**Buying research services**

Find out how to get help with your research projects and access insights into Essex residents to help plan and deliver services.

To decide whether your research needs can be met internally or if you need to buy research services from a third-party supplier, you can contact research@essex.gov.uk with your requirements, including:

* some background information
* your budget
* timings

We’ll also go through the [research governance processes (5.2)](https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2nx88/phab-resources-5-commissioning-an-evaluation-supporting-documents)  you’ll need to follow.

Services you can buy externally include, for example:

* delivering interviews and focus groups
* engagement with stakeholders and partners
* programme evaluation

The process for buying research services depends on your budget.

### **Under £10,000**

If your budget is under £10,000 (ten thousand), contact research@essex.gov.uk for advice and guidance.

### **Over £100,000**

If your budget is over £100,000 (one hundred thousand) you need to contact procurement.team@essex.gov.uk.

### **Between £10,000 to £100,000**

If your budget is between £10,000 to £100,000 (ten thousand to one hundred thousand), you need to invite providers to submit quotes following the research request for quotation (RFQ) process.

Research request for quotation (RFQ) process: step by step

1. Write your project specification document using the [research RFQ specification template (5.3)](https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2nx88/phab-resources-5-commissioning-an-evaluation-supporting-documents) to make sure you cover all the necessary details.
2. Identify suitable providers. Check the [list of known providers (5.4)](https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2nx88/phab-resources-5-commissioning-an-evaluation-supporting-documents) who provide research, engagement and evaluation services in the UK. Keep a note of why you have selected these providers.
3. Email your RFQ specification document to a minimum of 5 providers. Give providers a minimum of 2 weeks to send you their quotes (3 to 4 weeks for more complex projects).
4. Once all the quotes are in, [use the scoring template (5.5)](https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2nx88/phab-resources-5-commissioning-an-evaluation-supporting-documents) to add your evaluation criteria from your RFQ, and score your providers’ quotes. You should involve 2 to 3 people in the process. If you only receive 1 or 2 proposals, you will need authorisation from the procurement team to proceed.
5. Once you have agreed a provider [complete the contract template (5.6)](https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2nx88/phab-resources-5-commissioning-an-evaluation-supporting-documents) and [email your chosen provider using this template (5.7)](https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2nx88/phab-resources-5-commissioning-an-evaluation-supporting-documents).
6. You will need to [email the unsuccessful providers using this template (5.8)](https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2nx88/phab-resources-5-commissioning-an-evaluation-supporting-documents).

If at any point you are unsure of what steps to take, you can contact research@essex.gov.uk for advice and guidance, or your organisation may also have its’ own procurement function you can enquire with if needed.