to build on previous international trials (2017-present). [REDACTED] • Evaluation of the Personalisation Pathfinders for the DWP: Participant surveys involving 3,300 telephone interviews soon after joining the Pathfinders and then 2,000 longitudinal interviews conducted around 12 months later to look at longer-term outcomes, as part of our mixed-method evaluation (2015-2017). [REDACTED]
Our approach	<p>Our experience means we will bring to the FSS Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills in designing questionnaire, sampling and analysis approaches to accommodate a mixture of longitudinal follow-up interviews and ‘fresh’ participant cohorts; • ‘Tried and tested’ questions to capture claimant experiences of employability programmes and the outcomes of these. This includes techniques to establish progression towards, into, and within work;

<p>Requirement</p>	<p>A) To provide robust, independent evidence of the outcomes of employability services, via three waves of CATI research amongst FSS participants. Waves to be conducted annually commencing in Spring 2019; on each occasion the sample should be representative of FSS starts within the previous six months, with 1,000 interviews to be achieved per wave.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise in drafting questionnaires that ‘speak the claimant’s language, so that they recognise the programme and elements of support being references and can accurately attribute outcomes to FSS interventions (<i>discussed further re: requirement B, below</i>); • Expertise in reviewing the population profile and stratifying available sample to maximise analysis possibilities (<i>discussed further re: requirement C, below</i>); • Skills in explaining the purpose of the surveys in a relevant and motivating manner, to maximise engagement; and an interviewing team with considerable experience of surveys among claimants, disabled people and other hard-to-reach groups, helping us to maximise response and ensuring interviews are conducted with appropriate sensitivity; • Previous experience of producing datasets and reporting outputs that meet the SG’s needs (we share analysis and reporting specifications, and emerging findings, while fieldwork is still in progress, to help ensure we ‘get these right’ with minimum revisions); • Skills in interpreting survey findings to draw out policy implications (we share and discuss emerging findings with the SG, to ‘sense-check’ our interpretation/ensure it is on-point – <i>outputs are discussed further re: requirement D, below</i>).

<p>Requirement</p>	<p>B) To cover the participant experience across their key stages of the journey, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience of referral, starting, initial expectations and action planning; • experience of pre-employment support, motivation and progression towards work; • experience of in-work support, sustained employment and wider personal benefits.
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<p>Our project team’s experience/expertise</p>	<p>Our nominated team is well-versed in designing questionnaires to align with how the survey participant will experience their ‘journey’. For instance, [REDACTED] collaborated with the Scottish Government (SG) to capture the participant experience for the precursor to this study, the aforementioned Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation. [REDACTED] have further experience in designing surveys to capture claimant journeys through their work for the DWP on the aforementioned Universal Credit Pathfinder and Full Service Surveys for the DWP. [REDACTED] has particular expertise in developing questionnaires that use information supplied within the sample, to tailor question wordings, using text substitutions, to ensure that participants recognise their local version of the FSS programme – for instance, for the DWP Personalisation Pathfinder Surveys (see above) and the Evaluation of</p>
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Requirement	<p>B) To cover the participant experience across their key stages of the journey, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • experience of referral, starting, initial expectations and action planning; • experience of pre-employment support, motivation and progression towards work; • experience of in-work support, sustained employment and wider personal benefits.
	<p>the Six Month Offer, which used tailoring to ensure participants recognised ‘their’ elements of a four-strand employment support offer.</p> <p>■■■■■■ expertise is also evidenced by ■■■■ work in re-developing the questionnaire for the Foreign & Commonwealth Office customer satisfaction survey, which has to recognisably reflect the customer journey for a range of transactions, each of which may involve a combination of face-to-face, telephone and digital interaction within the journey.</p>
Our approach	<p>We often begin our questionnaire development by mapping out an overall structure, in Excel; setting out within this our suggested question wordings and timing estimates per question. This could be structured around the journey stages. This makes it easier for SG stakeholders to consider an overview of the question coverage from a ‘bigger picture’ perspective and to work with IFF to make decisions about how the questionnaire running time is allocated between the different stages of the participant experience.</p> <p>It is also of critical importance to ensure that the ‘journey’ presented in the questionnaire is recognisable to survey participants. To achieve this, we recommend that FSS providers provide input, by describing the stages and elements of the participant experience, using terminology that participants will recognise. This could be achieved efficiently by providers giving us a ‘journey diagram’ for their Lot(s). Where possible, we would use information provided within the sample files to tailor question wordings, using text substitutions, to ensure that participants recognise their local version of the FSS programme.</p>

<p>Requirement</p>	<p>D) Reporting outputs that are of a publishable standard, setting out analysis of policy and practice implications, in a manner that will support Scottish Government analysts to produce their own annual synthesis reports.</p>
<p>Our project team's experience/expertise, and what it means for our approach</p>	<p>Our reporting outputs will also be visually-engaging, drawing on our experience and expertise of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing claimant progression paths and outcomes as flow diagrams, describing the percentage of claimants who exhibit each type of progression – as used in numerous DWP employment programme evaluations, such as the Universal Credit Full Service Survey for DWP (██████████). • Representing claimant characteristics, behaviours, aspirations, barriers or support needs as typologies or segments, to build understanding of how claimant groups differ and what this means for how to cater for them – as used in the DWP ESA Support Group Research (██████████).

<p>Requirement</p>	<p>E) To support the inclusion of hard-to-reach or under-represented groups (adults with disabilities/health conditions, as well as specific groups such as refugees, Gypsies/Travellers) in the survey sample, through ensuring accessibility or, potentially, via over-sampling, in a manner that ensures informed consent.</p>
<p>Our project team's experience/expertise</p>	<p>Our experience and expertise are demonstrated by our work on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation: Although primarily telephone fieldwork, we offered the option of face-to-face, on-paper self-completion and EasyRead versions of the survey, alongside the option to take part in alternative languages (2017–18). (██████████) • Evaluation of Group Work / JOBS II for DWP and ESA Support Group for DWP: Again, although primarily telephone fieldwork, we offered the option of face-to-face, on-paper self-completion and EasyRead versions of the survey, alongside the option to take part in alternative languages. We also designed/agreed escalation processes for respondents who disclosed they were at risk of harm (2017-present). Group Work: (██████████); ESA Support Group: (██████████) • SEND Survey of Experiences of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). A major mixed-mode (online, postal, telephone) survey of 13,000 SEND young people, their parents and carers to assess experiences of creating an Education Health and Care Plan for the Department for Education. Cognitive testing and a large-scale pilot were used to check accessibility and identify the contact strategies that maximise participation. Again face-to-face, on-paper self-completion, EasyRead and alternative-language versions were used. (██████████)
<p>Our approach</p>	<p>We will support inclusion by asking all interviewees at the opt-in and recruitment stage whether there are any adjustments that would make it possible/ more comfortable for them to participate. We can conduct</p>

Requirement	E) To support the inclusion of hard-to-reach or under-represented groups (adults with disabilities/health conditions, as well as specific groups such as refugees, Gypsies/Travellers) in the survey sample, through ensuring accessibility or, potentially, via over-sampling, in a manner that ensures informed consent.
	<p>interviews using approaches such as TextPhone and Text Relay (or instant messaging services) for respondents with a hearing impairment. We can offer an 'assisted' interview in most of the common minority languages spoken in the UK (e.g. French, German, Spanish, Polish, Ethiopian, Bengali, Ghanian, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Yoruba and Hindi). We can make it clear at recruitment that the claimant is welcome to involve carers or supporters if they wish. For individuals with learning difficulties and other complex needs, we can offer face-to-face interviews; and for those with learning disabilities specifically, we can use a simplified version of the script in EasyRead.</p> <p>If relevant information can be marked on the sample provided by the FSS providers (e.g. if individuals communications preferences/needs; whether they are a member of a group likely to be under-represented), this can assist us by helping us to approach them to participate in the most relevant way. Dependent on population volumes, it may also allow us to over-sample those individuals most likely to be under-represented.</p> <p>Our proposed research team and all survey interviewers have received disability awareness training and have prior experience of claimant surveys among individuals with disabilities; including physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health conditions. This means that they are familiar with the social model of disability and are aware of the appropriate language to use.</p> <p>We ensure informed consent by ensuring respondents understand how findings will be used; that taking part is voluntary and that they can withdraw or refuse to answer individual questions at any time. This will be emphasised in the opt-out letter and wordings of recruitment scripts, reassurance letters/emails (which we would issue on request) and emails confirming interview appointments. Interviewers will devote good time to explaining the background and what participation will involve and will be instructed that if concerns exist then they should err on the side of caution and stop recruitment.</p>

Requirement	To safeguard the privacy of personal data within the research activity.
Our project team's experience/expertise	<p>Our nominated team is well-versed in considering steps to safeguard the privacy of personal data within survey research, and to manage requests from research participants within this process. Across the range of claimant surveys (<i>described in relation to requirement A, above</i>) ██████████ have worked through the potential privacy risks and steps to mitigate these; while ██████████ has, with Director input, designed wordings to ensure that participants are aware of and can exercise their personal data rights; and ensured that processes are followed to safeguard personal data.</p>
Our approach	<p>Our data handling on this project will comply with our strict protocols on information security. IFF holds ISO/IEC 27001:2005 accreditation (the international standard for information security) and has reviewed its procedures to ensure GDPR-compliance.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>We are happy to comply with your own Data Protection Policies and ownership of data requirements. The process that we most commonly adopt for our work with Government departments (such as the DWP) is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample data is transferred by secure electronic transfer to IFF using PGP encryption software to a dedicated e-mail account (which can only be accessed by our IT Manager); • Personal data is saved to a folder on IFF's network which only the direct project team are able to access (with permission rights to this secure area allocated by the Project Manager); • All activity relating to the secure files (copying, amending etc.) are recorded on the Data Asset Register. <p>Data relating to or personal data is not exported or transferred outside of the UK. Data you pass onto us will not be passed to any 3rd party without your prior consent and will not be used by any other purposes other than research on your behalf.</p> <p>We may wish to create a webpage that can be accessed via a link in our advance mailing, explaining how personal data is stored; how the data collected in the surveys will be used, and individuals' rights over their data.</p> <p>In our survey introductions and closing wordings we also make participants aware of their rights to access, obtain, change or delete their personal data; and signpost them to an IFF 'GDPR' web-page to allow them to make requests to exercise these rights.</p>

Requirement	To safeguard the privacy of personal data within the research activity.
	<p>Our SPSS Dimensions interviewing system ensures CATI interviewers can access only one claimant record at once, and they are given the minimum information needed to recruit and conduct an interview.</p> <p>We also consider data privacy when assessing project risks. We create a risk register, describing the nature of the risks, their likelihood and potential impact, the steps to take to mitigate these risks and their residual impact; this is used as a 'live' document in managing the project with the SG.</p>

(2.2.3) Policy context

Please provide a statement demonstrating your full and clear understanding of the underlying Scottish policy context for this evaluation activity.

Please note that responses to this question will be limited to 1500 Words any diagrams charts or tables, any additional text beyond this limit will not be considered

The Scotland Act 2016 devolved responsibility for contracted employment support for disabled people and those at risk of long-term unemployment. This provides the opportunity to develop a distinctively Scottish approach to providing employment support to these client groups (previously served by the Department for Work and Pension's Work Programme and Work Choice schemes).

The Fair Start Scotland (FSS) service launched in April 2018, following a year of transitional programmes Work First Scotland (WFS) and Work Able Scotland (WAS).² WFS replaced what was Work Choice, the Department for Work and Pension's disability programme. WAS was a new service supporting eligible individuals with a health condition.

The design of the devolved employability services is rooted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and recognises that the human rights considerations must underpin all activity across the whole range of policy and legislation which affects disabled people. A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People puts independent living at the centre of public policy to ensure that *"all disabled people are able and supported to live their lives with freedom, choice, control and dignity, participating equally alongside other citizens in their families, communities, workplaces and wider society"*. The Delivery Plan of A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People then set out a number of key actions relating to employment and employability services that establishes the overarching ambitions of Scottish Government on disability issues and use of the social model of disability. **These provide a clear policy context for the delivery of FSS and represent a break from the tone of previous UK national welfare to work programmes.** Scottish Government policy aims to reinforce positive perceptions of benefit being "a hand up rather than a hand out".

The underpinning principles of FSS include a strong focus on those who need **specialist support**, a **flexible 'whole person' approach** with a **greater role for customer choice**. This reflects a growing body of evidence in the research literature which suggests that:

- The customer group is significant and growing, particularly so in deprived areas. Needs are becoming more complex, especially for older age groups who more often have multiple health conditions
- Trusted, intensive support employability linked to specialist services do make a difference to employment outcomes
- Evidence is more mixed but suggest longer-term support may be required to help sustain participation in employment
- The quality of employment may also play a role in supporting improved quality of life for people living with conditions

² As of September 2018, there had been just under 4,500 starts on WFS and just over 1,000 on WAS (Scotland's Devolved Employment Services (Experimental Statistics), Scottish Government).

- Early intervention is key to supporting those who do acquire health conditions while they are in work to prevent them leaving the labour force.

The Delivery Plan also highlights the need to work in close partnership with other programmes/organisations working in the same space. The success of **partnership working** and the potential for **improving coherence and co-working** are central to successful delivery of FSS. The IFF and Cambridge Policy Consultants evaluation of the WFS and WAG programmes found that partnership working and communications between the Scottish Government and JCP/DWP have been transformed; partners now have an effective platform to raise and address policy and delivery issues such as information and data sharing and joint approach to improving operational delivery. This provides a positive base for the FSS programme to build on.

Delivery of Fair Start Scotland

The service will aim to help at least 38,000 people over 3 years of referrals to find employment via the provision of tailored and personalised support. It is targeted at those who may face significant barriers to entering the labour market including: disabled people (as defined in the Equality Act 2010); those who are long-term unemployed (2 years on Job Seekers Allowance/ Universal Credit equivalent); people in the ESA Work-Related Activity Group; people with convictions or offenders; Care Experience Young People; Lone Parents; Refugees; Ethnic Minorities, people living in deprived areas and people with a health problem that presents a barrier to employment.

In the first six months of the service, just under 5,000 people joined FSS. Nearly three in five (58%) were disabled (i.e. reported having a long-term health condition that limited their ability to carry out day-to-day activities 'a lot' or 'a little'). A quarter (25%) of those with any health condition reported having multiple conditions.³

Statistics are not currently available on the profile of FSS participants by other characteristics, for example information on ethnic group is collected on a voluntary basis and is unknown for 17% of participants. A key aspect of the evaluation will be understanding the extent to which the participant profile reflects the target groups for the service. Both the WFS and WAS programmes had proportionately more men and more young people participating⁴: a challenge for FSS therefore involves reaching and engaging women and older people.

A key aspect of the service is that it is entirely voluntary. During the first six months of FSS, just over half (53%) of those referred to the service chose to participate.⁵ However this proportion was much higher in Quarter 2 (59%) compared with Quarter 1 (46%), suggesting that referrals may be being more effectively managed as the new service finds its feet. However this is still lower than the 64% conversion rate of referrals to the WFS programme between April 2017-March 2018⁶. The evaluation of WFS and WAS found that warm handovers were important, as was familiarity with the offer by JCP Work Coaches.

Voluntary participation is widely regarded by providers and JCP Work Coaches as an important feature that engages customers. However, it is set within a wider benefit regime where some aspects are mandatory, and it will take time for customers to fully appreciate that participation is genuinely

³ Scotland's Devolved Employment Services (Experimental Statistics), Scottish Government

⁴ Scotland's Devolved Employment Services (Experimental Statistics), Scottish Government

⁵ Scotland's Devolved Employment Services (Experimental Statistics), Scottish Government

⁶ Note that this masks the significant variation identified at a local level in the IFF and CPC evaluation, depending on the extent of co-location of providers in JCP offices.

voluntary. The new regime is also likely to face challenges such as: general negative public perceptions towards benefit recipients⁷, which are particularly acute for those with chronic long-term conditions – for example, those managing pain and with mental health conditions can struggle to be credible with a lack of visible symptoms and intermittent episodes breaking up sustained participation. Furthermore, it will take time for people suffering such conditions to become sufficiently confident that they can try and participate without the fear that they can never return to their previously stable entitlement.

Other **key elements of the FSS service** include:

- Provision of in-depth action planning to ensure support is tailored to individual needs and circumstances;
- Offer of pre-work support of 12-18 months;
- Offer of high quality in-work support for 12 months;
- Provision of specialist support to find work to those that require it;
- National standards to ensure consistent support across the 9 geographic contract areas;
- Supported Employment and Individual Placement and Support available for disabled customers who require intensive support.

FSS is delivered through contracts (totalling £96m) with 6 primary bidders (Falkirk Council, Momentum Skills, People Plus, Remploy, Start Scotland and the Wise Group) across 9 geographically organised contracts. These primary bidders then work with a delivery partner network utilising locally-organised bodies (more than half the FSS provision will be delivered by supported business and by third sector and public sector bodies in Scotland).

There have been challenges to contracting for employability services observed in UK programmes that the FSS evaluation will need to consider; negative unintended consequences include ‘parking and creaming’ where the quality of service is not consistent across all customers.

A broader criticism of the UK welfare to work procurement procedures is that too much knowledge of what is and is not possible has been bound up in the “black-box” of delivery organisations and commissioners have not learnt enough about what works from almost 20 years of contracting to better inform the future design of programmes. It is clear that FSS (as with WFS and WAG) intends to set a different tone, with a greater focus on a shared learning model and some key design changes such as the specification that providers offer customers at least one hour a week face-to-face contact time to help them address their barriers to employment and secure specialist support as required using an action planning approach (specifying delivery standards in this way is a relatively novel approach in contracting employability services). The WFS/WAG evaluation found that this was valued by both advisers and customers. The FSS evaluation will capture participant experience of different elements of provision and will map participant journeys through to outcomes. *Sustainability* of outcomes will be important to measure; short-term episodes into work can be disruptive for those with long-term health conditions, undermining confidence and damaging willingness to seek work in future.

⁷ www.irf.org.uk/sites/default/files/irf/migrated/files/public-support-eradicating-poverty-summary.pdf

(2.2.4) Methodology

Please describe your proposed research design and methodology for meeting the requirements (research questions) as set out in the Technical Specification. The response should include details of the research activities to be undertaken by each partner involved (for collaborative bids), including a timeline with key milestones, plus details of any added value that the approach brings to the outline methodology set out in the specification.

Please note that responses to this question will be limited to 4000 Words any diagrams charts or tables, any additional text beyond this limit will not be considered.

Overall approach

We agree that the core data collection methodology should be a telephone survey. This will achieve a much better response rate than a self-completion approach (online or postal) and is less costly than a face-to-face approach.

That said, to support survey accessibility/inclusivity, it is vital that we produce alternative formats (EasyRead, and paper self-completion options) for individuals who explicitly express a preference to take part in this way but we suggest that these are only used under these circumstances. A face-to-face completion option may also be beneficial to some, e.g. those with hearing/speech impediments or learning difficulties (who, based on recent surveys of similar groups, are likely to account for only around 1-2% of participants). In the initial approach we will offer a face-to-face alternative on request to ensure inclusive participation. We anticipate (based on our experience of studies such as the SG Transitional Employability Evaluation, the Understanding Sickness study among recent ESA claimants and the Personalisation Pathfinders Evaluation) that the take-up will be limited. **Added value:** These elements are included without extra charge.

Sampling

The aim is for the sample to be representative of FSS starts within the previous six months.

The specification considers whether we might adopt a longitudinal or cross-sectional approach. The advantage of a longitudinal design is that it allows us to deliver findings structured by stages in the participant 'customer journey'. This would work as follows:

- **Wave 1:** To address **Stage 1 of the customer journey**, establishing an approximate baseline and to explore early experiences of the FSS Programme (including initial action planning) and help to identify any issues with referral from an individual's point of view. This is likely to be conducted around 2-8 months after individuals start on the programme (i.e. a six-month sampling window, followed by c. 4-5 weeks for the sample to be transferred to IFF, c. 1 week for processing sample and then c.2 weeks to administer an opt-out exercise)
- **Wave 2:** To address **Stage 2 of the customer journey**, exploring participant experiences of pre-employment support and assessing progression towards work. This is likely to examine changes in confidence, motivation, perceived ability to manage disability/health condition, to access learning opportunities and undertake job search activities, by comparison with our approximate baseline in Wave 1. This is likely to be at a point around 14-20 months after individuals start on the programme.

- **Wave 3:** To address **Stage 3 of the customer journey**, examining participant experiences of in-work support, their outcomes (in terms of sustained employment and wider personal benefits) and their reflections on the value of FSS participation, at a point around 26-32 months from the point at which they started on the programme.

However, it would not be possible to conduct a fully-longitudinal approach within the budget and get close to the desired number of interviews at Wave 3 once we have allowed for attrition. We estimate that to achieve 1,000 interviews at Wave 3 using a purely longitudinal approach would mean conducting around 6,000 interviews at Wave 1 which would exceed the budget. It also appears that there would be unlikely to be the volume of participants to support an achieved sample at this level. We would probably need a starting sample of 18,000 individuals to do this and we understand that the Scottish Government are only aiming to support around 38,000 participants over the three years from April 2018, and from the Q1 and Q2 FSS statistics release⁸ we know that there were just under 5,000 starts on the service during the first six months of provision.

Hence our suggestion is to take a **semi-longitudinal approach (sometimes called a refreshed panel approach)** i.e. conducting a mix of longitudinal and cross-sectional interviews, by re-contacting Wave 1 completes for Wave 2 and 3 to explore longer-term outcomes, but also 'topping-up' the sample at Waves 2 and 3 by also contacting fresh cohorts of FSS participants. This is considered but not 'set in stone'; it is something that could be considered further at inception once we have had a chance to analyse on-flows to the programmes.

We will deliver 1,000 interviews per wave which we still will over a good level of robustness. The maximum standard error on a sample of this size would be +/- 3.1%.

We agree that it is appropriate to use a **stratified sampling approach** to achieve a representative sample of participants. Based on the breakdown of starts on the programme within the first six months⁹, if we sample proportionally to the designated Lots we expect that we will achieve a sufficient base for regional analysis of least 50 interviews in all but one area (Highlands and Islands). We therefore suggest over-sampling to boost the target number of interviews for this region to 50, through slight reductions in the target for larger areas (e.g. Glasgow, Lanarkshire and East).

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-devolved-employment-services-fair-start-scotland-2018-quarters-1-2-work-first-scotland-work-scotland-2018-quarter-2/pages/4/>

⁹ <http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/devolved-employment-services/fair-start-scotland/-fair-start-scotland-statistics-2018/>

Lot Area	Contract Area	Starts to Sept 2018	Proportion of total starts	Interviews achieved out of base of 800 (if proportional)	Interviews achieved out of base of 800 (over-sampling)
Lot 1	Glasgow	977	19.6%	196	191
Lot 2	Lanarkshire	892	17.9%	179	175
Lot 3	Tayside	501	10.1%	101	101
Lot 4	Forth Valley	448	9.0%	90	90
Lot 5	East	803	16.1%	161	161
Lot 6	South West	436	8.8%	88	88
Lot 7	North East	317	6.4%	64	64
Lot 8	Highlands and Islands	204	4.1%	41	50
Lot 9	West	400	8.0%	80	80
Total		4,978		1000	1000

We also propose to profile the participant population by **demographic characteristics** such as age and gender, and **eligibility criteria** (e.g. those in receipt of a reserved UK out-of-work benefit and aged 18+ and out-of-work; or aged 16-17 and either disabled or in receipt of ESA). We will then calculate the likely profile of the resultant survey dataset, if we were to achieve a simple random sample. Where this would lead to base sizes that would be too small for the SG's desired analyses, we will advise on where else we might need to stratify, and potentially over-sample (if participant volumes allow).

As an example, the following table predicts the sample profile by age and gender. Based on the profile of starts on the programme for 2018, quarters 1 and 2¹⁰, if we sample proportionally we expect that we will achieve a sufficient base for analysis of least 50 interviews in all cells (setting aside 'unknown' responses, which we would of course attempt to minimise within the survey).

¹⁰ Ibid.

Starts Quarters 1 and 2 2018:					
Age Group	Female	Male	Unknown	% by age group	Total
16-24	264	469	5	14.8%	738
25-34	342	725	7	21.6%	1,074
35-49	544	938	11	30%	1,493
50-65+	527	988	12	30.7%	1,527
Unknown	51	87	8	2.9%	146
% by gender	34.7%	64.4%	0.9%	100%	
Total	1,728	3,207	43		4,978
Interviews achieved out of base of 1,000 (if proportional)					
Age Group	Female	Male	Unknown		Total
16-24	53	94	1		148
25-34	69	146	1		216
35-49	109	188	2		300
50-65+	106	198	2		307
Unknown	10	17	2		29
Total	347	644	9		1000

In other respects, we will monitor the profile of those completing the survey to ensure we obtain responses in line with known demographic characteristics of the participant population.

Added value: Our nominated team's experience of running the Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation survey means we are familiar with the process of receiving and assembling sample from multiple FSS providers, allowing us to 'hit the ground running'. We know how to brief providers on sample format and content to ensure we have both the information needed to review the claimant population profile and identify how best to stratify the sample; and the details of programmes/elements experienced, to allow us to tailor question wordings to participants.

Response rates and sample volumes

We have conducted a large amount of survey work using this approach among very similar audiences and this means that we can be confident about the types of response rates that it would be possible to achieve from this approach. We estimate that the response rates will be:

- c.30-40% for the Wave 1 survey, and for fresh participants interviewed at Waves 2 and 3; this is the type of response rate that we have achieved for the initial survey for the Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation, the Universal Credit Full Service survey, the initial survey for the Evaluation of Group Work / Jobs II which surveys JSA, ESA and UC claimants participating in a peer support scheme for those at risk of developing mild to moderate mental health conditions and the initial survey for the Personalisation Pathfinders

which surveyed ESA and JSA claimants with a disability marker who participated in a voluntary package of 12-month support.

- c.40-50% for the longitudinal follow-up surveys at Waves 2 and 3. Again, this is the magnitude of response rate we achieved for the UC Full Service survey (conducted 4 months after the initial survey) and both the Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation and the Personalisation Pathfinders Evaluation (both 12 months after the initial survey).

We would expect the breakdown of sample outcomes for each of the two types of sample to be along the lines shown below.

	Fresh sample	Longitudinal follow-up
Removed by data cleaning at IFF	11%	
Opt outs	6%	
(Declined follow-up at the end of Wave 1)	N/A	11%
Unobtainable numbers	11%	7%
Refusals	7%	11%
No definitive outcome during fieldwork	30%	26%
Completed interviews	35%	45%
Total	100%	100%

On this basis we suggest the following balance between fresh sample (cross-sectional) and longitudinal follow-up interviews across the three waves:

	Respondents sampled (fresh participants)	Wave 1 interviews (35% of starting sample)	Wave 2 interviews (35% of fresh sample; 45% of Wave 1 interviews)	Wave 3 interviews (35% of fresh sample; 45% of Wave 1 and Wave 2 interviews)
Wave 1 fresh sample	2,857	1,000		
Wave 2 longitudinal follow-up of Wave 1 respondents			450	
Wave 2 fresh sample	1,571		550	
Wave 3 longitudinal follow-up of Wave 1 and Wave 2 respondents				450
Wave 3 fresh sample	1,571			550
Total		1,000	1,000	1,000

Differences required to be statistically significant

The table below gives an indication of the level of difference that would be required for a number of illustrative comparisons in order to be statistically significant at the 95% level assuming that we take the approach outlined above.

Per Wave				
	Sample size	For findings at c.50%	For findings at c.25%/75%	For findings at c.10%/90%
For comparisons between Areas/Lots – two larger Lots				
e.g. Glasgow	191	10%	10%	7%
e.g. Lanarkshire	175			
For comparisons between Areas/Lots – two smaller Lots				
e.g. North East	64	18%	17%	14%
e.g. Highland and Islands	50			
For comparisons between Areas/Lots – larger and smaller				
e.g. Glasgow	191	16%	14%	10%
e.g. Highland and Islands	50			
For comparisons between genders				
Female	347	7%	6%	5%
Male	644			
For comparisons between age-groups				
e.g. 16-24	148	11%	10%	8%
e.g. 25-34	216			
For comparisons by gender and age – two smaller samples				
e.g. female 16-24	53	18%	17%	14%
e.g. female 25-34	69			
For comparisons by gender and age – two larger samples				
e.g. female 35-49	109	12%	11%	9%
e.g. male 35-49	188			

Opt-out letter

We will send out a hard copy advance letter prior to the start of Wave 1, and further letters to fresh/cross-sectional sample drawn at Waves 2 and 3. The letter will be on Scottish Government letterhead and will explain the aims of the research and what it involves. Individuals will be assured of anonymity and that their decision to participate will not affect any benefits they may receive now or in the future. We will make clear that participation is voluntary. If they do not wish to participate in the research they can opt out – via a dedicated IFF telephone line (with mailbox) and postal and email addresses.

Added value: We will use our experience of activating behavioural levers (for example, by emphasizing the opportunity to help improve support for others in similar circumstances) to ensure that this is an opportunity to maximise interest in the survey.

The letter will also ask individuals to advise of any additional support required to enable them to participate in research e.g. proxy interviews, BSL interpreters.

Added value: From our experience of running the Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation surveys, we know that some claimants approached in Wave 1 were concerned about whether the survey was bona fide and contacted their FSS Service Provider for reassurance. For Wave 2 we therefore also sent an advance email to Service Providers to make them aware of the research and to ask them to encourage participation amongst their participants. We recommend adopting this approach here.

Questionnaire coverage

We have allowed for an interview length of up to 20 minutes at each Wave. This should be sufficient to cover the necessary ground. Questionnaires will contain routing to ensure relevance. The broad anticipated coverage of the interviews is summarised below.

Topic area	Line of questioning	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Current work and benefits status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current employment status (including hours, duration) Current benefits situation Employment history – in and out of work? 	✓		
Job quality and progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If in employment</i> – duration Job quality (hours, contract type, pay) Progression (hours, role, responsibility) 		✓	✓
Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When was FSS introduced, how heard about it? Initial views/expectations of NSS/reasons for participating Ease of referral 	✓		
Take Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What support offered? Which elements accepted? Why? Which elements taken up? Why those? Why not others? 		<i>Including in-work support</i> ✓	<i>As per Wave 2</i> ✓
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views on support – by element What could be improved/perceived gaps Relationship with case manager 		<i>Including in-work support; perceived efficacy of support in addressing barriers</i> ✓	<i>As per Wave 2</i> ✓
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitudes to/distance from work Perceived barriers to work Confidence / motivation Job search skills 	✓	✓	✓
Outcomes in more detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-being/impact of work on condition Wider outcomes, e.g. finances, housing Use of health services Perceived attribution 		✓	✓
Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition Perceived ability to manage condition 	✓	✓	✓
Demographics and consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographics Willingness to be re-contacted at Waves 2/3 Consent for data-linking 	✓	✓	✓

When we cover question areas in both Wave 1 and Waves 2-3 (for example employment status), the intention would be to establish in the Wave 1 interview both the situation prior to joining the FSS programme (to give a baseline measure) and the situation at the time of interview and then, in the Wave 2 and 3 interviews, to measure progress. However, for some of the measures (e.g. wellbeing and possible factors such as confidence) it will be harder to collect a baseline measure at the Wave 1 interview and we will probably just need to collect 'point in time' data.

We can look at 'distance travelled' in a number of ways. One is on a number of 'soft measures' for example increased confidence in applying for jobs, feeling they are more likely to get a job, etc. The other is an increase in activity/behaviour/outcomes (e.g. having applied for (more) jobs; having attended (more) interviews).

Added value: We are experienced in using a number of different standardised metrics that cover these areas which include:

- **Job Search:** The Job Search Self Efficacy Index and the FIOH Job Seeking Activity Scale.
- **Well-being:** WHO-5, ONS4, GAD-7, GHQ-12, PHQ-9, EQ-5D-3L, WEMBWS. Our preference is probably for the WEMBWS because the statements are phrased in the positive (I've been feeling useful etc.) which makes them slightly more comfortable to use over the phone. However, we know that there are advantages of using some of the other scales that have larger banks of comparable data. We have used these metrics within, for example, the DWP Evaluations of IAPT and Group Work/Jobs II. In our fees, we have allowed for the costs required for using these scales.

Added value: To ensure that the 'customer journey' and terminology presented in the questionnaire is recognisable to survey participants, we recommend that FSS providers provide input upfront, by describing the stages and elements of the participant experience, using terminology that participants will recognise. This could be achieved efficiently by providers giving us a 'journey diagram' for their Lot(s). Where possible, we would use information provided within the sample files to tailor question wordings, using text substitutions, to ensure that participants recognise their local version of the FSS programme. This is important given that many FSS participants may have experienced other work support programmes so, when contacted for research, we need to make it as easy as possible for them to differentiate between programmes and recognise FSS. It is also key in the context of FSS being delivered across multiple Lots/contractors, meaning there may be no one standard description of the support provided.

We will also ensure that key demographic questions are aligned with the most recent Scottish Census for comparability (e.g. the health conditions questions; putting White Scottish on the ethnicity list, making sure the list of qualifications state 'Highers').

Piloting

The questionnaire will be piloted to check that questions make sense to respondents and 'flows', whether all relevant questions are answered, whether dropouts from the interview occur at any stage and to establish the minima, maxima and mean/ median interview duration. The pilot will also provide a first level check on response rate assumptions.

The pilot study will be conducted by a small group of telephone interviewers who will go on and work on the main telephone survey.

We recommend a total of 20 pilot interviews as this will provide the necessary information as to the efficacy of the questionnaire at an overall level and within sub-groups. Members of the SG team would be most welcome to attend the debrief and/or to listen in to pilot interviews.

Following the pilot, we would produce a short report detailing outcomes and recommendations for changes. This would be accompanied by a marked-up questionnaire with suggested changes.

Fieldwork

Telephone interviews will be conducted from IFF's in-house CATI centre. Interviewers will receive a detailed briefing (with written notes). Members of the SG team would be very welcome to attend (and assist with) the briefing.

As discussed above (see *overall approach*) the core telephone methodology will be supplemented by **EasyRead and paper self-completion options**; BSL interpreters, TextPhone, Text Relay, assisted interviews; and a **face-to-face completion option** for those who explicitly express a preference for this.

We can offer an **'assisted' interview** in most of the common minority languages spoken in the UK (e.g. French, German, Spanish, Polish, Ethiopian, Bengali, Ghanian, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Yoruba and Hindi). The interviewer administers the questionnaire in English but provide assistance in the respondent's first language where necessary.

Encouraging participation:

We will look to achieve a high response rate through:

- A well-worded introductory letter;
- (If practical), asking case managers to forewarn participants about the research;
- Using a high quality/experienced field-force. The volume of work that we conduct among claimants/employability-programme participants means that our interviewers are well-used to the sensitivities.
- The effort put into contacting respondents. We will call a minimum of 8 times before considering withdrawing the sample. Calls will be well spaced (the CATI script will be programmed with a minimum gap between calls).
- Being flexible about the times when we pursue interviews. Our recent experience suggests it will be most productive to focus on achieving interviews during the day, but we will also make sure that all records are called in the evening/at the weekend to mitigate any bias away from those in work (particularly important at Waves 2-3).
- Taking several contact details at the end of the Wave 1/2 interview – particularly both a landline and mobile phone number, to maximise our ability to re-contact at Waves 2/3.

Data processing and analysis

Coding of open-ended responses or 'other' responses will be conducted on an on-going basis to codeframes. A coding briefing will be carried out by a member of the research team and coding notes (detailing the types of responses to be included in each code) will be produced.

The survey data will probably need to be weighted for non-response bias. Our approach will be simply to compare the profile of achieved interviews with the profile of FSS customers for all variables included on the initial sample. If there are big differences for any variables we will apply weights to bring these back into line.

If we decide to take a longitudinal approach, we will need to apply a non-response weight to correct for differential likelihood to complete the follow-up survey among the Wave 1/2 respondents.

Our starting point for the quantitative analysis will be to produce a set of data tables that cross-analyse all questions by a series of cross-breaks that we will agree with the SG team in advance. Key sub-groups for analysis will include demographics (e.g. gender, age, condition, ethnicity) and contract area/provider. We would generally expect to include derived variables, for example, to measure distance travelled.

The data outputs of each wave will be:

- Computer tabulations (with full significance testing against all the analysis sub-groups agreed with the SG);
- An SPSS datafile (the Wave 2/3 dataset will contain all Wave 1/2 responses to facilitate longitudinal analysis).

All outputs will be checked sequentially by at least two members of the research team. The SPSS and tables will be checked against each other. Directors will play a lead role in determining the analysis plan and agreeing interpretation.

Reporting

Reporting outputs for each wave will comprise: **a findings debrief** (presented face-to-face and a **final report of publication standard** (SG style-compliant).

Interpretation of the quantitative findings involves a **director-led analysis session** in which the researchers compare and contrast their initial interpretation of the findings, with reference to the evidence. Typically, a consensus view emerges of the key themes. These are written up, and the data re-examined to check and verify these. Often a further discussion session takes place.

We recommend that we **iteratively share our views on emerging implications/interpretation** of the findings through informal discussions with the SG while fieldwork is in progress, to 'sense-check' our interpretation and ensure our analysis is on-point.

Reports and debriefs are characterised by a high level of director involvement in drafting; with a focus on highlighting 'headline' messages and – where appropriate – implications. Diagrams will make the output **visually-engaging**: e.g. representing claimant progression paths/outcomes as flow diagrams, describing the percentage of claimants who exhibit each type of progression; representing claimant characteristics/behaviours/barriers as typologies, to convey how claimant groups differ.

The debrief and report will answer questions such as:

- What are the outcomes of FSS for participants (both 'soft' outcomes such as confidence, motivation and job-search skills, and 'hard' outcomes such as employment entered/sustained)?

- How does this differ by area/Lot, provider, and participant type?
- How do outcomes vary by elements of the programme taken up? To what aspects are outcomes attributed? What does this tell us about 'what works'?

It can help to **organise the evidence around an overarching research question** and 'layer' the findings. In this instance the overall question might be articulated as '*how is FSS benefiting participants, and in what circumstances?*'.

IFF Research will undertake all of the survey and analysis activities in-house.

Timetable

The timetable that we suggest working to for the first year is outlined below. This would see us completing fieldwork in the first week of June (slightly later than suggested in the ITT) and a first draft report at the end of July which hopefully would make it comfortable for you to produce the published report in September. The timings for Years 2 and 3 would then be very similar.

		April					May				June				July				August					
Week commencing	25/03/2019	01/04/2019	08/04/2019	15/04/2019	22/04/2019	29/04/2019	06/05/2019	13/05/2019	20/05/2019	27/05/2019	03/06/2019	10/06/2019	17/06/2019	24/06/2019	01/07/2019	08/07/2019	15/07/2019	22/07/2019	29/07/2019	05/08/2019	12/08/2019	19/08/2019	26/08/2019	
Inception meeting	█																							
Agree sampling approach	█																							
Sample delivered to IFF		█																						
Deliver first draft of questionnaire		█																						
Questionnaire review/amends			█	█																				
Agree questionnaire for piloting				█																				
Scripting/checking					█																			
Opt-out period for pilot				█	█																			
Pilot						█																		
Pilot report delivered							█																	
Agree amends to questionnaire								█	█	█	█													
Mainstage fieldwork											█	█	█											
Agree analysis specification																								
Data processing and coding																								
Deliver summary report																								
Report review/amends																								
Final report agreed																								
Final presentation																								

Design and set-up	█
Fieldwork	█
Data preparation	█
Reporting	█

[REDACTED] Director	
	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">[REDACTED] <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
Other experience of CATI surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">[REDACTED] <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
Experience of complex public policy evaluations, including mixed-method and qualitative studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">[REDACTED] <ul style="list-style-type: none">[REDACTED] <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>

[REDACTED], Senior Research Manager	
Profile	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
Experience of employability research, including in Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">[REDACTED] <ul style="list-style-type: none">[REDACTED]

Senior Research Executive

[Redacted]

- [Redacted]

Research Executive

Profile

[Redacted]

Experience of employability research, including in Scotland

- [Redacted]

Experience of complex public policy evaluations, including mixed-method and qualitative studies

- [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Our approach to delivery of projects is very much team based but the table below gives an indication of the roles each team member would play and the number of days they would contribute to the study.

Team Member	Role	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
██████ ██████ ██████ ██████ Directors	Overall quality assurance Lead on sampling and weighting design Lead on questionnaire design Lead on analysis strategies, lead in delivery of presentations and lead report authors	7.25 days	6.5 days	6.5 days
██████ ██████ Senior RM	Ownership of timetable, Progress updates, Input into design and analysis Sign-off of CATI script Sign-off of data tables/data files Management of pilot Fieldwork management Authoring chapters of reports and producing presentation slides	11.25 days	10.25 days	10.25 days
██████ ██████ ██████ (S)RE	Sample preparation Checking script/data outputs Management of opt out mailing Handling respondent queries Project support Presentation charts Report checking	17.5 days	16.5 days	16.5 days
██████ ██████ ██████ Data Services	Questionnaire scripting Programming of data tables and SPSS files	9 days	9 days	9 days
██████ ██████ Director	Consultancy input to ensure continuity with other research	1 day	1 day	1 day

We are accredited members of the **Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS)**. All survey recruitment and interviewing will be conducted in-house by our specialist telephone interviewers who have extensive experience of interviewing claimants, jobseekers, people with disabilities/long-term health conditions on experiences of/outcomes from employability support, for clients including the Scottish Government and the Department for Work and Pensions (*see the range of studies cited in our team CVs above*). Interviewer experience is key to maximising response and in providing a positive interview experience for the respondent.

(2.3.2) Management

Please provide details of how you will manage and support the proposed staff resource(s) through the duration of this contract. The response should include any internal systems in place for managing the absence/replacement of key staff.

Please note that responses to this question will be limited to 1500 Words any diagrams charts or tables, any additional text beyond this limit will not be considered.

IFF Research is of sufficient size that we can deliver multiple projects at the same time without resourcing conflicts. We currently employ 60 full-time staff. The research team consists of 8 directors and 22 researchers. The operations team includes 8 people who manage our field operation and 9 who are involved in data processing, sampling and IT.

Key to the success of any project is having a suitably experienced team, sufficient senior involvement, and sufficient time allocated to the study. All projects will have two directors assigned to them and at least two other research staff. Our proposed teams are always be large enough to enable us to undertake multiple research tasks simultaneously, but small enough to ensure that all members of the core team remain up to speed as the project progresses. Our resource management system is led by a Board Director, and research resource discussed on a project by project basis and collectively by the directors weekly. Fieldwork resource allocation is managed through bespoke databases which track the progress of projects, and allocate resource accordingly. Quality assurance is established through well-established systems and processes (for example outputs being fully checked independently and sequentially by at least 2 members of the research team). A detailed timetable is developed following inception, and this is regularly reviewed, monitored and if needed amended through the life of the study.

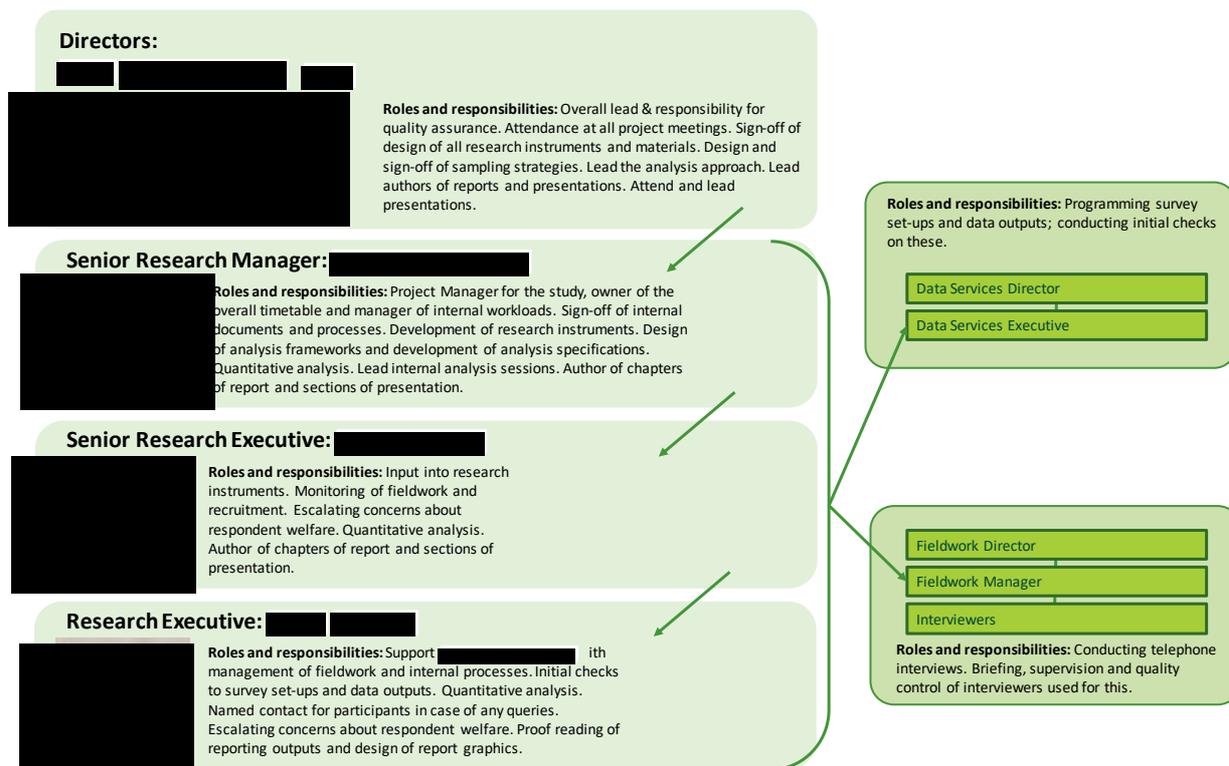
A high level of senior involvement at all stages in a project is a hallmark of our approach. As well as maintaining an overview of the entire study at all times, Directors play a very hands-on role, particularly at design and analysis phases. The project directors are responsible for ensuring work is carried out by staff with suitable skills. All documents sent to the end user will have been thoroughly reviewed by a project director. Having a second director on all studies ensures a key decision maker is always available for the research team and for the client.

Individual members of staff are selected for studies based on a combination of their expertise and availability. Staff workloads are reviewed using projections of time required for their projects across the next three months. Workloads and project resource requirements are reviewed weekly by the senior management team to identify and resolve any clashes or bottlenecks.

Within each project, junior researchers' work is closely supervised by the (Senior) Research Manager. The project Directors give overall guidance at weekly internal meetings for each project, informed by written project plans.

All research instruments and draft outputs are reviewed sequentially by the (Senior) Research Manager and Directors before they are used/issued to clients – and feedback is given to staff at each stage to support their personal development.

The individual tasks and lines of supervision for the nominated team are summarised below:



Having our **data collection and processing departments in-house** gives full control over staff resourcing and we can make adjustments so key deadlines are met even when client requirements evolve or projects do not run entirely to plan. Our 120-booth Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing unit (one of the largest in the country) can conduct 500,000+ interviews per annum.

New staff participate in an ongoing programme of internal training in the research process and research skills from the point at which they join; and have a formal annual review, accompanied by a six-monthly feedback session, plus a skills audit and learning and development pathway, to support effective performance and professional development. This appraisal, learning and development activity is supported by line management catch-ups in which development goals are revisited and any issues are addressed.

These processes in place for researchers are replicated within the Data Services and Fieldwork Teams. In addition, all interviews conducted by fieldworkers are quality-audited in line with IQCS standards (the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme – this is the industry standard for fieldwork excellence). Constructive feedback is given from these quality audits to support improvements in interviewer performance.

Our staff turnover rates are among the lowest in the industry; and the lead Director [Redacted] is long-established at IFF [Redacted] **We minimise the impacts of any staff absences or staffing changes through:**

- Having two IFF Directors on the team for this study, helps ensure continuity.
- Group e-mails, ensuring all team members receive project correspondence; and weekly internal meetings, keeping team members in touch with key tasks and progress – together

these mean team members are up-to-speed with all areas of the project and able to cover tasks if any staff are absent.

- Our large, experienced IFF team with additional researchers available as required, including 8 further Research Directors, 4 Associate Directors, and 9 further (Senior) Research Managers with a track record of projects directly relevant to this brief. We would be happy to provide the SG with the CV of any replacement members of the proposed research team, for approval.

Equally important in successful delivery is how IFF's staff liaise with the Scottish Government (SG). IFF's tight project management ensures that any problems are identified and dealt with quickly and effectively. To ensure the smooth running of the project, we will work very closely with the SG project team throughout the course of this research. Much of this contact is informal (telephone, email), but we would expect to commence the working relationship with an in-person project inception meeting. The purpose of an inception meeting is to obtain a full briefing on the requirements of and background to the project, as well as how the results will be used. Our project management approach also includes the following:

- Throughout the research programme, IFF will provide the SG with a **weekly update**, which will detail the status of the research and any issues that might arise. Where issues are identified, IFF will discuss these, either over the phone or in a face-to-face meeting, with the SG research team. This approach helps ensure there are no surprises and reinforces our collaborative approach to research projects.
- We will provide a **summary within two working days of each meeting** with the SG in a consistent format.
- Our aim is to **respond to all requests and enquiries within 24 hours**. If this is not possible we will discuss the reasons for this with the SG team and agree a revised timescale. Where no timing for response is indicated, and where it is not possible to provide a response there and then (for telephone enquiries) or by return (for written/email requests) we will agree an appropriate timescale with the SG team for response.
- We have proposed **an experienced project team and have a named Account Manager** to act as the key contact between IFF and the SG.
- The **project directors will be involved in all stages of its delivery**. They will be lead report authors, will sign-off all survey materials, data output requirements and analysis plans and will be responsible for contacting the SG team on issues relating to the design of the project or about any problems encountered.
- All sample and data management will comply with our strict protocol on information security (**ISO27001**) and **GDPR requirements**.
- We normally set up a **group e-mail** ensuring that all client correspondence is received by all IFF team members. This ensures that someone is always able to respond quickly to urgent requirements.

We encourage clients to attend interviewer briefings and debriefings and to observe/listen in to interviews. All key documents and outputs will be designed by IFF and approved by the SG. We usually also provide an outline of key deliverables enabling the broad approach to be agreed, thus helping to minimise the amount of redrafting required.

3 Quality Management (10%)

(2.4.1) Quality

Please provide details of your approach to quality and performance management in relation to this requirement, giving details of any relevant professional standards you adhere to, and/or any management tools or systems used. Please also provide a detailed risk matrix which identifies risks associated with this requirement (ethical risks to be covered in the next question) and how these are to be mitigated.

Please note that responses to this question will be limited to 2000 Words any diagrams charts or tables, any additional text beyond this limit will not be considered.

Performance management

IFF prides itself on its ability to deliver high quality research to time and budget. Fieldwork and analysis processes are managed in-house giving us control and flexibility to ensure deadlines are met – as this DWP researcher’s testimonial attests:

“To very challenging deadlines they developed long, complex, high quality questionnaires, piloted interviews and finished each survey to time, without exception.”

Working with the SG in an open and transparent manner, we would invite ongoing feedback from the SG so that any respects in which we can improve delivery are flagged quickly and the necessary adjustments made before they become an issue. We suggest that the Scottish Government (SG) include on its agenda for each wave’s planning and/or interim research meetings, an agenda item to discuss feedback on our delivery to date.

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 achievement rates daily, and increasing resource allocation as required;
- Progressing analysis and working with test-data during fieldwork to ensure ‘right-first-time’ outputs;
- Sharing emerging findings with you iteratively to ensure findings answer your research questions.

Key to the success of individual project delivery is having a suitably experienced team, sufficient senior involvement, and sufficient time allocated.

The IFF Directors provide leadership with a focus on ensuring quality by reviewing methodological decisions, research instruments and outputs. IFF’s **written quality standards** form parts of our induction processes and inform a rolling programme of internal training/appraisal.

The individual project team members, as well as being given project-specific support by the Directors, are also assigned an **independent line-manager** whom they can use as a sounding-board

for research queries or other issues that might affect their project performance. Our line management systems build in line manager catch-ups at regular intervals, typically monthly. Project team members also benefit from **six-monthly internal review/feedback sessions**, to help them develop their skills and optimise performance.

Our **telephone centre** is currently organised into teams of **no more than 10 interviewers**, each with a Team Leader. We have Team Leaders rather than Supervisors to emphasise a focus on coaching and mentoring, rather than solely supervision. Our Team Leaders each have on average 6 years of service at IFF. All have worked on surveys re: experiences/outcomes of employability programmes.

The role of the Team Leader is to: to understand, communicate and achieve the key quality assurance and monitoring requirements of the specific survey they are working on; prepare their team for the shift; monitor performance; mentor and coach. Throughout the shift, Team Leaders feedback on performance, take steps to remedy low performance and encourage higher performers. This creates a close working relationship and shared understanding of what is expected. We conduct thorough quality checks of *at least* 5% of all completed interviews. The Team Leaders analyse and monitor the interviews across:

- The introduction and close;
- Following questionnaire wording;
- Correct pace of delivery;
- Clarity of speaking voice;
- Following routing/filter questions;
- Recording of verbatim questions; and
- Recording of demographics.

Quality management

Our **quality management approach** is as follows:

High quality methodological design:

Involving two IFF-directors provides **an internal sense-check** on design decisions. Where the decision is challenging, it will be **peer-reviewed** by a third Director with relevant experience.

Data collection:

- Instruments drafted by senior researchers; peer-reviewed by IFF Directors;
- Initial in-depth interviews/the first day of case-study fieldwork is treated as a pilot: the efficacy of topic guides and stimulus materials are reviewed following this and any suggested refinements shared with the Scottish Government (SG) for comment and sign-off;
- CATI scripts tested by 2+ research team members (by running through scenarios using the script and then by running frequency counts on a randomly-generated dummy data file), signed off by Directors;
- Thorough testing of instruments/materials in development stages;

- Project team listens to pilot interviews;
- Research team checks topline-data during fieldwork to check response patterns;
- Client attendance at interviewer briefings encouraged;
- Field-force is IQCS (Interviewer Quality Control Scheme) accredited;
- Respondents give informed consent in accordance with MRS (Market Research Society) guidelines and the GSR (Government Social Research) Code of Ethics;
- We employ a team of Quality Control supervisors.

Data analysis:

- We hold the ISO 27001 accreditation for data security, and have reviewed our processes for GDPR-compliance;
- Survey data coded by in-house team to a specification signed-off by Research Manager. Data preparation specifications signed-off by Directors;
- Tables/SPSS files thoroughly checked independently and sequentially by Research Executives on the study (by checking against raw CATI and raw coding outputs); signed-off by Research Manager;
- Data dictionary supplied explaining every data-file variable;
- Analysis models are peer-reviewed by IFF-Directors;
- All work checked for accuracy. Confidence intervals used to indicate reliability of survey results;
- Qualitative interviews recorded on encrypted DVRs, transcribed, and summarised into Excel-based frameworks (signed-off by Directors before data is entered). All research team members enter scripts; completed framework reviewed by Directors;
- Researchers bring their interpretation to a Director-led analysis session for discussion/challenge. SG participation is welcomed;
- We discuss emerging findings with the SG team iteratively – informally via ‘rapid findings’ documents/catch-up calls during fieldwork; at analysis sessions. This means at every step, the SG is kept aware of findings and our interpretation – enabling the SG to input into/shape the analysis, and IFF to refine both discussion approach and our interpretation.

High quality reporting outputs:

- We prepare a report/debrief blueprint/structure in advance for SG approval; with team meetings to discuss reporting ‘tone’, key analysis variables and ways of presenting data;
- All report/debrief sections are drafted by Research Manager/Directors with Directors drafting summaries/conclusions;

- Chapter drafts sense-checked against data tables/analysis frameworks by another project team member; and reviewed by IFF-Directors. Sufficient time allowed for at least two internal drafts before the report is submitted;
- Directors draw sections together into a coherent first-draft. This is proof-read for consistency and SG style-guide compliance. Outputs thus conform to your preferred templates.

Contingencies for maintaining service quality in the context of staff changes:

Our staff turnover rates are among the lowest in the industry; and the lead Director [REDACTED] is long-established at IFF (18 years+). We minimise the impacts of any staffing changes through:

- Having two IFF Directors on the team for this study, helps ensure continuity.
- Group e-mails, ensuring all team members receive project correspondence; and weekly internal meetings, keeping team members in touch with key tasks and progress – together these mean team members are up-to-speed with all areas of the project and able to cover tasks if any staff are absent.
- Our large, experienced IFF team with additional researchers available as required, including 8 further Research Directors, 4 Associate Directors, and 9 further (Senior) Research Managers with a track record of projects directly relevant to this brief.

Managing risks

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 them. When bidding for a project we typically assess and summarise the likely project-relevant risks – in a ‘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 refined at the project inception.

A summary of the forthcoming risks to the project will form part of our regular weekly updates and we will, of course, alert the SG to any issues and proposed solutions as soon as possible. This will be done informally by telephone, supported by a written summary of the issue and mitigation steps/solutions proposed. Our initial thinking about these risks is as follows:

Nature of risk	Likelihood	Impact	Steps to mitigate	Residual impact
Lower-than-anticipated participant volumes	Medium	Very high	<p>We could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the current timetable and settle for fewer quantitative interviews. We would be able to advise on the impacts of this for subgroup analysis. Move back reporting deadlines so that we can cover starts later on the programmes. We have a flexible interviewing resource so can easily adapt to accommodate this and still ensure we maximise response from variable participant (and therefore sample) volumes. 	Medium-to-high
Delays in accessing sample from some FSS providers	Low-to-medium	High	<p>If it were to take longer to secure access, then we could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start interviewing 1-2 weeks later. We have a sufficiently large telephone resource to adjust resourcing to accommodate this and make up lost time. Consider staggering fieldwork so that we begin with sample from providers who have supplied sample already. 	Medium
'Hawthorne effects' where attitudes/behaviour of participants is influenced by research	Medium	High	<p>Experienced team to ensure questionnaire is carefully drafted using appropriate language and as far as possible sticking to factual content within Wave 1 interview. Retaining a neutral description of the purpose of the follow-up interview that does not imply in any way that we will be 'checking up' on respondents.</p>	Low
Poor recall of the nature of support received	Medium	High	<p>If at all possible obtaining information for each participant, in the sample file, about the nature of support provided. This can then be used to prompt responses, by tailoring question wordings to ensure respondents recognise 'their' FSS experience. At the analysis stage it will allow us to compare levels of recall but also to conduct analysis of results by type of support package using fully reliable data.</p>	Low-to-medium

Nature of risk	Likelihood	Impact	Steps to mitigate	Residual impact
High attrition between waves	Medium	High	Careful explanation of why we need involvement in both surveys. Ensuring interviewer flexibility with dates/times to maximise response. Collecting as many contact numbers as possible (including mobiles) to maximise chances of re-contacting respondents.	Low-to-medium
Customers unwilling to be candid	Medium	High	Reassure re: independence/confidentiality; the uses of the data; and individuals' rights to see/change their personal data or have it deleted.	Low
Flaws in research design	Low	High	Two Directors sense-check design decisions, with SG input.	Low
Poor quality interviewing	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face briefing by Directors/RM, supported by notes, ensures in-depth understanding of study purpose among all researchers. IQCS-aligned, frontloaded QC-checks on survey interviews and recruitment to identify/address problems early and support continuous improvement. 	Low
Staff turnover	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Directors ensure continuity; we have a large, experienced team with additional researchers available (8 with relevant experience). Group e-mails and weekly internal meetings keep team members in touch and ensure they are able to cover tasks if staff are absent. 	Low
Reporting outputs not on-point, causing delays	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply/discuss interim findings documents from fieldwork-to-date so report 'story' can be scoped out iteratively with SG input. Hold analysis session to finalise interpretation/analysis and agree reporting tone/approach/structure. Produce report 'blueprint' (structure and key messages) for SG comment/sign-off to minimise redrafting needed. First drafts peer-reviewed within IFF; SG style guide adhered-to. 	Low
Complaints	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All complaints are formally logged, with actions taken and a link to any documentation; we aim to respond within 24 hours. All interviews are recorded so we can listen back to all calls, to inform our response. 	Low

(2.4.2) Ethics

Please provide details of the ethical sensitivities and risks associated with this requirement and the actions that you and any partner(s) will take to mitigate these.

In particular, please include details of how your approach and methodology recognises challenges in relation to:

- *research activity with participants who have disabilities or health conditions;*
- *ensuring all participants who want to take part in the evaluation research are able to do so; and*
- *the privacy impacts of gathering and processing sensitive personal information in relation to individual research participants*

Please note that responses to this question will be limited to 2000 Words any diagrams charts or tables, any additional text beyond this limit will not be considered.

Managing ethical risks

We will apply the principles of GSR (Government Social Research) unit throughout. We will ensure **informed consent** by:

- Working within the requirements of data protection legislation.
- Ensuring respondents understand how findings will be used, that taking part is voluntary and that they can withdraw or refuse to answer individual questions at any time. This will be emphasised in the opt-out letter and wordings of recruitment scripts, and reassurance letters/emails (which we would issue on request).
- Ensuring respondents are clear that their relationship with the Scottish Government (SG) and their Fair Start Scotland (FSS) provider will not be affected.

Interviewers will devote good time to explaining the background/what participation will involve and will be instructed that if concerns exist then they should err towards caution and stop recruitment. In some circumstances, if they are concerned about comprehension, interviewers will ask the respondent to repeat back their understanding of what the research will involve so that they can check this.

All interviews will be conducted with humanity and sensitivity. This means that:

- Interviews are conducted at the respondent's pace and can take place over more than one session;
- The rationale for personal questions is explained;
- Interviewers will stop if the respondent is becoming distressed (and offer to contact a friend/relative if appropriate);
- If interviewers are concerned about a respondent's welfare, then they will escalate the issue to the research team (who will discuss with the SG if appropriate).

Interviewers will receive a detailed briefing (with written notes). Members of the SG team would be very welcome to assist.

It is worth bearing in mind that progression towards employment from being on benefits can be a source of anxiety for many claimants (especially those with mental health conditions), and they may well ask questions or need reassurance from our interviewers. We would look to work with you to prepare agreed 'lines to take' that would form part of the briefing process. These could include references to pages on gov.scot or helpline numbers for the provision of more information.

We will also ensure that ethical risks form part of our **risk register for the study** (our assessment of the likely project-relevant risks, used as a 'live' project management document):

Nature of risk	Likelihood	Impact	Steps to mitigate	Residual impact
Potential participants do not correctly grasp the study purpose and thus fail to give informed consent	Medium	Medium	To support informed consent, clearly explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose/commissioner/survey content; • How findings will be used; • The voluntary nature of participation; • Anonymity and confidentiality; • That participation will not affect relationship with the SG or FSS provider. Both the opt-out letter and survey introduction wordings can be used to explain these points and allow the individual to make an informed choice. If needed, the interviewer can invite and answer questions to ensure the individual has fully understood; additional supporting materials (e.g. EasyRead) can be posted/emailed if helpful. If concerns remain, interviewers do not proceed with recruitment.	Low
The study is not sufficiently accessible for all, resulting in certain participant groups being under-represented	Medium	Medium	We can make reasonable adjustments to facilitate participation; including BSL interpreters, TextPhone, Text Relay, assisted alternative-language interviews; materials available in EasyRead; as well as face-to-face completion options.	Low-to-medium

Nature of risk	Likelihood	Impact	Steps to mitigate	Residual impact
Participating in an interview has a negative impact on participants			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will minimise burden on research participants by careful questionnaire design and piloting to ensure sensitive and relevant question wordings. We will ensure informed consent (see above). We will reassure participants that taking part will not effect relationship with the SG or FFS provider. If queries or concerns are raised we will follow lines agreed with SG and provide contacts for reassurance, further information/support. 	
Survey participation results in disclosure of risk of harm to respondent	High	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use documented process for escalating concerns re: participant wellbeing; agreed upfront with SG. For questions such as the PHQ-9 which have the risk of disclose of potential harm, we script text for interviewers to ask respondents if they would like a family member/friend/GP to be contacted 	Medium
Data security breach	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stringent data security measures in place; in line with ISO27001 standards and GDPR. Sample files are held on secure servers with access restricted to the core research team. Transfer of data encrypted through PGP (in line with e.g. DWP-GSAD). 	Low

Maximising accessibility/participation

To ensure that we enable the widest possible range of perspectives and contributions:

- We will ask all interviewees at the opt-in and recruitment stage whether there are any adjustments that would make it possible/ more comfortable for them to participate e.g. we **can arrange BSL interpreters if interviews are conducted face-to-face**. We have established relationships with organisations providing BSL interpreters who worked with on projects such as the EHRC 'Opening Up Work for Disabled People' study (██████) and the DWP Personalisation Pathfinders Evaluation (██████).
- We can conduct interviews using approaches such as **TextPhone and Text Relay** (or instant messaging services) for respondents with a hearing impairment. We use this approach extensively throughout the majority of our research focusing on people with disabilities as well as in wider phone-based research.

- We can offer an **'assisted' interview** in most of the common minority languages spoken in the UK (e.g. French, German, Spanish, Polish, Ethiopian, Bengali, Ghanian, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu, Yoruba and Hindi). The interviewer administers the questionnaire in English but provide assistance in the respondent's first language where necessary.
- IFF is very experienced in conducting **proxy interviews** e.g. sessions involving DLA claimants' carers/supporters and formal representatives for the recent study to understand the aspirations/support needs of individuals in the ESA Support Group [REDACTED]. We will take our cues from the claimant themselves – making it clear at recruitment that they are welcome to involve carers or supporters if they wish (we are careful to always address our questions to the claimant first, in line with disability awareness training).
- For individuals with learning difficulties and other complex needs, we will offer **face-to-face interviews**. Specifically for those with learning disabilities, we will use a simplified version of the script and make all materials (confirmation letter, any show material) available in **EasyRead**.

If relevant information can be included in the sample provided by the FSS providers (e.g. if an individual is known to have specific communications preferences or needs; is a member of a group likely to be under-represented), this can assist us by helping us to approach them to participate in the most relevant way. Dependent on participant population volumes, this may also allow us to over-sample those individuals most likely to be under-represented.

Managing research activity with participants who have disabilities or health conditions

Of key importance is **ensuring accessibility**. As noted above, at the opt-in stage and at recruitment, we invite potential respondents to tell us specific requirements to enable them to take part. This might include: how the IFF interviewer communicates (including the need for interpreters etc., alternative formats, alternative languages); how ideas are presented to the respondent; other individuals (e.g. friends, family members, carers) that the respondent wishes to have present at the time of interview, in order for them to feel at ease.

The research team named in this proposal, and all survey interviewers, have received **disability awareness training** and have prior experience of claimant surveys among individuals with disabilities; including physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health conditions, e.g. Group Work/Jobs II Evaluation; and the Scottish Government Transitional Employability Evaluation [REDACTED]). This means they are familiar with the social model of disability; are aware of the appropriate language to use when designing questions and conducting interviews; are conscious of not making assumptions about what an individual can or can't do or what support they might need; and can approach fieldwork and associated communications with the appropriate balance of sensitivity and confidence.

There are some **particular ethical issues with the use of some standardised wellbeing scales** often used in this kind of questionnaire exploring the relationship between disabilities/health conditions and closeness to work. The PHQ-9 for example, asks respondents about the extent to which they have been troubled by 'Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way'. By answering this question, respondents can disclose a danger of self-harm. When we use this question, we script a follow-up that asks respondents whether they would like us to contact a friend, family member or GP surgery on their behalf. If they state that they would then either a Team Leader or a member of the research team makes this follow-up contact as soon as possible. This process has successfully been used on recent/current surveys for the DWP, to evaluate Group

Work/Jobs II [REDACTED] and to understand the aspirations/support needs of individuals in the ESA Support Group [REDACTED]

For any online resources (e.g. web-pages of supporting information on privacy or rights under GDPR), online accessibility will be maximised through:

- Using a responsive-design approach which means that the software can recognise the type of device that is being used and re-format the online information accordingly.
- Maximising the extent to which the online information is compatible with screen-readers.
- Inclusion of a tool to allow the text size to be increased.
- Checking that as far as possible, the online information is compatible with all web browsers.

Managing potential privacy impacts

Our data handling on this project will comply with our strict protocols on information security. IFF holds ISO/IEC 27001:2005 accreditation (the international standard for information security) and has reviewed its procedures to ensure GDPR-compliance.

Under GDPR, the right for us to hold and process personal data rests either on public interest or participant consent. While there is arguably a case to be made for public interest, we believe that, for the research to be ethical, obtaining informed consent from participants is of the utmost importance anyway. To ensure we have informed consent, potential participants will be briefed on the study before indicating an initial interest in participating (see *managing ethical risks*, above).

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.

We are happy to comply with your own Data Protection Policies and ownership of data requirements. The process that we most commonly adopt with Government departments (e.g. DWP) is that:

- Sample data is transferred by secure electronic transfer to IFF using PGP encryption software to a dedicated e-mail account (which can only be accessed by our IT Manager);
- Personal data is saved to a folder on IFF's network which only the direct project team are able to access (with permission rights to this secure area allocated by the Project Manager);
- All activity relating to the secure files (copying, amending etc.) are recorded on the Data Asset Register.

Data relating to or personal data is not exported or transferred outside of the UK. Data you pass onto us will not be passed to any 3rd party without your prior consent and will not be used by any other purposes other than research on your behalf.

We may wish to create a webpage that can be accessed via a link in our advance mailing, explaining how personal data is stored; how the data collected in the surveys will be used, and individuals' data rights.

In our survey introductions and closing wordings we make participants aware of their rights to access, obtain, change or delete their personal data; and signpost them to an IFF 'GDPR' web-page to allow them to make requests to exercise these rights.

Our SPSS-Dimensions interviewing system ensures interviewers can access only one claimant record at once, and they are given the minimum information needed to recruit/conduct an interview.

We also consider data privacy when assessing project risks. We create a risk register, describing the nature of the risks, their likelihood and potential impact, the steps to take to mitigate these risks and their residual impact; this is used as a 'live' document in managing the project with the SG.

4 Mandatory Requirements

(2.5.1) Community benefits

Please provide details of any quantifiable wider community benefit(s) you will deliver as part of this Contract, particularly in respect of the proposed research methodology, working with local and/or third sector employability support services and any opportunities for participant co-production of future services.

This project will create social value by producing evidence-based, practical recommendations for potential improvements to the design and delivery of the FSS programme and future employability programmes. This will provide a clear basis for future design of services and engagement of the target groups, and ways to deliver greater benefit to the Scottish economy.

Beyond this specific Contract **we deliver community benefit generally** through:

- Participation in the Buy1 Give1 charitable-giving scheme which sees IFF give a percentage of project income to a selection of causes;
- A charitable matching scheme, matching any money raised for charity by staff up to £100 per employee per year;
- A payroll giving scheme, enabling easy, and tax efficient, charitable donations;
- Team days have supported local charities (we are based in London), including redecorating a youth centre in Hackney, and a community farm on the Isle of Dogs;
- IFF has recently recruited, trained and then employed three apprentices (two still with the company);
- IFF is currently providing two positions for sandwich students from a local university.

Although we are based in London, our telephone centre uses a combination of office-based workstations located at our offices in London Bridge and a network of homeworkers across the UK. **We currently have 13 homeworkers based in Scotland on our panel** and are looking to grow this over the coming months. This includes individuals working in remote, rural locations and those for whom regular office-based work can be difficult to manage (e.g. carers, people with health conditions). **Our flexible, homeworking approach allows individuals to access work who may otherwise face barriers due to transport or the challenges of an office environment.**

We would be happy to provide a work experience opportunity for an FSS participant as a homemaker as part of our telephone centre operation. They would need to meet our basic requirements which are access to a computer, ethernet rather than Wifi and access to their own headset (however if necessary, we could send these out though we would need to discuss costs for this with the Scottish Government). We have also had discussions in the past with JCP around **a joint initiative whereby JCP provide space in their centre and the necessary technology for people to work for us, with IFF providing the support, coaching and training.** We would be willing to explore working in this way with a Scottish JCP as part of this Contract if this is of interest.

We have considerable experience of **supporting and advising on self-evaluation for organisations delivering on a local level.** There are a range of ways we could support third sector organisations in their self-evaluation of FSS service delivery, such as producing best practice guidance on evaluation methodology and peer reviewing research instruments or outputs. We have not made provision for this activity within our costs but would be happy to discuss this further if it is of interest to the Scottish Government.

As part of our Corporate Social Responsibility policy, we support staff who would like to contribute to the community. We offer each staff member two days paid leave per year for volunteering with a charity or community organisation. If there are third sector organisations delivering employment support services who may wish to engage with a volunteer researcher in this way, we would link up any interested parties.

We have expertise in the **co-production of research studies and findings/recommendations with participants**. For example, for a recent study on behalf of the DWP on the ESA Support Group we included an element of peer interviewing; and for a study among disabled people for the EHRC we set up an online community of participants to comment on and develop emerging findings from the research. We could see the latter working well for the proposed study – we could collect email addresses of interested participants at the end of the survey interview and invite them to log on to an online community further down the line. Within this forum they would then be invited to comment on emerging findings and recommendations, and/or take part in creative exercises relating to designing future services. IFF would host and facilitate this forum. More extensive co-production work could include face-to-face workshops involving both research participants and those responsible for the design and delivery of the FSS service. Including elements of this type would incur additional fees, not currently included within our core proposals, but we would welcome the opportunity to discuss the range of options further with you if co-production is desirable.

IFF is a corporate member of **Disability Rights UK**, with whom we have worked in partnership on research projects to ensure accessibility, increase our awareness of issues relating to disability, and to publicise research among disabled people. As part of this Contract there would be the option to share emerging recommendations for service delivery with Disability Rights UK for feedback and peer review (for no additional cost).

(2.5.2) Fair practices for workers

Describe how you will commit to fair work practices for workers (including any agency or sub-contractor workers) engaged in the delivery of this contract.

Please note that responses to this question will be limited to 500 Words any diagrams charts or tables, any additional text beyond this limit will not be considered.

All elements of this study will be delivered in-house; we will not use any agency or sub-contractor workers.

At IFF, we are immensely proud of our people. We also do our best to make them proud of us: our services and products, our clients and work, our culture and way of working. We strive to do our best for all our stakeholders, including our most valuable resource: our people. Our fair work practices are outlined in detailed in our Staff Handbook and several written policies and further details are available on request.

Performance is reviewed regularly via appraisals and supplemented with more informal feedback provided throughout the year. Salaries are reviewed annually alongside the performance appraisal.

We recognise the vital importance of learning and development (L&D), whether hands-on, workplace-based experience or more structured training, coaching and knowledge-sharing. Personal L&D needs are identified as part of regular performance management review / appraisals. This feeds into a companywide training plan.

IFF is a family-friendly employer. We recognise that getting the work-life balance right is important to all our employees. We pride ourselves on running a company where family values are high on the agenda, and therefore offer a number of enhanced family-friendly policies in addition to existing legal rights. Numerous employees have flexible working arrangements in place and several have taken career breaks/sabbaticals.

The research team engaged in delivery of this contract have access to a company benefits package including:

- Company pension scheme;
- Company life assurance cover;
- Permanent health insurance;
- Profit sharing scheme;
- 28 days annual leave per year, plus public and bank holidays;
- Health benefit scheme and eye tests;
- Childcare vouchers;
- Enhanced maternity and paternity pay;
- Assistance with travel to work – season ticket loan scheme and ride-to-work scheme;
- Team Building Days and other social events / activities;
- Monthly Food Allowance and free fruit;
- Helping support charities and paid leave for volunteering.

In terms of our telephone interviewers, we offer a blended office worker-homeworker model which provides an attractive work proposition. Market and social research interviewers typically want to work flexible hours, on a part-time basis (sometimes to regular patterns, oftentimes not), and as far as possible we accommodate this.

We welcome applications from parents returning to work, carers and people with health conditions that have barriers to travel to work or working in an office environment, and our recruitment channels and processes reflect this.

We have ongoing training and performance management processes, including intensive monitoring and training during the first 2 weeks, with regular monitoring and coaching thereafter. All interviewers are assigned a Team Leader responsible for providing coaching on areas for improvement.

“

IFF Research illuminates the world for organisations businesses and individuals helping them to make better-informed decisions.”

Our Values:

1. Being human first:

Whether employer or employee, client or collaborator, we are all humans first and foremost. Recognising this essential humanity is central to how we conduct our business, and how we lead our lives. We respect and accommodate each individual's way of thinking, working and communicating, mindful of the fact that each has their own story and means of telling it.

2. Impartiality and independence:

IFF is a research-led organisation which believes in letting the evidence do the talking. We don't undertake projects with a preconception of what "the answer" is, and we don't hide from the truths that research reveals. We are independent, in the research we conduct, of political flavour or dogma. We are open-minded, imaginative and intellectually rigorous.

3. Making a difference:

At IFF, we want to make a difference to the clients we work with, and we work with clients who share our ambition for positive change. We expect all IFF staff to take personal responsibility for everything they do at work, which should always be the best they can deliver.



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