



Public Accounts Committee

**Gareth Davies CB
Permanent Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF**

1 June 2026

English Language Test (HOELTs)

Dear Permanent Secretary

We note that in September last year, a fifth round of market engagement was launched as part of the tendering process for the Department's future 'English Language Test' (HOELTs).¹ 'HOELTs' is envisaged as a test which will assess speaking, listening and, where applicable, reading and writing skills, for immigration routes which require applicants to demonstrate English language proficiency. We further note that between the fourth and fifth round of market engagement, the Department pivoted to explore 'Digital by Default' testing, with remote proctoring as the primary mode of delivery and physical test centres available where remote solutions are not feasible.

The HOELTs tender is valued at £816 million, including VAT. The contract will run from 3 August 2026 to 3 August 2031, with the possibility of extension to 3 August 2034. We would like to invite you—or appropriate officials—to brief us on HOELTs on either 15 June at 3.30 pm or 25 June at 9.30 am. We are interested to hear how you are ensuring value for money during the tendering process and any specific issues that are pertinent to the HOELTs tender.

We appreciate that tenders, by their very nature, engage commercially sensitive information, and that it may not be appropriate, at this time, for such a briefing to take place in public. We are content for the briefing to take place in private.

We require a response to this letter by 8 June.

¹ <https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Notice/055549-2025> [accessed 18 May 2026]



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Yours Sincerely

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts