



## **Scottish Employer Skills Survey 2020**

Schedule 4 (Sections 2 & 3) and Schedule 7

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A proposal prepared by:

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All research services will be undertaken from the company base in Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

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## Schedule 4 (Section 2) Quality Questions

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### Section A - Understanding the requirement (8%)

**Role and evolution of the ESS:** The UK Employer Skills Survey (ESS) is one of the largest business surveys in the world, gathering comprehensive data on labour market intelligence and skills challenges that inform UK and devolved policy teams on how best to invest in skills systems. In their most recent form, the ESS and its sister study, the Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS) have been undertaken biennially and in alternating years. Structural and funding shifts within Government prompted changes to how these surveys were managed and administered, with the Department for Education (DfE) taking ownership following the closure of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) in 2016. Following a review carried out by the DfE, the two surveys were combined and modularised, starting with the 2019 iteration (due for publication in 2020). This covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with Scotland due to join from 2021. The value of the ESS lies in its scale, breadth, robustness, transparency and searchability – acting as a barometer of positive and negative change.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**How the ESS is used in Scotland:** Economic policy in Scotland is committed to sustainable growth, tackling inequality, building an inclusive labour market and a skilled population. Skills represents one of ten key components of the 2019-20 Economic Action Plan, with the strategic objective to provide a highly skilled workforce through education, training and re-skilling<sup>1</sup>. The ESS, along with other national datasets such as the Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey, inform strategic frameworks and planning activities across Scotland. ESS data on skills shortage vacancies and skills underutilisation feed into National Performance Framework indicators<sup>2</sup>, while the former has also informed the STEM Strategy for Education and Training in Scotland. The ESS also provides vital underpinning intelligence for local Government and community planning partnerships, as well as employment and skills-focussed organisations such as Skills Development Scotland (e.g. a data matrix on skills mismatches) and the Scottish Funding Council (e.g. setting priorities for training provision through the Flexible Workforce Flexible Development Fund).

**Value of the ESS to Scotland in unprecedented times:** There are a number of advantages to combining the ESS and EPS, as well as important reasons why Scotland stands to benefit from commissioning interim standalone reports prior to joining the combined project from 2021. The main advantages of the combined approach include being able to link employer actions to the skills challenges they face; enabling richer analysis of the relationship between skills shortages, recruitment practices and engagement in policy initiatives; and increasing the overall value of the survey to policymakers. However, recent political and economic turbulence – firstly relating to Brexit and secondly the shockwaves resulting from COVID-19 – make it vitally important that Scotland obtains current and up-to-date insights on the challenges employers are facing, the actions they are taking, and their perceptions and possible fears about the future. The recently completed EPS 2019 for Scotland, as well as the project under tender, provide vital continuity of intelligence and up-to-date insights.

**Early indications on the business impact of COVID-19:** The Scottish Government has estimated that businesses asked to stop physical trading during the COVID-19 lockdown accounted for some 22% of the economy and 920,000 people (32% of the February 2020 Scottish workforce)<sup>3</sup>. The SCDI's May 2020 State of the Nation report warned of the substantial impact of COVID-19 on sectors such as oil and gas, aviation, tourism and hospitality, which are significant in their contribution to

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (2019) *Economic Action Plan 2019-20*

<sup>2</sup> The Scottish Government: The National Performance Framework [Online] *National Indicator Performance*

<sup>3</sup> The Scottish Parliament (7 May 2020) *Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Scotland's economy*



employment, productivity and growth in Scotland. Early indications suggest that Scottish employers shed jobs in March at the fastest rate in over two decades, and at a faster rate compared with UK-wide firms. Furthermore, just over half (51%) of Scottish businesses are reported to have reduced their staffing numbers and 81% have cut staff working hours<sup>4</sup>. Immediate business concerns relate to cash flow, liquidity and viability. Robust quantitative evidence from 2020 ESS will therefore be key to shaping future actions (e.g. flexible financial support and consistent coordinated guidance). Longer term there will be a need to consider what the new 'normal' should look like in terms of how people live, work and do business<sup>5</sup>.

[Redacted text block]

**Anticipated research challenges:**

[Redacted]	[Redacted]

**Section B - Research design and methodology (26%)**

**Summary of added value:** ✓ Survey target of 2,650 to mirror the 2019 EPS; ✓ [Redacted] ✓ Online portal for the survey to provide information to prospective participants; ✓ Regular progress reports whilst the survey is live in a format to be agreed – not just at the end; ✓ [Redacted]; ✓ We advocate strong partnership/collaboration on research design, with a flexible approach to communications.

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Council for Development and Industry (May 2020) *State of the Nation*

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Council for Development and Industry (April 2020) *COVID-19 - Impact on Scotland's businesses, workers and economy*

**Working with The Scottish Government and the RAG:** The project will begin with a face-to-face inception meeting between Pye Tait and The Scottish Government/RAG, during which we will discuss and agree on key aspects of the methodology, deliverables, risks/contingencies; and communication protocols. Following the meeting we will prepare a project plan and final timetable that shows agreed responsibilities on both sides. We will work flexibly and collaboratively with the RAG throughout via email and video/telekit discussions. This will include, but not be limited to:

- understanding what worked well and lessons learned from the 2019 Scotland EPS project;
- agreeing the sample strategy, including manual adjustments needed to over-sample certain groups that would otherwise be under-represented;
- agreeing Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) areas to be factored into regional analysis;
- refining the latest UK ESS questionnaire and co-developing questions relating to COVID-19 (main themes then honing them to the best possible question styles);
- agreeing cross-tabulation and weighting requirements; and
- seeking review and feedback on all draft research tools and deliverables, including discussions to shape next steps.

**Dependencies:** To successfully undertake the research we will need to:

- Understand Scotland's priorities for the ESS questionnaire (drawing on our own knowledge and in conjunction with the RAG);
- Order latest available bespoke business population data via the IDBR, including total establishments (business units rather than unique firms) with at least two individuals;
- Have access to a suitable GDPR-compliant sample frame (discussed below);
- Make use of the latest available UK ESS questionnaire (if The Scottish Government does not already have access to the as-yet unpublished 2019 edition then we recommend submitting a joint request to the DfE – justified in the interests of producing nationally comparable statistics).

**Overall survey target:** We will deliver the Scotland ESS 2020 survey using a CATI telephone team to achieve a target of **2,650 responses**. This target mirrors the 2019 Scotland EPS (which will act as a sister report), is feasible within the timescale/budget and offers a low 1.9% overall margin of error at the 95% confidence level.

**Survey population:** The business population relevant to the ESS will be establishments in all sectors of the economy (including commercial, public and charitable organisations) with two or more people working at them, including partners and working proprietors. Any establishments with a single person on the payroll will be excluded. By 'establishments' we mean local units rather than unique enterprises, in keeping with previous iterations of the ESS. This is justified on the basis that a particular branch or outlet may be responsible for its own recruitment and encounter skills shortage vacancies reflective of the local labour market. Respondents are also more likely to be able to give accurate data at establishment level, minimising the need to speak to more than one person.

**Sampling strategy:** The two main sampling criteria will be: industry sector (cutting across all 21 Major Groups of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code system); and employment size band (seven groups, consistent with the previous ESS and EPS). Secondary criteria will be geography (Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA) areas) and urban/rural split. We will apply a disproportionate stratified random sampling approach to set and achieve quotas.

To begin, we will submit a bespoke data request to ONS to obtain IDBR data. This will span Scotland-based establishments with at least two people, by industry sector, size band and geography (down to local authority level). Using the IDBR data, we will initially devise representative quotas based on the proposed survey target of 2,650. There are differences between how quotas were set for the 2017 UK ESS and the 2019 Scotland EPS. We propose to mirror the approach used for the 2019 EPS since the survey population and targets are essentially the same. This will involve:

- Working out the proportion of establishments in the population across: i) all 21 Major Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code groups; and ii) seven size-categories;
- Aggregating the SIC Major Groups into higher level categories for ease of analysis and without sacrificing any key industry clusters;
- Working out representative quotas by size band for a survey target of 2.650, then for each size band splitting these representative quotas proportionally across each SIC category (i.e. creating interlocking quotas);
- Applying manual adjustments to uplift the quotas for certain cohorts (e.g. large employers and those in the financial sector, which is key for Scotland) that would otherwise be under-represented if a truly representative survey was carried out.

We do not recommend applying representative quotas to the secondary sampling criteria (geography and urban/rural split) and will instead allow responses to fall out naturally. This is for two reasons: i) multivariate sample strategies with complex interlocking quotas are incredibly difficult to achieve; and ii) a reasonably representative natural fall-out by geography was achieved for the 2019 Scotland EPS. Further details on these two elements are set out below:

- **Geography (ROA areas):** By mapping the 32 Scottish local authority areas to current ROA area boundaries (14 defined for 2019/2020)<sup>6</sup>, we can determine from IDBR data the population mix of establishments falling within each ROA. We can then work out what the representative targets would be and monitor the natural fallout per ROA area as the survey progresses. Should there be any observable shortfalls as the survey progresses (e.g. in areas with a high concentration of industry sectors worst affected by COVID-19) we will boost survey deployment in these areas accordingly.
- **Urban/rural split:** We will use the Scottish Government’s 2016 *Urban Rural Classification* guide to allocate each local authority area (and ultimately ROA area) to a single urban/rural category that accounts for the largest proportion of the human population. The classification system is made of up six categories and we propose deriving three broader groups for analysis: i) predominantly urban; ii) urban with significant rural; and iii) predominantly rural. These derivations have previously used for classifying local authorities in England<sup>7</sup>.

**Sample frame:** [Redacted]

**Questionnaire design:** Key themes of the ESS include main activities and structures on a particular site; current and anticipated future skill needs; recruitment and vacancies (including hard-to-fill; skills shortages, gaps and utilisation; as well as training and workforce development. Using the latest questionnaire as a base, we will work jointly with the RAG to remove any questions that are only

<sup>6</sup> This mapping was undertaken for the last ESS.  
<sup>7</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/591464/RUCLAD\\_leaffet\\_Jan2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591464/RUCLAD_leaffet_Jan2017.pdf)

relevant to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, then identify questions to be retained, those to be modified (with warning that this could affect onward comparability) those which can be removed (no longer of strategic relevance to Scotland) and new question areas to be scoped out.

Within the questionnaire we will retain full meta-data, including question and variable code numbers, routing rules, information to be read out/not read out and prompts for additional information to be displayed or referred to by the interviewer. We note from the ITT that occupational data should be gathered to 4-digit SOC 2010 code. We recommend updating this to the newly released SOC 2020, which will not affect comparability given that previous ESS datasets cross-tabulate results at Major Occupational Group level which are unchanged. Whilst we can pre-seed data relating to sector/size/geography/urban and rural into the responses without needing to ask them during the interview, we will certainly validate SIC code and size band in case any information has changed. This will ensure the achieved sample is truly reflective of the business population.

We will be pleased to work with the RAG to co-develop new questions relating to the impact of COVID-19. Examples might include:

- Number of additional redundancies made;
- Number of staff whose hours have been cut as a result;
- Number of staff unable to work due to furlough or other reasons related to COVID-19;
- Average number of hours cut due to COVID-19;
- Scale of impact on business confidence (including anticipated future survival timescales under certain conditions);
- Percentage change in the number of job applications received over a specific period;
- Additional staff recruited on temporary or short-term contracts (including breakdowns by occupational group);
- Additional support needed to improve productivity (e.g. financial, guidance etc.).

[Redacted text block]

**Piloting and cognitive testing:** Following internal testing, we will carry out an external pilot of the survey by telephone with 20 respondents. In doing so we will test: i) the overall flow and ensure that new questions are clear, not inadvertently leading and that they are straightforward for respondents to answer; ii) the ordering of response variables to ensure they do not inadvertently bias options at the top of the list (a remedial measure would be to build in a response option randomiser); and iii) average completion time. We note that the average for ESS 2017 was 21 minutes and – for reasons aligned to Principal 4 of the Scottish Government’s Ethics Guidance for Social Researchers covering long interviews – we would ideally not recommend exceeding this. However, we recognise the importance of this year’s COVID-19 questions and suggest 25 minutes as an absolute maximum average once these additional questions have been added.

[Redacted text block]

**Reaching and engaging the right person in the business:** As with all employer surveys, key challenges include reaching the most informed person to answer the questions (harder in larger firms) and mitigating the risk of non-response bias (especially in smaller firms who may not have someone

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available). We will therefore deploy gentle persistence, possibly multiple call attempts at different times of the day, and occasional email correspondence if needed. We will target the most senior person responsible for recruitment, human resources and workplace skills. Within micro and small firms this may be the owner/manager, whilst in larger companies we will likely need to engage with the Training and/or HR Manager/Deputy. To assist in gaining buy-in, we will clearly explain the purpose and importance of the ESS, reassurances around how data will be aggregated/anonymised, and how personal data will be used (only by us for queries), stored and retained. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] More on ethical issues associated with contacting respondents in light of COVID-19 below).

**Telephone team deployment:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They will be fully inducted by the project manager so that they understand the background, organisations involved and gain familiarity and practice with the questionnaire. We will maintain an even distribution of completions by sector and size, with some manual adjustment to mitigate the effects of seasonality (further details below). We also know from experience that employers in some sectors that work primarily outdoors (e.g. agriculture/construction) will be harder to reach during normal business hours and we will deploy out of hours shifts accordingly. We have conducted hundreds of employer telephone surveys over the years, our interviewing technique is fine-tuned and our team are extremely familiar with surveying employers of all sizes and across all sectors of the economy – especially in relation to labour market intelligence, skills and training issues.

[REDACTED]

**Mitigating seasonality effects:** The survey fieldwork is due to take place in autumn 2020, in the run-up to Christmas. We have conducted numerous surveys at this time of year and do not anticipate any adverse seasonal effects on achieving sample quotas and/or on how respondents answer the survey questions. In the case of sectors that are likely to get much busier as Christmas approaches (e.g. Retail), we will prioritise them for earlier contact. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] s regards seasonal effects on responses, it is common practice (including in past ESS surveys) to ask respondents to look back over the past 12 months and look forward over the next 12 months when providing estimates, to mitigate the effects of seasonality.

**Survey monitoring and quality control:** Once the survey is live, the survey team supervisor will monitor completions on a daily basis in line with the sample strategy and quotas and report to the project manager. In turn, the project manager will report progress on a weekly basis by email to The Scottish Government. This will be undertaken using a proforma to be agreed at the outset of fieldwork showing completions against quotas, any risks/issues and suggested remedial actions. We will control quotas using a red/amber/green monitoring system and will adjust the push/direction accordingly to ensure we reach all necessary cohorts. Day to day operational management of the telephone team will incorporate the following tools:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Analysis:** All findings will be fully checked in [REDACTED] as the survey progresses – however, we will also carry out a full review of data following survey completions to check for any inconsistencies, outliers, missing data, etc. Detailed survey analysis will be carried out using [REDACTED], allowing maximum flexibility for creating results tables, charts and cross-tabulations. The latter will include all variables cross-analysed by sector, size-band, ROA area and urban/rural categories (as defined above). As [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] our associate statistician, [REDACTED] is

[REDACTED]. By combining results from the survey with the latest available IDBR data we will:

- weight and gross up the results to be representative and reflective of the total population of establishments and the total population of employees;
- undertake statistical significance testing (e.g. T tests) to determine whether there are meaningful differences between certain groups or if they are due to chance; and
- Work out margins of error for each discrete cohort of the sample (e.g. sector/size band) based on the 95% confidence level. An optional second confidence level (any figure in the range 60-99) can also be specified at The Scottish Government's request, with no impact on cost.

Further details about these elements of analysis are provided in response to Section E – *Quality assurance of methodology and data*. For coding of open-ended survey responses, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. This will firstly involve examining the data to identify emerging topics and labelling them with code descriptions. We will then re-examine the data to group these code descriptions into broader categories before arriving at highly refined themes. The coding process will be iterative and analysis will begin while the survey is still live.

**Reporting: Short weekly progress reports:** Rather than a single progress report, we propose weekly reports during the survey, including completions against quotas, key results and any risks/issues. This will be supplemented by a final headline findings report following survey completion (cf. section D timetable).

**Main report:** This will be a public-facing document that presents a short summary of the findings at a national level. We will discuss and agree key parameters with The Scottish Government in advance, e.g. structure, template and target length (we envisage this not exceeding circa 30 pages). The report will include an executive summary (including infographic); introduction; presentation of the main research findings by thematic area of the questionnaire; summary of the methodology, sample strategy and respondent profile; and a contextual appendix. Each section of the findings will begin with a brief overview, followed by a descriptive narrative. The results/survey data will be presented visually using tables, charts and infographics to capture the reader's attention and give clear visual representations of the results. We suggest colour-coded indicators to clearly show the direction and extent of change compared with the previous ESS (e.g. green for a positive change, amber for a minor negative change and red for a major negative change).

**Full tabular analyses:** MS Excel workbook comprising one worksheet per numbered question, with each result (counts and per cents) cross-tabulated by a suite of agreed variables and including weighted/unweighted data and results of the statistical significance testing. The workbook will be headed up with a Contents page containing hyperlinks to each table, a Notes page with explanations and definitions of meta-data, as well as suppression rules. [REDACTED]

**Extended dataset:** Full/anonymised data in derived format (i.e. containing all variables, meta and case data) e.g. [REDACTED]

**Raw dataset:** Full/anonymised unit record data (flexible for onward analysis).

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**Bespoke dataset** – a smaller, cleaned, non-disclosive dataset for use by expert users and to be used in the UK Data Archive with exact content to be agreed with The Scottish Government.

**Delivery:** [REDACTED]. Data will be destroyed after a period of 24 months from completion. All other deliverables (tools, materials and datasets) will be the property of The Scottish Government.

**Presentation:** As the report is being finalised, we will produce a PowerPoint slide deck and attend a final meeting with the RAG to present the main findings and co-facilitate a discussion on the implications and to answer any questions about the research.

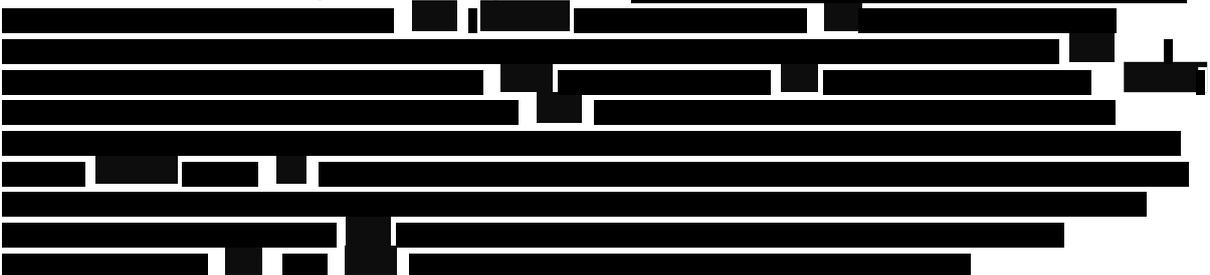
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**Ethical issues in light of COVID-19:** During the time of COVID-19, it is important to ensure that the health of participants, clients and researchers is not put at risk through face-to-face contact. This is not a direct issue for this telephone-based research and we advocate remote (video) meetings with The Scottish Government until such time that confidence can be restored in offline meetings. Whilst commissioners tend to prefer keeping to the same methodology, some have been switching methods from face-to-face to telephone based or online approaches in recent months. This can have the effect of increasing the volume of outbound contact activity at a time when businesses and individuals are already dealing with additional burdens. Additionally, the Market Research Society (MRS) has highlighted instances of fraudsters preying on people are staying at home, with an increase in cold calling and scam text messages that could lead to some distrust of genuine research agencies. For the ESS, these factors make it important that we deploy a sensitive, empathetic and understanding approach (e.g. rescheduling calls), being patient when seeking out the right contact who may be working from home, and appreciating they may have other priorities.

### Section C - Staffing, skills & task allocation (16%)

Pye Tait Consulting has been carrying out UK-wide LMI and skills research for almost thirty years.

**A cohesive team:** Proposed team members for this project, including reporting lines, roles, responsibilities and planned hours, are summarised in the organogram, below. Individuals have been selected based on their experience and specialisms.

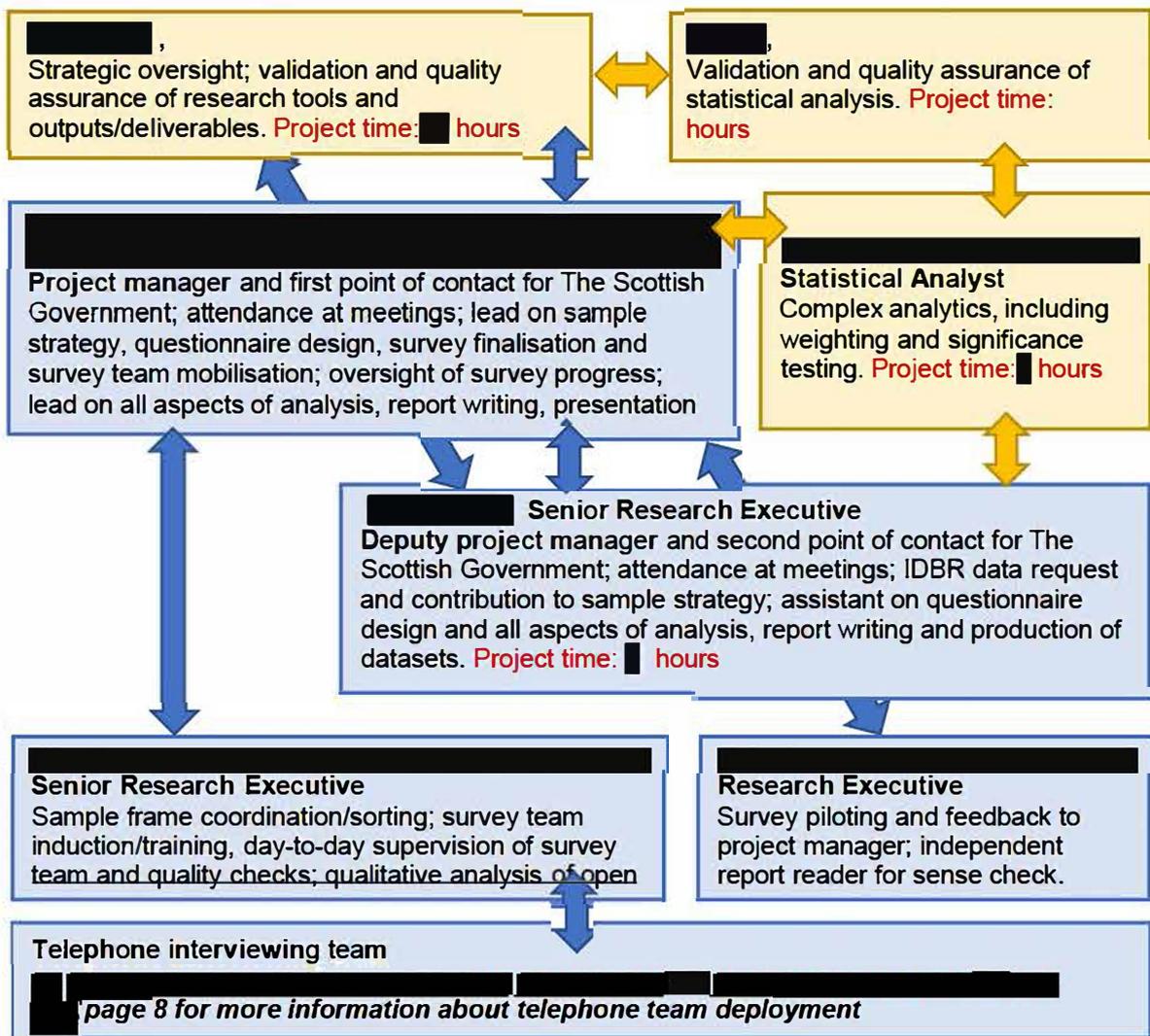


All team members take part in weekly internal project meetings to ensure we collectively monitor progress, identify any emerging risks/ethical issues and determine task allocations, timescales and deadlines for the following week. Acting as line manager to the research team, [REDACTED] oversees their development, not only in delivering excellent research but managing client and research participant relationships, communication and presentation skills, as well as coaching and supervisory skills. Staff training and development are covered in more detail in Section G – Fair Work.

**Business resilience and contingencies:** Our business is robust and resilient in the face of COVID-19. The bulk of our research does not depend on face-to-face engagement and we are flexible and innovative at adapting to virtual research methods and meetings. [REDACTED]



**Project team organogram:**



**Brief CVs:**

	<b>Director</b>

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block] **Director**

[Redacted text block] **Acting Research Manager**

[Redacted text block] **Senior Research Executive**

[Redacted text block] **Senior Research Executive**

**Statistical Analyst (Associate)**

[REDACTED]

**Delivering high-quality written outputs:** The credibility of the final report, our own reputation and that of The Scottish Government depends on robust analysis and high-quality reporting through which the findings are clear, appropriate to their target audience, and can be easily digested and taken forward. We always aim for clarity of exposition, flow and validity of argument, full referencing of sources, full explanation of technical terms (either in footnotes and/or in a glossary) and – where needed – evidence-based conclusions and recommendations. Our reports from large-scale survey projects are routinely published, with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] while a good number have helped to shape the design of skills and training interventions, apprenticeships and re-design of funding arrangements.

[REDACTED] will undertake a detailed review of all tools and outputs for accuracy, impartiality, clear structure, sense and flow. A separate staff member (unconnected to the analysis) will act as proof-reader and will be tasked to ensure the outputs are clear to readers without prior knowledge. Collectively these steps will ensure our outputs are always well-produced, well-written, accurate, robust and provide the information we set out to achieve. [REDACTED]

**Section D - Project management, risk assessment and ethics (16%)**

**Project management:** Our detailed timetable is provided below. We have allowed for three main meetings: inception (early Sep); progress meeting (early Jan) and final presentation meeting (April). Our proposal assumes a virtual format (e.g. via Microsoft Teams) for the first two meetings and a final face-to-face meeting in April (this could be converted to a virtual meeting if the COVID-19 situation worsens). Regular communication and collaboration with The Scottish Government/RAG is assumed and will require a flexible approach depending on what needs to be discussed, when, and using the most optimum channel (phone, video or email).

When the survey is live, we will provide **weekly progress updates** by email to The Scottish Government. This will comprise an update form with content to be agreed, e.g. achieved responses against quotas, selected key interim results, instances of outliers/errors, any other risks/issues and proposed remedial actions. We feel this regular approach to progress reporting will ensure there are no surprises at the end that will be too late to correct.

The ITT suggests a progress meeting prior to a progress report in early January and we feel that these may be better swapped around to provide more material for the meeting. It may even be preferable to have this meeting after the initial data deliverables so that there is more to discuss based on the headline findings and to shape the direction of the detailed analysis and the main report structure. This element of the timetable will therefore be subject to discussion and agreement with The Scottish Government upon inception.

We have factored into the timetable that the latest UK ESS questionnaire will form a solid base. We have also included dates by which we will require responses to key outputs from the RAG. Following submission of draft outputs, we will respond to written comments/changes and/or take part in video/telekit discussion to talk through feedback. We will submit revised versions as quickly as possible following internal quality checks to allow time for further review by the RAG.



Risk assessment:

[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]			

**Data security:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Ethical sensitivities:** Pye Tait Consulting is committed to legal and ethical research practice. [REDACTED] and operate in full compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), including Article 28 as a Data Processor. [REDACTED] we demonstrate commitment throughout our company to professionalism and self-regulation via the MRS Code of Conduct. We are also [REDACTED] in terms of meeting all required obligations to society, funders and employers, colleagues and research subjects. Below we have set out our approaches to working in alignment with key principles of The Scottish Government Ethics Guidance for Social Researchers.

**PRINCIPLE 1 Sound application and conduct of social research methods and appropriate dissemination and utilisation of the findings:** The research will be undertaken using a robust survey methodology that is appropriate for its purpose. Through careful questionnaire design and piloting, we will ensure the research is neither intrusive, unreasonable, nor overly burdensome. There is a risk that some respondents who participated in EPS 2019 mistakenly believe that they have already taken part or that the questions seem repetitive. We will therefore make clear that the research has a different focus but will not force anyone to participate against their wishes.

**PRINCIPLE 2: Participation based on valid informed consent:** Our robust management and operational practices are [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Through these robust approaches we:

- ensure that any consent-based processing meets standards of active, informed consent, and that such consents are recorded and auditable;
- maintain records of personal data processing activities;
- comply with the rights of data subjects in respect of receiving privacy policy information, and access, rectification, deletion and portability of personal data;
- ensure ongoing confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of processing systems;
- regularly test, assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the above measures.

**PRINCIPLE 3: Enabling participation:** In designing the sample we will ensure all important groups are represented, supplemented by over-sampling of under-represented groups and subsequent weighting. The main methodology will in no way adversely affect such groups as ethnic minorities, those with caring responsibilities and those with physical or mental impairment. For individuals unable to complete the survey by telephone alone (for example those who are hard of hearing) we would be happy to facilitate a video interview with screen sharing so respondents can read the answers.

**PRINCIPLE 4: Avoidance of personal harm:** Participation will be voluntary and as fully informed as possible. In acknowledgement that the survey may be long (up to 25 minutes) respondents will not be pressured nor forced to answer any question or provide any data they do not feel comfortable with. We will also ensure that we engage only those individuals who are in a position to provide the answers we need. All our telephone interviewers are fully trained/professional and will undergo an induction to the project, thereby protecting the integrity of all responses. If any interviewee appears uncomfortable then we will offer them the opportunity to speak at another time or stop the interview. On-going coaching and training forms part of our commitment to the interview team.

**PRINCIPLE 5: Non-disclosure of identity and personal information:** All data gathered that identifies individuals and/or organisations will be held in confidence by Pye Tait Consulting and will



not be released (including to The Scottish Government) without written consent of participants. All personal and sensitive data will be treated in a way that is lawful, fair, transparent; limited for its purpose, adequate, necessary, accurate and not kept longer than necessary. We take responsibility for complying with GDPR at Director level as well as throughout our organisation (the 'accountability' principle), which instils a 'data protection by design and default' approach.

Our ethical approaches for this project relating to COVID-19 are as follows:

- **A sensitive and empathetic approach:** We will be mindful at all times that some employers are undergoing a very difficult trading period and their staff may also be adversely affected. In addition to explaining the purpose and importance of the research upfront, we will acknowledge that we understand this is a challenging time and that we also want to hear what issues have been faced so The Scottish Government has the full picture. We will fully respect any decisions made by employers not to take part.
- **Contacting furloughed employees:** We will only contact furloughed employees if they are the only available person with the requisite knowledge and if we are given permission by the employer. Whilst employees cannot provide services to their employer in a way that contributes revenue, they can undertake training and market research. [REDACTED]

Honesty and integrity are key to our success - we are open and transparent in all of our research activities and communications and will flag up any potential ethical issues to The Scottish Government should they emerge. We committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability. If a member of staff discovers information which they believe shows malpractice or wrongdoing, then they can disclose this internally without fear of reprisal.

## Section E - Quality assurance of methodology and data (17%)

**Ensuring statistical quality:** The Government Statistical Service (GSS) endorses the European Statistical System's (ESS) Dimensions of Quality criteria for assessing the fitness for purpose of statistical outputs. This section sets out the key principles of the Code of Practice, our interpretation of the challenges these represent for the ESS research and our approach to meeting each requirement through a strong quality-centric approach. [REDACTED]

### 1. Relevance

**Challenge:** Ensuring statistics meet the current and potential needs of users.

This is pre-determined by what The Scottish Government and wider stakeholders need from the ESS data to inform thinking, policy, strategy and other skills interventions. Our role here will be working closely with the RAG to ensure that the questions asked in ESS 2020 are appropriate for Scotland and take account of current stakeholder and business priorities, especially the influence and impact of COVID-19 on recruitment, retention, skills and training.

### 2. Accuracy and Reliability

**Challenge:** Ensuring closeness between estimated results and (unknown) true values; as well as ensuring closeness of early estimates to subsequent estimated values.

We have set a survey target of 2,650 ensure a low overall margin of error of 1.9% at the standard 95% confidence level. We will also make manual adjustments to ensure that small but significant groups (e.g. large employers) are not under-represented. We will list the resulting margins of error for each quota in the report and accompanying data tables, along with Base numbers of respondents for each question. We will add notes of caution where certain findings may be purely indicative, e.g. questions answered by a limited number of respondents.

We will also perform and report on the findings of statistical significance tests. Assuming the survey data are normally distributed, we recommend T-tests at the 95% confidence level based on the actual (unweighted) base sizes. This would mirror ESS analysis in previous years and we could also do significance testing at the 99% confidence level for no extra cost. Z-tests or U-tests may also be appropriate in certain circumstances. For each survey question, tests will be performed against pre-selected cross-breaks where we want to test for significant differences within each group (e.g. within each separate size band). If two figures are judged significantly different this means that we can be 95% (or 99%) sure that a real difference exists in the population.

We will discuss the selection of cross-breaks with The Scottish Government prior to commencing analysis, using the previous iteration of the ESS as a starting point. Each column within each cross-break table will be assigned a letter (a, b, c etc.) These letters will then be used to denote which column(s) - if any - the percentage value is significantly different to (and mirrored vice versa). From the grey highlighted cell in the example below, one can see that the percentage result for size group 2-4 is significantly higher than size-groups 25-49 and 50-99. All such meta-data will be explained in an upfront Notes page in the final accompanying dataset, along with other acronyms and symbols.

Establishment Size						
Size band	2 to 4	5 to 24	25 to 49	50 to 99	100 to 249	250+
Identifier	a	b	c	d	e	f
% respondents	19%	10%	10%	11%	20%	30%
Significance (95%)	--cd--	---de-	a--de-	abc-e-	-bcd--	-----

When providing The Scottish Government with interim updates on emerging findings, we will include appropriate caveats, e.g. unweighted data not yet subject to statistical significant testing.

### 3. Timeliness and Punctuality

**Challenge:** Appropriateness of the time gap between the publication date and the reference period for the statistics; as well as the time lag between actual and planned dates of publication.

Our role here will be ensuring the survey, analysis and reporting are undertaken accurately, on time and to the satisfaction of The Scottish Government so they are fit for publication on time. (See timetable in Section D).

### 4. Comparability and Coherence

**Challenge:** Ensuring statistics can be compared over time and in other ways; and that the statistical processes which generate two or more outputs use the same concepts and harmonised methods.

We do not recommend changing the wording or variables within existing ESS questions unless there is an overriding reason (e.g. to reflect changing priorities). In discussing proposed question changes with the RAG, we will always highlight the possible implications for time-series analysis and comparing Scotland's results with other UK nations. When undertaking analysis, our default position will be to mirror the analytical approaches taken in previous years (e.g. choice of cross-breaks) unless the RAG would prefer a different approach. We are confident that the amount of information in the public domain from the latest UK ESS datasets is sufficient to replicate these outputs independently.

### 5. Accessibility and Clarity

**Challenge:** Ensuring that users can easily access the statistics and data, taking into account their format and the availability of supporting information; and ensuring high quality and sufficient commentary, illustrations, accompanying advice and technical details.

(NB: Our response to this section also addresses the requirement about quality assurance documentation). The combination of outputs will provide maximum flexibility to suit a range of different audiences with different needs. Threaded through the main report will be a clear and well-written descriptive commentary that can be easily digested by lay audiences, supported by the main points

emerging from open-ended questions. To improve on previous years, we propose including colour-coded time-series comparisons.

The accompanying Technical report will describe the methodology in full for those who need to dive deeper (sampling, questionnaire design, fieldwork approach, coding, weighting and notes on using the data) as well as copies of final research tools as a point of reference. This report will also include details of the quality checks performed and justifications for analytical approaches followed. The Excel workbook of data tables will include one sheet per question containing unweighted and weighted data, cross-tabulations and results of statistical significance testing. It will be headed with Contents and Notes pages to guide the user to the precise information and Table numbers they need for whatever purpose, including explanations of meta-data (discussed above).

**Weighting:** The survey data will be weighted and grossed up to the population of establishments in Scotland employing two or more people. We will use the latest release of Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) statistics as a basis for this process. Given that the Scotland ESS data will be used in a variety of ways (e.g. Scotland-wide establishment measures, employment-based measures and regional analysis), we will produce a number of different weights:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Software:** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Data audits:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Data storage:** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Statistical disclosure control:** We will treat all survey data securely and confidentially and report the findings anonymously and in aggregate form to The Scottish Government. At the start of each telephone interview, we will reassure respondents about how the data they provide (including any personal data) will be used and held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. All participants will have the opportunity to opt in, decline or choose not to be contacted again for the research in question.

**Delivery of a non-disclosive dataset for expert users and the UK Data Archive:** We will discuss the precise data requirements with The Scottish Government and applicable stakeholders to ensure the supplied dataset is of maximum utility and not complicated by variables that are not of interest. We will then create this workbook as a modified version of the data tables and/or the raw dataset in field and tab format, depending on what is needed. Should this dataset need to include open question responses, we will undertake a thorough review to redact any direct or indirect identifiers. In supplying raw data, we will take care to ensure that the combination of profiling data on any individual employer does not inadvertently lead to their identification.

## Section F - Sustainability (5%)

We are committed to improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area in which we operate. When procuring services, we do so in a fair and transparent way, without discrimination. We source local suppliers wherever possible to support the local economy and reduce the number of deliveries by bulk ordering (where delivery is required). We procure from companies (and sub-contractors where appropriate) that comply with all relevant environmental legislation. We are committed to purchasing recycled or recyclable/re-usable products where feasible; and are committed to purchasing products, goods and services from suppliers recognised by eco-labels to be less harmful to the environment, committed to energy efficiency and lowering their carbon footprint. Through the course of our business we also seek to minimise negative environmental impact, for example through unnecessary vehicle movements and associated emissions.

As part of our research services (and with clients' consent) we look for opportunities to embed community benefits from the outputs of our work. For example, we recently developed a Brexit-planning Toolkit for use by employers in Yorkshire and the Humber and took pride in working closely with local stakeholders to share and cascade the published output for maximum long-term impact. When undertaking research that resonates with a wider audience (or is relevant to a very specific group but on a regional or national scale), it is sometimes appropriate to use of social media to promote published outputs and encourage interaction. We also support our clients wherever possible in disseminating findings to embed the benefits.

## Section G - Fair Work (7%)

While Pye Tait Consulting is not accredited as a Living Wage Employer, all individuals working for us are paid at a rate that at least is a match to what is acceptable within the current market conditions. Being a small but highly successful organisation in existence for almost 30 years, it is hugely important and worthwhile to provide rewarding salaries<sup>8</sup> commensurate with qualifications attained<sup>9</sup> and skills and experience gained; to nurture our employees to develop to their full potential; to provide a safe and comfortable environment in which to work; and last but not least, to retain them.

We are fully committed to equal opportunities in the workplace (including equal pay irrespective of gender) and firmly believe this is good management practice and makes sound business sense. Our policies for Equality and Diversity and Staff Recruitment and Development set out our commitment to treating all staff and temporary workers fairly, and with dignity and respect. We do not make use of zero hours contracts.

The Directors of the business operate an open-door policy to encourage employee engagement. This means that any employee should feel empowered to put forward their views frankly, freely and in person on matters affecting them personally, for example, concerning a grievance, a physical or mental health issue, any concerns relating to work-life balance or on the subject of career development. In addition, line managers are encouraged to build good rapport with their staff and know how they are feeling and the issues that most concern them.

All members of the research team adhere to Pye Tait's policies: health and safety, business ethics, child protection, environment/sustainable development, equal opportunities, disaster recovery and recruitment/development. Staff are also trained in data protection legislation and how to operate to the MRS Code of Conduct and SRA Ethical Guidelines. New staff undergo a structured induction process, then a formal review/appraisal takes place on a regular basis (this is more frequent in the first year or two of employment, often quarterly or half-yearly). Appraisals involve discussing formal and informal learning among other job-critical elements. On their anniversary of joining, staff are asked to complete a Self-Appraisal Form to show knowledge, areas of competence and experience, along with any learning and development requirements they have identified during the course of the projects they have been supporting or leading. These forms are discussed with the individual and training set up as required (usually amounting to 4 or 5 days over the following 12-month period). The entire process is monitored through Pye Tait's ISO9001 system.

Prior to allocating staff to any project, the Directors review their training and experience, and will provide further in-house training as required. Researchers are also closely mentored by their line managers during the course of individual research projects and any additional training/development needs will be flagged. Any member of staff can discuss training needs with the Directors/Line Manager at any time and any decisions will be recorded. Staff are also encouraged to request training or additional focused mentoring in a field relevant to our business objectives at any time they feel the need arises. We also encourage staff to develop and hone their skills in areas of research that are of particular interest to them.

The research and professional services offered by Pye Tait as a company are not subjects which form the basis for formal training courses and the immense volume of background knowledge required of staff cannot be obtained from one or even several educational courses. The development of any single member of staff progresses, therefore, along an extended dimension over many years (indeed, over their entire working life with the company) during which knowledge, approaches, techniques, and skills are acquired. A person's learning and development is, more often than not, informal and unplanned but is, nevertheless, extremely valuable.

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<sup>8</sup> Employment contracts are permanent and include a short probationary period.

<sup>9</sup> All research staff must be educated to at least first degree level upon joining the company.

Finally, we are also keen to encourage a flexible working culture, recognising this leads to increased employee morale and a more diverse, productive and committed workforce. Where appropriate (and for all staff during the COVID-19 pandemic), we offer home working and flexible working hours, making use of video conferencing technologies to keep in regular contact with the whole team.

## **Section H - Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery (5%)**

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



## Schedule 4 (Section 3) Non-Scored Questions

		Non-Scoring
Q1	<p><b>SCOTTISH BUSINESS PLEDGE (NON-SCORED)</b></p> <p>The Scottish Business Pledge is a Government initiative which aims for a fairer Scotland through more equality, opportunity and innovation in business. Information on this can be found at the following link: <a href="https://scottishbusinesspledge.scot/">https://scottishbusinesspledge.scot/</a></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have signed this.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, but I commit to signing it in the future.</p>
Q2	<p><b>LIVING WAGE (NON-SCORED)</b></p> <p>The Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Initiative and the Living Wage Foundation recognise and celebrate the responsible leadership shown by Living Wage Employers and support employers to incorporate the Scottish Living Wage into organisational structures long term. More information can be found at the links below:</p> <p><a href="http://scottishlivingwage.org/">http://scottishlivingwage.org/</a>  <a href="http://www.livingwage.org.uk">http://www.livingwage.org.uk</a></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am accredited</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, but I commit to obtaining accreditation in the future</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, but I commit to paying staff directly involved with the delivery of this contract the Real Living Wage</p>



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## Schedule 7 Form of Tender to the Scottish Government

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(\*DELETE AS APPROPRIATE)

We the undersigned do hereby contract and agree on the acceptance of the Tender by the Scottish Ministers, to provide the services in the Specification of Requirements (Schedule 2) in accordance with the Schedules, at the prices entered in the Commercial Proposal (Schedule 5) and in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Contract (Schedule 8) which appear in this set of documents.

We the undersigned undertake to submit a tender in accordance with the following documents:

- **SCHEDULE 1**                    **Instructions for Tenderers**
- **SCHEDULE 2**                    **Specification (T&Cs Schedule 1)**
- **SCHEDULE 3**                    **Evaluation Guide and Instructions**
- **SCHEDULE 4**                    **Quality Questions**
- **SCHEDULE 5**                    **Pricing Schedule (T&Cs Schedule 2)**
- **SCHEDULE 6**                    **PO and Invoicing Requirements (T&Cs Schedule 3)**
- **SCHEDULE 7**                    **Form of Tender**
- **SCHEDULE 8**                    **Scottish Government Terms & Conditions of Contract**

We agree to abide by this tender from 13 July 2020, the date fixed for receiving tenders, until the Award of Contract.

We understand that the Scottish Ministers are not bound to accept the lowest or any tender and shall not be bound to use the Contractor as a sole supplier.

We understand that the service provision is expected to commence 01 September and run until the work is completed unless the Contract is terminated in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Contract of this Invitation to Tender (ITT) document.

We understand that the Scottish Ministers are not bound to accept this or any Tender for this project, however, any contract that may result from this Tender will be subject to Scots Law and the Tenderer hereby irrevocably submits to the jurisdiction of the Scottish Courts.

We agree that this Tender remains open for consideration for 6 months from the date fixed for receiving Tenders.

By submitting a Tender, we acknowledge that our Tender is a bona fide Tender, intended to be competitive, and that we have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the Tender by or under or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person.

Signature

Name:

**(BLOCK CAPITALS)**

Designation

DIRECTOR

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Duly authorised to sign Tenders for and on behalf of:

Name of  
Tenderer

Pye Tait Limited (trading as Pye Tait Consulting)

Address

Royal House, 110 Station Parade, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 1EP

Telephone  
No

01423 509 433

**INCLUDE AREA CODE**

Date

13/07/2020