



Invitation to tender: Creating a national survey to scope school library provision in the UK

Indicative contract fee: £25,000

Timescale for delivery: December 2018 to May 2019

Tender open to: Individuals and organisations

Closing date: 10am, Monday 19 November 2018

The background

The Great School Libraries campaign was launched in September 2018 to raise the profile of and understanding about school libraries. Due to a lack of current figures an essential part of this campaign is collecting data about school libraries. In order to facilitate this the School Library Data Group was set up to bring together interested parties and find the best way forward for the data collection.

School libraries play an important part in supporting pupils' academic attainment, such as their reading and writing skills as well as wider learning skills. For both primary and secondary pupils, they are also linked to increased reading enjoyment, increased reading frequency and better attitudes towards reading as well as higher levels of self-esteem and feelings of success and accomplishment.

With public libraries closing, school libraries are becoming even more essential, yet despite their importance, there is an absence of authoritative data on school libraries in the UK to give insight into how many school libraries exist in the country and of what quality. There is significant evidence from outside the UK of the impact of school libraries, but very little from within the UK, so this research would fill an important void.

This lack of UK based research means that we, as a sector, are unable to say how many school libraries exist in the country, but most importantly we are also unable to adopt an evidence-based approach to policy development and the promotion of good practice to maximise the impact school libraries can have.

Given the lack of a consistent and comprehensive audit of the nation's school library provision, we therefore strongly believe that it is necessary to pioneer a new, robust approach that will give us this key information on an annual basis.

As part of the Great School Libraries campaign we want to address this challenge and to ensure that every child has access to a library they need to develop fully as engaged and knowledgeable learners and citizens.

The objective

We would like to commission an individual, independent research organisation or university to undertake a large-scale national survey of school libraries to collect systematic data to help us build the foundation of a picture of the state of play of school library provision in the UK.

The first year will form the baseline against which we will measure provision in the future. Ideally, we would like to publish the audit on a yearly basis as an impartial and consistent measure and so we can notice any trends and either put things in place to celebrate or overcome them.

Our aim is to survey a large sample of primary and secondary schools from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland is currently already conducting a similar survey and we will seek to work with them to ensure consistency across measures and sharing of data to be able to provide a comprehensive account across all four nations of the UK.

The purpose of the survey is to benchmark current school library provision in the UK, within primary and secondary state and independent schools, by outlining:

- The number of school libraries in the UK which have a school library
- If schools have a school library, what they currently have in place and how this is managed
- The role of the school library within the school, level of senior management buy-in as well as wider staff support
- Budgetary considerations
- Perceptions of impact of school libraries on pupil outcomes
- If there is no library provision, what is the reasoning behind this decision.

Activities

Key contract activities include:

1. Design the methodology. This should include details of samples – i.e. how do you intend to reach schools across the UK, what level of take-up can be expected and what processes, if any, ought to be put in place to make sure that England, Wales and Northern Ireland are fairly represented.
2. Design the survey. This will mean working collaboratively with representatives of the coalition to develop the key questions that could be asked in this survey that would also work as good tracker questions in the future. This would also mean establishing relationships with Scotland to see whether their survey instrument could be used to help collect nationwide data. We would also be interested to hear your thoughts on whether a survey delivered in the Welsh medium for schools in Wales is required.
3. Set up and manage data collection. This should include approaches that will be used to ensure high survey participation. In particular, we would be keen to hear what approaches could be used to engage those schools who don't have a school library as we feel that these might be least likely to respond to the survey invitation.
4. Liaise with representatives of the coalition to gather feedback and information.
5. Analyse and write up findings in an accessible report in line the coalition deadlines.
6. Present the report and findings to the coalition.
7. Help promote findings at a possible launch event and other dissemination opportunities

In summary it is expected that the appointed consultant will:

- Liaise regularly with the main point of contact on a timely basis as well as other representatives of the coalition if required
- Engage directly with participating schools to gather data
- Review and analyse project data collected by you
- Support the sharing of good practice, including disseminating the project outcomes and successes
- Identify recommendations for continued implementation and improvement.

Outputs/Key Performance Indicators

- Monthly monitoring meetings with coalition point of contact (by phone, skype or face to face)
- A Gantt chart in order to monitor progress
- An agreed approach to working with schools and collecting, collating and analysing data in a timely way
- A survey instrument that is signed off by the coalition
- A report, including an executive summary, and presentation to the coalition by end of April 2019. The report should be written in an accessible manner to appeal to a wide variety of stakeholders and should be agreed in advance with representatives of the coalition.

Required skills and experience

We welcome tenders from suitably qualified individuals, institutions and consultancy firms with a proven record of working within the education sector, in particular schools.

Budget

We have set aside a budget of up to £25,000. This includes VAT, any possible travel, and all other expenses. There is a separate budget to design the report and to disseminate findings through media outlets and an event.

Submitting your tender

Your tender must not exceed 3,000 words (excluding annexes) and must include:

- An introduction to and credentials of your organisation or operation, including examples of relevant projects delivered by you.
- Details of the relevant experience of the persons to be employed on the project.
- Details of how you propose to satisfy the requirements of the brief, as set out here, over the period of the contract. These should include a structure and timetable for delivery.
- Information on suggested samples and sample sizes as well as details on tools.
- Evidence of an appropriate infrastructure and management system that will enable you to carry out the requirements of the contract.
- A full budget detailing all costs. We require bids to clearly state the number of days each team member will work on the project, along with their name, job title and daily rates.

Other costs should be described in sufficient detail to allow assessors to consider the reasonableness of the costs and the efficiency of the approach. Tenderers should give details of the number of days allocated to each part of the project.

- Full contact details for the project team and day-to-day project manager.

Your tender must also include:

- Evidence that all consultants engaged on the evaluation have DBS clearance
- Proof that all applicants are eligible to work in the UK.

The successful contractor will report to Christina Clark. Please direct any queries about this invitation to tender to her.

Proposals must be submitted by email to Christina Clark, Head of Research at the National Literacy Trust: christina.clark@literacytrust.org.uk. Proposals must arrive by 10am on Monday 19 November 2018 and be clearly marked School Library Provision Survey.

Evaluation criteria

Your tender will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Relevant experience and knowledge of the consultant
2. Approach to the requirements of the tender, including:
 - a. Understanding of aims of the project
 - b. Understanding of the wider context
3. Proposed methodology, including:
 - a. Suitability and credibility of the approach
 - b. Fit with requirement of the invitation to tender
 - c. An explanation of suggested samples as well as any proposed measures and how data collection / review will be managed
4. Deliverability
 - a. Within the proposed resources and time frame
 - b. Budget information, day rate, days allocated and value for money

Timescale

Initial evaluation of all bids may be followed by formal interviews and will be held in accordance with the following timetable:

Deadline for submission of tenders: 10am, 19 November 2018

Evaluation of bids : 20 – 21 November 2018

Interviews if required : W/C 26 November 2018

Decisions: W/C 26 November 2018

Initiation meeting: W/C 3 December 2018

Completion of contract: By end of April 2019

Publication/launch event: May 2019

Terms

Nothing in the enclosed documentation or appendices, or any other communication made between representatives of the coalition and any other party, can be considered a contract or agreement at this stage.

About the SLDG coalition and the Great School Library Campaign

There is a Campaign Working Group, chaired by Alison Tarrant (CEO School Library Association), that drives the campaign forward and a subsidiary group called the School Library Data Group, which is a consortium of organisations committed to the campaign and the data collection. This sub-group is made up of the groups below and chaired by Barbara Band.

- Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians
- CILIP
- CILIP Cymru/Wales
- CILIP Ireland
- CILIP School Libraries Group
- CILIP Scotland School Libraries Group
- CILIP Youth Libraries Group
- Individual experts – Barbara Band and Dawn Finch
- National Literacy Trust
- The Reading Agency
- School Library Association

As a group and as individual members:

- We secure widespread media coverage for our research reports and events
- We are at the forefront of literacy policymaking and carry out cutting edge research
- We are experienced in running successful events which attract a good level of interest and engagement from MPs and wider stakeholders