

# Invitation to Tender

## Evaluation of TDS partnership's Housing Access scheme

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Tenderers are responsible for all costs and expenses incurred in preparation of the tender response.

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## Summary

- Crisis' partnership with TDS supports our strategic aim to 'Build a community of people across Britain helping to end homelessness', by funding a Housing Access service:
  - Five to six specialist Landlord Liaison roles, who will work in local communities across Great Britain to build relationships with landlords to create routes into good quality homes for more of our members.
  - An 'Innovation Fund', which will remove financial barriers around access and affordability in the PRS for our members.
- Crisis' Research & Evaluation team invites proposals to evaluate the Housing Access service; the process and impact evaluation would aim to uncover whether, and how, this service improves access for local people experiencing homelessness to enter tenancies in the Private Rented Sector.
- The selected contractor would also conduct a light-touch evaluation of the partnership between TDS and Crisis, to understand to what extent the partnership perceived to have achieved its wider goals and how it has changed and adapted.
- The evaluation project will begin in July 2025 (or as soon as possible thereafter) and end in February 2027.
- Total funds for this evaluation are £54,000.
- Deadline for proposals: Friday 2 May 2025 @11.59pm. Proposals and enquiries should be emailed to Alice Dore (alice.dore@crisis.org.uk).

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## Introduction & overview

### ***About Crisis***

Crisis is the national charity for people experiencing homelessness. We are committed to ending homelessness.

Every day we see the devastating impact homelessness has on people's lives. Every year we work side by side with thousands of people experiencing homelessness, to help them rebuild their lives and leave homelessness behind for good.

Crisis' Client Services are continually adapting to deliver the most effective homelessness services in an ever-changing political and economic landscape. We deliver services in our nine Skylight centres across England, Scotland and Wales, providing holistic support for our 'members' experiencing or at risk of homelessness to help them end their homelessness for good.

Through our pioneering research into the causes and consequences of homelessness and the solutions to it, we know what it will take to end it. Together with others who share our resolve, we bring our knowledge, experience and determination to campaign for the changes that will solve the homelessness crisis once and for all.

We bring together a unique volunteer effort each Christmas, to bring warmth, companionship and vital services to people at one of the hardest times of the year, and offer a starting point out of homelessness.

We know that homelessness is not inevitable. We know that together we can end it.

### ***About Tenancy Dispute Service***

TDS was established from concerns about the unfairness of the tenancy deposit system and our roots lie in creating a fairer and more professional Private Rented Sector. TDS does this by helping tenants, landlords, and agents deal with deposit

protection and dispute resolution as quickly and easily as possible. We work in partnership with charitable trusts, foundations, statutory and lottery funders who share our belief that homelessness can be ended. We deliver innovative and impactful services, many of which have only been possible thanks to the support of like-minded grant makers.

### ***Background to the partnership***

The Private Rented Sector can be difficult to navigate for many. And it becomes even more difficult if you're struggling with money or experiencing health problems. These pressures can build up until people are pushed to the brink of homelessness.

While many landlords do provide good quality homes, a significant proportion of tenants face challenges, particularly those who are living on lower incomes. And for anyone experiencing homelessness, the Private Rented Sector can often be inaccessible, with very high up-front rent and deposit payments.

Our partnership with TDS supports our [strategic aim](#) of 'Building a community of people across Britain helping to end homelessness', by funding:

- Five to six specialist Housing Access roles who will work in local communities across Great Britain to build relationships with landlords to create routes into good quality homes for more of our members.
- An 'Innovation Fund', which will remove financial barriers around access and affordability in the PRS for our members.

While this direct service delivery will make a huge impact on the lives of individual people, TDS are also funding us to improve our data collection and collate and evidence best practice. A wider aim of the partnership is that this evidence will be shared with politicians and housing providers to influence system-wide reform for tenants and landlords.

As part of this arrangement, TDS are funding an evaluation of some parts of this project.

## The evaluation

We are seeking a highly skilled and experienced Contractor to conduct an evaluation for this partnership. The evaluation will cover two separate parts of the TDS partnership between July 2025 and February 2027. The primary audience for the evaluation reports are staff within Crisis and TDS; however, we are keen for the impact of the funded services to be shared and promoted externally, so learning about the services can be disseminated.

### ***Part 1: Evaluation of the Housing Access service (85%)***

Five to six of our Skylight centres are funded by TDS to actively improve access to PRS for our members, through Landlord Liaison specialist roles and through a dedicated Innovation Fund. The majority of the evaluation would focus on these two resources, separately and in combination.

#### **1a: Evaluation of the Landlord Liaison role**

In participating Skylight centres, a specialist 'Landlord Liaison Officer role has been embedded within the team. This innovative role aims to create routes for our members into the PRS by successfully attracting landlords to consider our client group for tenancies. A community of practice supports these Landlord Liaison Officers to innovate and define new ways of working to improve their practice.

Key aspects of the role are:

- Engaging with landlords
  - promoting and advertising the service, ensuring landlords are aware of the robust package of support in place around a member ahead of and during a move-in;

- meeting landlords or inviting them to Skylights to build relationships;
- maintaining regular contact with landlords throughout tenancies and beyond and being a point of contact for assisting and mediating during tenancies
- Working with members
  - Vetting prospective accommodation for our members to ensure it is of a good standard
  - Negotiating property standards and rates
  - Proactively sourcing new accommodation.

### 1b: Evaluation of the Innovation Fund

As part of the TDS-Crisis partnership, TDS have set aside a ringfenced sum to be drawn on by the Skylights operating the Housing Access work.

This fund will enable us to offer bespoke support for individual tenancies, built around one of these aims:

- Removing barriers around affordability and access
- Focusing on the needs of tenants and offset the prohibitive impacts of current policies
- Supporting people to 'make a house a home'.

During the course of this evaluation project, the pot will start to be used to financially supplement the Housing Access work. This fund pot will finance one or more of the aims above, and may be implemented differently in each area. The precise remit of the Innovation Fund is yet to be confirmed, so the evaluation questions may need to flex to this.

Crisis and TDS are keen to understand the effectiveness of this service on improving access for local people experiencing homelessness to enter tenancies

in the Private Rented Sector. We would expect the evaluation to answer **these overarching questions**:

1. Does the Landlord Liaison service secure anticipated outcomes for member and landlords?
  - a. Crisis members access secure, good-quality tenancies in the PRS.
  - b. Tenancies secured through this service are sustained.
  - c. Homelessness is ended or prevented for more Crisis members.
  - d. Landlords have a positive experience with the service and renting to Crisis members.
  - e. Landlords have reduced time with empty properties.
  - f. Landlords have reliable rental income.
  - g. Landlords have reduced costs associated with adverse tenancy outcomes.
  - h. Reduced stigma towards both landlords and Crisis members.
2. If so, how is it making a difference?
  - a. Is the service meeting the needs of both landlords and members?
  - b. What barriers and enablers make the service more or less effective at increasing access to, and sustaining, tenancies in the PRS?
  - c. Is this service the best way of increasing access to PRS?
  - d. What (Skylight or wider) factors make the service more, or less, effective?
  - e. Are there additional, unexpected benefits or unintended negative consequences?
3. (How) can this service be replicated, improved on, and scaled up?
  - a. What profile of landlords are most motivated to have members as tenants?
  - b. What barriers do landlords face in engaging with a service such as this?
  - c. How does a landlord's local housing market affect their motivation and interest? How can local Landlord Liaison Officers adapt to this?
  - d. What opportunities exist for expanding the reach and engagement of the service in these areas, or in different areas?



4. To what extent is the Innovation Fund improving members' access to, and sustainment of, tenancies in the PRS?
  - a. How far does the fund fulfil one (or more) of its aims?
  - b. To what extent does the Innovation Fund complement or advance the Landlord Liaison work and outcomes in the Skylights?
  - c. Is the way the fund is being used best use of a fund to further PRS access for people experiencing homelessness?
  - d. What (Skylight or wider) factors make the impact of this fund more, or less, effective?

We expect this evaluation would draw on learning sourced from local Skylight members, and local landlords. To supplement the analysis, additional sources could be used, including aggregated monitoring data collected by Crisis Skylights, and TDS' regular national landlords' survey.

This evaluation would need to account for local differences in the areas where this service operates; and adjust in line with changes we anticipate throughout the eighteen months such as the introduction of the Innovation Fund (see below). In addition, the passage of the Renters Rights Bill through Parliament is currently in progress, and will likely be implemented within the timeline of this project. The implications of this legislation on landlord behaviour (and thus on Landlord Liaison Officers and on members) is unknown, but we hope the evaluation will acknowledge and account for the new legislative context over the course of the evaluation project.

We anticipate that this part of the evaluation would represent approximately 85% of the evaluation project.

### ***Part 2: Evaluation of the TDS-Crisis partnership (15%)***

The final part of the evaluation would be a light-touch process evaluation of the strategic partnership between TDS and Crisis. This evaluation would aim to understand the original objectives and goals of this partnership from both sides and answer the following **over-arching questions**:

1. To what extent is the partnership perceived to have achieved its wider goals of collating and evidencing best practice for Housing Access support, and sharing this evidence with politicians and housing providers to influence system-wide reform for tenants and landlords?
2. How have the objectives and goals evolved over the course of the partnership?
3. How has the partnership responded to changes in circumstances (such as the introduction of the Renters Rights Bill and the rollout of the Innovation Fund, plus any other unanticipated changes)?

We expect qualitative insights from a range of key informants to generate the insights for this evaluation, which would be used by stakeholders for internal review part way through the life course of the partnership. We anticipate that this part would represent approximately 15% of the evaluation project.

## Contractor requirements

While there are two parts of this evaluation, they are interdependent. We are looking to appoint a Contractor who can deliver on both parts, rather than ask bidders to bid on 'lots'.

### ***Approach***

Whilst we would be looking for the successful Contractor to develop and finalise the approach of this evaluation following a brief consultation phase, the Contractor should be guided by these principles:

#### **a) Participatory and inclusive**

Fundamental to Crisis' principles is the involvement of people with lived experience of homelessness and of receiving support from Crisis. We plan to draw on our pool of Experts by Experience to sit on our selection panel

for a Contractor and to play a 'consultation' role, reviewing and feeding into draft plans and materials from the Contractor with a lived experience lens over the course of the evaluation. Remuneration for Experts by Experience's time and expertise on this project is ringfenced (so does not need to be accounted for in the Contractor's budget); and Crisis' Member Involvement team would deliver pastoral and wraparound care. However, we expect the Contractor will work in an inclusive way, finding opportunities for involvement throughout the project, accommodating and adapting EbyEs' ways of working to include people with lived experience, and recognising the value these consultants bring.

#### **b) Mixed method**

Both quantitative and qualitative evidence are important for this evaluation. We expect the Contractor will consider the most valuable data to answer each evaluation question, and design their data collection plan accordingly.

#### **c) Data management and integrity**

Crisis' comprehensive data information system, MAPS (Members Achievement and Progression System) records members' demographics, activities and performance indicators in Skylights.

In addition, Landlord Liaison Officers collect information at a local level on landlords they contact and the status of ongoing relationships, as well as the factors that affect the relationship to end.

Aggregated and anonymised data from MAPS and from the Landlord Liaison service can be extracted by Crisis' Research & Evaluation team for the purposes of this evaluation and shared with the Contractor.

Crisis' Research & Evaluation team have set up a SharePoint Collaboration site, where this data can be shared with the Contractor safely upon agreement between the Contractor and the Evaluation Lead in Crisis.

This SharePoint Collaboration site will also be used to share resources and draft reports or data collection materials and tools for review.

The project team must act in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

#### **d) Sensitive to complexity**

We know there is variation in service delivery across the operational areas, as the service adapts to local need and local housing markets. In addition, we anticipate some substantial changes to the operating environment over the course of the evaluation, both internal (e.g. the roll-out of the Innovation Fund) and the external (e.g. the implementation of the Renters' Rights Bill).

Both of these characteristics would be a challenge for an evaluation that was not sensitive to these complexities throughout.

#### **e) Innovative**

Fundamental to this evaluation will be understanding the experiences and perspectives of both members and landlords. The Contractor should apply innovative methods to gather this data, paying particular attention to the difficulties members may face in engaging in traditional research approaches.

Crisis will not supply a 'control group' to measure the services against, so we expect the Contractor to find alternative ways of demonstrating impact.

#### ***Intellectual property***

Any information gathered during the course of the project and not already in the public domain is deemed to be the property of Crisis. The information provided in the reports, and the rights to all other outputs, shall become the property of Crisis.

#### ***Project management***

The Contractor will hold responsibility for management of the project, including preparing the plan of work, providing regular progress updates to Crisis, and

ensuring outputs are delivered on schedule unless an extension is jointly agreed. Crisis, and other members of the project group, will have the opportunity to comment on any draft reports before they are finalised.

## Evaluation deliverables

The main outputs of this evaluation project are:

1. **An evaluation plan due end September 2025.** This will be a detailed document based on a refined version of the successful bid following a scoping phase. The plan would include:
  - The final set of evaluation questions for each part of the evaluation, and data sources (including data supplied by Crisis or TDS) mapped on to each question
  - A detailed workplan including data collection and meeting key deliverables
  - A comprehensive methodology section citing suitability of each method used, limitations, risks and assumptions.
2. **An interim report due end June 2026.** This report would summarise the learning and insights gathered so far of all parts of the evaluation (according to the workplan).
3. **A final report due end February 2027.** This final report would include and build on the insights from the interim report, addressing all the evaluation questions in the plan.

We also expect the contractors to provide a progress update, and an overview of new and emerging findings, at quarterly Evaluation Working Group meetings throughout the course of the evaluation project.

## Funding available

The upper limit of this evaluation is £54,000 (including VAT and travel and subsistence if needed).

### Key dates for deliverables:

End September 2025:	Evaluation plan following scoping phase
End June 2026:	Interim report
End February 2027:	Final report

We will link payment to deliverables at contract stage.

## Format of bids

### Proposals should clearly identify:

- Your understanding of the brief and the evaluation objectives;
- A proposed approach to evaluating each of the three parts of the evaluation, and key principles underpinning the approach, with consideration made to assumptions and limitations;
- A succinct description of how data will be collected and analysed, with consideration made to inclusion and trauma informed procedures;
- How you will ensure data storage and retention, and usage of the SharePoint Collaboration site, will be compliant with GDPR;
- A short description of how you are best suited to conduct this evaluation, including relevant experience of conducting evaluations previously (with particular consideration of the domains of:
  - homelessness services;
  - housing markets and housing policy;
  - evaluating in complex and ever-changing conditions;
  - vulnerability and safeguarding;

- working with people with lived experience).
- Suggestions of Expert by Experience consultation opportunities in this evaluation;
- CVs of key members of the evaluation team, including relevant experience in similar projects or initiatives;
- A standard, or proposed, service-level agreement;
- Details of two referees, one of whom must be a previous evaluation client;
- The basis on which the consultancy fee would be calculated, and showing relevant daily rates against one or more members of the team to be assigned to the project;
- Confirmation that work can start in July 2025, or soon thereafter.

## Submission of proposals

Proposals should be submitted as a Word or PDF document, and completed Form of Offer (see Appendix), via email to Alice Dore (Research and Evaluation Manager): [alice.dore@crisis.org.uk](mailto:alice.dore@crisis.org.uk).

The deadline for proposals is Friday 2 May 2025. Proposals must be received by the deadline. Late proposals will not be accepted.

We request that interested parties register their intent to submit a proposal ahead of this time by email, to Alice Dore ([alice.dore@crisis.org.uk](mailto:alice.dore@crisis.org.uk)).

Proposals, enquiries and clarification questions must be addressed to Alice Dore ([alice.dore@crisis.org.uk](mailto:alice.dore@crisis.org.uk)). Responses to clarification questions will be shared anonymously with all bidders.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview.

A tender response may be rejected if it is:

- not submitted in a manner consistent with the provisions set out in this ITT;
- received after the Tender Response Deadline.

## Timetable

The table provides the indicative timings for this procurement process. Crisis reserves the right to amend the timings and will endeavour to keep bidders informed of any changes.

Date of ITT issue	Tuesday 1 April 2025
Last date for questions	Friday 18 April 2025
Closing date/time for bids	Friday 2 May 2025 @11.59pm
Shortlisting bids	w/c 6 May 2025
Bidders notified if shortlisted/not shortlisted	Monday 12 May 2025
Shortlisted interviews	3-5 June 2025
Interviewees notified of outcome	w/c 16 June 2025
Finalise contract with selected provider	By Monday 30 June 2025
Contract start date	Tuesday 1 July 2025



## Appendix

### *Form of Offer (to be completed by the Tenderer)*

Having considered the invitation to tender and all accompanying documents we confirm that we are fully satisfied as to our experience and ability to deliver the goods/services in all respects in accordance with the requirements of this invitation to tender.

We hereby tender and undertake to provide and complete all the goods/services required to be performed in accordance with the Specification [and the terms and conditions of contract] for the amount set out in the Pricing Schedule.

We agree that this tender shall remain open to be accepted by Crisis for three months from the date below.

We understand that Crisis is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender it may receive.

We certify that this is a bona fide tender and that we have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the tender or our rates and prices by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of (organisation name) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_