

RETAIL BANKING MARKET INVESTIGATION

Notice of intention to conduct qualitative research

1. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is conducting an investigation into the retail banking market. The investigation covers both personal current accounts (PCAs) for individuals and banking for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) including business current accounts (BCAs) and loans.
2. The provisional findings report is due to be published in October 2015. In the event that one or more adverse effects on competition (AECs) are identified in our provisional findings, the CMA may, if appropriate and feasible, wish to test potential remedies to address concerns related to such potential AECs. This qualitative research would support the process of testing any potential remedies.
3. We have published our requirements for this research on the government contracts finder website, inviting research agencies to tender.
4. Note that any activities including commencing the process to enable the CMA to conduct qualitative research are contingent on, and without prejudice to, any provisional findings of an AEC.
5. The main objectives of this research would be to inform the development of different types of communication aimed at influencing behaviour of PCA and SME customers and the development of digital tools that would be valued by them.
6. We have requested that potential bidders provide details of how they would implement comprehensive procedures within their agency to manage and minimise any potential conflicts of interest. Special requirements will be included in the service agreement between the CMA and the retained agency.
7. In particular, the CMA intends to require the successful bidder to meet the following minimum requirements:
 - Until the contract completion date (or until the termination of the contract):
 - (a) no member of the team of staff undertaking the CMA's project (including the director responsible for the team working on the project

and research executives) will undertake any work for other participants in the retail banking market without the CMA's consent; and

- (b) the team of staff undertaking the CMA's project is kept physically separate from teams who undertake work for any other participant in the retail banking market (including workstations in separate areas or situated as far as possible, discussions conducted in closed rooms).
- Until the market investigation and, if applicable, any relevant appeals are finally determined:
 - (a) no member of the team of staff undertaking the CMA's project (including the director responsible for the team working on the project and research executives) will undertake any work that is directly related to the scope of the retail banking market investigation, and could therefore be relied upon by a party in its submissions to the CMA, without the CMA's consent;
 - (b) no individual working on the CMA's project will discuss that project with colleagues involved in work for other participants in the retail banking market; and
 - (c) the team's data is to be secured so that personnel involved in work for other participants in the retail banking market cannot access it.

8. **Any comments must be received by 5pm on Thursday 8 October 2015 and sent by email to retailbanking@cma.gsi.gov.uk or in writing to the team at:**

Retail banking team
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