



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice

Request for Tender for Research Services

*Approaches to the Concept of Parental Alienation
in Other Jurisdictions*



Request for Tender for Research Services

Applications for tenders must be returned to research@justice.ie by **17:00 17th May 2021**

Section 1. Background information and invitation to tender

1.1 The Department of Justice

The Department of Justice (“the Department”) is a department of the Government of Ireland. The Department's mission is to work to make Ireland a safe, fair and inclusive place to live and work. It has a wide range of responsibilities including, state security, the protection of life and property, the prevention and detection of crime, maintaining and promoting fairness, providing services for the buying and selling of property, managing inward migration to the State, providing a Courts Service, updating our criminal and civil laws, developing the Insolvency Service and various other regulatory services.

1.2 Background to the tender

The Department invites tenders for research to assess the framing – legislative and otherwise - of the concept of parental alienation internationally and the various approaches being taken to deal with this issue in other jurisdictions. Establishing a knowledge and evidence base in this area has become a research priority for the Department.

The term “parental alienation” generally refers to a process through which a child becomes estranged from a parent as the result of the psychological manipulation of the other parent. There is no clear agreed definition of parental alienation in Ireland and there are no reliable statistics on the prevalence of this in Ireland, but it would appear that the term has been cited in the Irish courts, particularly in family law proceedings.

Carrying out independent research in this area, examining the approaches taken in other jurisdictions and getting the view of experts in the area, will provide the Department with a robust evidence base for any future policy and legislative changes around this issue. This work will inform the Department’s thinking on whether any legislative and/or policy changes may be required.

1.3 Research aims

The aims of this research are to:

- Identify the various definitions of parental alienation being used internationally. What is meant by parental alienation – theoretically, legislatively and in a policy oriented sense? What are its characteristics? What makes these characteristics distinctive to other areas of familial conflict, e.g. domestic violence?
- Identify and outline the various approaches and responses being taken in other jurisdictions to deal with the issue of parental alienation (legislative and otherwise).
- Describe, outline and evaluate any studies which have examined the effectiveness of these various international approaches.
- Assess the relevance of these studies to the Irish context.
- Investigate what is known about the prevalence of this issue (in Ireland or internationally) through examination of the literature
- Identify any gaps on a policy and/or legislative level in Ireland that need to be addressed.



Key research questions

This research has four key areas/questions.

1. Defining Parental Alienation:
 - How has parental alienation been defined within an Irish, European and international context? Is there an agreed definition of parental alienation used internationally? How is it defined legislatively?
 - What are the known effects of parental alienation and what is the evidence base for this – causal, correlational, experiential?
2. Exploring the issue of parental alienation in Ireland:
 - What attempts, if any, have been made to establish what parental alienation is understood as in Ireland? What is the nature and extent of parental alienation in Ireland? How has that nature and extent been measured? Has the nature and occurrence levels changed over time?
 - What are the main social and economic factors that underpin parental alienation?
3. Understand the wider nature of parental alienation
 - What is understood by parental alienation in Europe particularly within the EU/EEA and internationally, with particular emphasis on common law jurisdictions? Has this understanding changed over time?
 - What is known about its extent and nature in Europe and how has this changed over time?
4. Develop a comparative understanding:
 - What can be learned from an international context that can help us understand and deal with the issue of parental alienation in Ireland?
 - What interventions have been undertaken internationally to tackle parental alienation? What are the various approaches taken in other jurisdictions on this issue? This should include (but not be limited to) examination of the following: legislative interventions, specific statutory instruments, laws policies, guidelines, specific interventions.
 - What has been the specific situational context in which these have been undertaken, i.e. what may have prompted these interventions?
 - How successful have they been? What has been the impact of these various approaches? What evidence is there for their effectiveness (or lack there-of)? What contributes to effectiveness?
 - In particular, is there evidence from other jurisdictions for criminalisation of parental alienation?
 - To what extent are international interventions transferable to an Irish context? To what extent is parental alienation a major issue in Ireland that requires a legislative or policy response? Can it be effectively dealt with using what is already in place?

Approach



A core part of the methodology should be a review of the relevant literature – international and domestic - in order to understand the national and international context. The review should cover evidence and literature published from 2005 to 2021. The articles reviewed should be in English, within peer reviewed journals and government/agency publications. If other research sources are to be included, it should be clearly stated in the proposed methodology and a rationale provided, along with a clearly stated approach as to how they will be dealt with.

However, proposals within the methodology as to how other sources of data and information could be used to inform answering the above research question would also be welcomed. The methodology section should also include proposals that examine how on-line, off-line and any grey literature resources will be analysed.

The tenderer will be required to outline the approach that is proposed to be taken in undertaking this work in the attached submission form. In doing so, the following key questions must be addressed as part of the response to the review of literature:

- Full details of the methodology to be used, including the strengths and limitations of the proposed approach as well as any ethical concerns
- For the literature review, what the key search terms will be, and the rationale for their selection and use stated
- What academic databases or other sources will be used to sample from
- The process for deciding which articles to include for the review and which to exclude
- The data recording process (essentially, what are the key data points you will record for each study such as author, year of publication, what type of study, evaluation type and its strength)
- The process that will be used to assess the quality and methodological rigour of the articles
- How the findings within articles will be synthesised

Any additional methodological approaches, for example on-line analysis, should also be accompanied by an appropriately detailed description to allow for an assessment to be made of its strength.

Tenders should also include details of stakeholders to be considered for interview.

1.4 Research outputs

The target audience for this research include: Department of Justice Civil Justice Policy Division, practitioners in the field, and the research community. The final report should provide evidence-based recommendations for actions and interventions most likely to be successful in dealing with the concept of parental alienation. Importantly, these recommendations should be tailored to the specifics of parental alienation in Ireland. Findings from this research will be used to inform any legislative changes, policy decisions/actions in this area.

As noted, a core element of the research will be to undertake a review of the research literature in this area.

The research outputs should include:

- An interim report highlighting key emerging findings and analysis. This can be presented



as a slide pack.

- A final draft report, identifying findings, analysis and implications to be submitted to the Department of Justice by 30th November 2021
- A presentation on the final report to the Department of Justice

1.5 Timeframe

The Department is eager that the tenderer will be ready to start as soon as possible and asks that tenderers specify how soon they would be in a position to commence the work. Duration of the tender will be no more than five months after the awarding of the tender.

The estimated budget for this study is €25,000 (excluding VAT).

Section 2. Instructions to Tenderers

2.1 Format of tenders

Tenderers should complete and submit the application form. Tenders submitted in formats other than the application form will not be considered.

2.2 Compliant tenders

To better ensure compliance with the tendering process, tenderers should read this document in full including Section 5 'Terms and conditions'. If a tenderer fails to comply in any respect with the requirements of this paragraph, the Department reserves the right to reject the tender as non-compliant or, without prejudice to this right and subject to its obligations at law, to take any other action it considers appropriate including but not limited to:

- Seeking written clarification from the tenderer;
- Seeking further information from the tenderer; or
- Waiving a requirement, which in the Department's view, is non-material or procedural.

Tenderers are required:

1. To submit all documentation which this Request for Tender (RFT) requires to be submitted with their tender;
2. To conform to and comply with all instructions and requirements set out in this RFT;
3. To submit the statement required under Appendix 1;
4. Not to alter or edit this RFT in any way.

2.3 Submission of tenders and closing date for application

Completed application forms must be sent by email to research@justice.ie with subject line "Parental Alienation".

Completed application forms must be received no later than 17:00 on 17th May 2021 (the 'tender deadline'). Application forms received after the tender deadline will NOT be considered.

Section 3. Queries and clarifications

All queries related to any aspect of this RFT must be directed to research@justice.ie. The Department reserves the right to issue or seek written clarifications. The Department reserves the right at any time before the tender deadline to update, cancel or amend the information contained in this document and/or to extend the tender deadline. Participating tenderers will be informed of any such clarification, amendment or extension by email.



Section 4. Evaluation of tenders and award of contract

4.1 Criteria for award of contract

The contract will be awarded out of a total of 100 marks on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender as identified in accordance with the following criteria:

- Proven and demonstrable track record, project description and demonstrated understanding of the work involved in conducting the research (35)
- Feasibility of the approach suggested to the research (20)
- Ability to deliver key outputs on time (10)
- Cost – broken down to show description of costs, justification for proposed costs and best use of resources (35).

Award of the contract to the highest ranked tenderer (as determined by the above paragraph) will be conditional upon the tenderer submitting the following evidence in respect of the tenderer (including any subcontractor as applicable) to the extent not already provided, within seven days of request by the Department (i) a Declaration in the form attached as Appendix 1 at “TENDERER’S STATEMENT” and (ii) all or any of the supporting documents specified in the section 2.1 on ‘Format of tender’.

The Department does not bind itself to accept the lowest priced of any tender. This RFT does not constitute an offer or commitment to enter into a contract. No contractual rights in relation to the Department will exist unless and until a formal written contract has been executed by or on behalf of the Department.

The tenderer will be required, if necessary, to outline and agree the approach which it proposes to take to the research with the members of the Department's Research Advisory Group/Research and Data Analytics Unit.

4.2 Payment conditions

- i. All prices quoted must be all-inclusive of all expenses anticipated inclusive of VAT. The VAT rate(s) where applicable should be indicated separately.
- ii. Tenderers must confirm that all prices quoted in the tender will remain valid for three months following the tender deadline.
- iii. Payment for the delivery and implementation work will be on foot of appropriate invoices. Invoicing arrangements will be agreed with the successful contractor, following the award of contract.
- iv. The provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997, as amended or revised, and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations, 2002 shall apply to all payments. Incorrect invoices will be returned for correction with consequential effects on the due date of payment.

4.3 Taxation requirements

It will be a condition of any contract pursuant to this RFT that the successful tenderer shall, for the term of such contract, comply with all applicable EU and domestic tax laws. Tenders are referred to www.revenue.ie for further information. Prior to the award of any contract arising out of this RFT, the successful tenderer shall be required to supply its Tax Clearance Access Number and Tax Reference Number to facilitate online verification of their tax status by the Department. By supplying these numbers, the successful tenderer acknowledges and agrees that the Department has the permission of the successful tenderer to verify its tax cleared position online.



4.4 Subcontractors

Tenderers should note that where a tenderer is relying on the capacity of other persons or entities (for example subcontractors) for the purposes of fulfilling any of the award criteria set out below, it must ensure that each such person or entity, when requested by the Department, will submit proof, to the satisfaction of the Department, that it will place the necessary expertise at the disposal of the tenderer.

If a tenderer does not, upon request by the Department, provide evidence which is considered by the Department as sufficient to demonstrate the fulfilment by any subcontractor on whose capacity the tenderer relies of the award criteria (or any one of them) in accordance with this RFT, it shall be excluded from further participation in this tender process unless it replaces the subcontractor with one which meets all relevant requirements of this RFT. Any such replacement cannot affect the price submitted.

Section 5. Terms and conditions

5.1 Liability and warranty for tender information

While every effort has been made to provide comprehensive and accurate information in this request for tender, the Department does not accept any liability or provide any express or implied warranty in respect of any such information. Tenderers must form their own conclusions about the solution needed to meet the requirements set out in this RFT and may wish to consult their legal advisers as appropriate.

5.2 Data protection

With effect from 25 May 2018, a new Europe wide data protection regime has come into place under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The GDPR significantly increases the obligations and responsibilities for organisations and businesses on how they collect, use and protect personal data. All data will be processed in accordance with GDPR and relevant data protection law. Applicants are required to comply with the requirements of data protection legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

5.3 Tendering costs

All costs and expenses incurred by tenderers relating to their participation in this RFT shall be borne by the tenderers exclusively.

5.4 Confidentiality

All documentation, data, statistics and information furnished by the Department to tenderers during the course of this RFT:

- i. are furnished for the sole purpose of replying to this RFT only;
- ii. may not be used, communicated, reproduced or published for any other purpose without the prior written permission of the Department;
- iii. shall be treated as confidential by the tenderer and by any third parties (including subcontractors) engaged or consulted by the tenderer; and
- iv. must be returned immediately to the Department upon cancellation or completion of this RFT if so requested by the Department.

5.5 Publicity

No publicity regarding this RFT or any contract pursuant to this RFT is permitted unless and until the Department has given its prior consent to the relevant communication.

5.6 Ownership

Ownership of any reports or material produced relating to any contract awarded as a result of this



RFT rests with the Department.

5.7 Copyright and publication

Copyright of any reports or material produced shall rest with and be assigned to the Department. The Department shall have the right to publish, or not as the case may be, and to disseminate the report in both its original and in a modified form, without further reference to the tenderer. The tenderer will not be entitled to further payment if this occurs. The tenderer and the individual researchers will be entitled to be credited with the work that they have done on this project in any publication.

5.8 Registrable interest

Any registrable interest involving any tenderer or subcontractor and members the Department, members of the Government, members of the Oireachtas, or employees and officers of the Department and their relatives must be fully disclosed in the tender or, in the event of this information only coming to the notice of the tenderer or subcontractor after the submission of a tender, must be communicated to the Department immediately upon such information becoming known to the tenderer or subcontractor.

The terms 'registrable interest' and 'relative' shall be interpreted as per section 2 of the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001, copies of which are available at www.irishstatutebook.ie. The Department will, at its absolute discretion, decide on the appropriate course of action, which may in appropriate circumstances include eliminating a tenderer from this RFT or terminating any contract entered into by a tenderer.

5.9 Anti-competitive conduct

Tenderers' attention is drawn to the Competition Act 2002 (as amended, the '2002 Act'). The 2002 Act makes it a criminal offence for tenderers to collude on prices or terms in a public procurement competition.

5.10 Freedom of information

Tenderers should be aware that, under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, information provided by them during this RFT may be liable to be disclosed.

Tenderers are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by them in their tender should not be disclosed because of its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity. If tenderers consider that certain information is not to be disclosed because of its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity, tenderers must, when providing such information, clearly identify the specific sections of their tender containing such information and specify the reasons for its confidentiality and commercial sensitivity.

5.11 Conflicts of interest

Any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest on the part of a tenderer, subcontractor or individual employee or agent of a tenderer or subcontractor must be fully disclosed to the Department as soon as the conflict or potential conflict is or becomes apparent. In the event of any actual or potential conflict of interest, the Department may invite tenderers to propose means by which the conflict of interest might be removed. The Department will, at its absolute discretion, decide on the appropriate course of action, which may in appropriate circumstances include eliminating a tenderer from this tender process or terminating any contract entered into by a tenderer.

5.12 Withdrawal from the RFT process

Tenderers are required to notify the Department immediately by email to research@justice.ie if they decide to withdraw from the RFT process.



5.13 Insurance

The successful tenderer shall be required to hold for the term of the contract the appropriate level of insurance cover in order to carry out work associated with this project.