

Invitation to Tender

External Evaluation of Challenge Partners' Quality Assurance Review

Deadline for Proposals: 12:00 (midday) on Monday 14th September 2026

Budget: £45,000

Contract Period: October 2026 – October 2027

Key Contact: Nikita Vyas, Head of Programmes and Networks (nikita.vyas@challengepartners.org)

About Challenge Partners

Challenge Partners is a practitioner-led education charity committed to reducing educational inequality. Across England, we support schools and trusts to evaluate, improve, and share leading practice, so that excellence becomes the norm. We focus on what makes the biggest difference to pupil success: teaching, curriculum, leadership, and support for vulnerable pupils. Our national programmes and network of local hubs drive upwards convergence in performance, reduce regional disparities, and build leadership and improvement capacity at scale.

The Quality Assurance Review

Our flagship programme, the **Quality Assurance Review** (QA Review) is a sector-leading, 3-day peer audit focusing on teaching, inclusion, and narrowing achievement gaps. Each school hosts an annual review, and reciprocates by sending their headteacher and senior leaders to review other schools. Each team is guided by an expert Lead Reviewer we train and quality assure. Leaders collaborate nationwide to identify areas for development, examine the experiences of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs, and build a reciprocal network of knowledge exchange. Schools benefit from:

- A rigorous assessment of their progress, strengths and weaknesses to support their evaluation and school improvement cycle
- Unique experiential leadership development opportunities for leaders and senior staff through hosting a review and reviewing other schools, with coaching from the Lead Reviewer
- A review report which articulates the agreed next steps to accelerate progress
- The opportunity to accredit an Area of Excellence to celebrate exceptional practice and share with the national network

Scope and purpose of evaluation

We are seeking an evaluation partner to assess the overall quality, effectiveness, and impact of the QA Review programme across three core pillars:

1. **Impact on School Improvement:** The extent to which the QA Review drives sustained school improvement and better outcomes for pupils across the country.

2. **Impact on Disadvantaged and SEND Pupils:** The extent to which the programme strengthens a school's focus, implementation, and measurable outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and/or those with additional needs.
3. **Impact on Leadership Development:** The programme's contribution to leadership growth, specifically the professional learning and capacity-building experienced by peer reviewers through their participation.

Alongside this, we would like the evaluation to identify areas for programmatic improvements to enhance impact; and capture best practice within participating schools to be shared with practitioners and policy-makers.

Who we're looking for and ways of working

Challenge Partners routinely collects evaluation data from all host schools and peer reviewers at the end of each QA Review. We wish to work collaboratively with the appointed evaluation partner to review and finalise the core questions for these standard surveys by 23rd October 2026. Beyond these routine post-review forms, we invite providers to propose an evaluation design and methodology that best addresses our evaluation aims within the available budget.

We welcome proposals from independent consultants, academic research teams and specialist evaluation organisations. Preferred providers will demonstrate proven experience designing and delivering evaluations of education programmes.

Scoping phase

The contract will begin with a scoping phase in October 2026 during which the appointed provider will work collaboratively with Challenge Partners to:

- Understand the programme and review our current approach to monitoring and evaluation, including existing impact data.
- **Finalise all post-review evaluation survey questions by 23rd October 2026** to ensure forms are ready before programme delivery begins on 2nd November 2026.
- Finalise the overall evaluation framework, including research questions, methods and data collection tools.

Deliverables

We expect the following deliverables (timeline and approach to be agreed with appointed provider):

1. **Evaluation Plan:** A clear document outlining the agreed research questions, methodology, timeline and data collection tools.
2. **Progress Updates:** Brief written updates at key milestones to report on progress, emerging findings or required adjustments.
3. **Draft Evaluation Report:** A draft outlining initial findings.

4. **Final Evaluation Report:** A comprehensive written report detailing evaluation findings, conclusions and actionable recommendations. The report must include an executive summary suitable for sharing with funders and stakeholders.
5. **Presentation of Findings:** A presentation to the Challenge Partners team on the final report's key insights.

Timeline and Key Milestones

Timing	Activity
14th September 2026	Deadline for submitting proposals
15th - 25th September 2026	Shortlisting and interviews
w/c 3rd October 2026	Provider appointed and scoping phase begins
23rd October 2026	Post-review survey questions finalised
November 2026 – July 2027	Programme delivery and data collection
September 2027	Draft evaluation report
October 2027	Final evaluation report and presentation of findings

Budget and Payment Terms

The total budget for this evaluation is £45,000. Proposals should include an itemised budget breakdown showing daily rates, number of days allocated per team member and any other costs.

A payment schedule tied to key deliverables will be agreed with the appointed provider.

Proposal guidelines and how to apply

Please submit your proposal in PDF format by **12:00 (midday) on Monday 14th September 2026** to nikita.vyas@challengepartners.org

Proposals should be no longer than 8–10 pages (excluding team CVs and references) and should include:

1. **About you:** A brief description of your organisation or team.
2. **Understanding of context:** A brief summary of your understanding of Challenge Partners, the QA Review and our evaluation objectives.
3. **Proposed approach:** Indicate how the evaluation objectives will be answered by the proposed design and methodology.
4. **Team and expertise:** Details of individuals leading and delivering the work, with brief CVs attached as an appendix.
5. **Budget breakdown:** Detailed cost summary within the £45,000 budget, including day rates, number of days per team member and any other costs.
6. **Project management plan:** Realistic delivery timeline.
7. **References:** Contact details for two referees from relevant previous work.

Assessment and Award Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
Proposed approach and methodology	35%
Relevant experience and capability	25%
Understanding of our programme and context	20%
Value for money	20%

Privacy Policy

Personal data submitted as part of this proposal will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR / UK data protection law solely for procurement purposes. You can find our Privacy Policy [here](#).