



**Prisoner  
Learning  
Alliance**

**MONITORING THE DYNAMIC  
PURCHASING SYSTEM**

Today's workshop will cover:

- Your experiences of using the Dynamic Purchasing System...
- Our work so far - how we are using feedback from senior prison staff and voluntary sector providers to advocate for changes
- Next steps

## What is the DPS?

- Electronic framework for buying services – designed to be more efficient for prisons to commission bespoke education and training services
- Supposed to complement services under PEF
- Supposed to be flexible and straightforward to use

**How have you found using the DPS?**



In April, we asked the Prison Governors Association to send out a survey.

We asked how have you found using the DPS?

We had 55 responses to this question

- two respondents had found it straightforward
- four said mostly straightforward
- 16 said reasonable
- over half, 33 said that it was difficult.

- Comments from senior prison staff about the DPS:
- It's not exactly dynamic. It is cumbersome and extremely bureaucratic!
- It creates an increased workload for HOLS
- DPS feels overly complex
- As far as DPS is concerned, the guidance given is extremely confusing and time consuming. At the moment, it is very hard to understand and work with.
- We need stronger regulations about what we can and cannot use DPS on, so that we remain compliant.
- The DPS advisers at Commercial and Contract Management are giving conflicting advice.....and the guidance misses huge chunks out or refers to actions that are not available or difficult to find
- I do not think the DPS is fit for purpose. It is too difficult to use for short contracts. The length of contracts on DPS should be flexible between 1-3 years to suit business need.
- TUPE issues have caused concern

## Voluntary sector providers told us that:

- the system is complicated and time consuming to register on, and applications take a long time to submit
- the time given to respond to bids can be very short and the response time following submitting a bid can be lengthy – award times are taking longer than expected and the window between award and mobilisation can be very short
- the contracts can only last up to 12 months, which because of lead in and security-vetting time (which can be a few months) is a disincentive for service providers
- approaches/invitations have been sent outside of the DPS system and this can be confusing for providers
- Uncertainty about what contracts are coming up – whether there will be bids to apply for
- Smaller organisations are finding this particularly difficult, as it is impacting on their funding, and limiting their ability to plan and staff services

- We worked with Clinks to collect and collate information.
  - We met with PEDPS - the commissioning team in June and fed in the information from the senior prison staff and the voluntary sector
  - We organised a roundtable meeting in July with MOJ, HMPPS, the commissioning team and voluntary sector education providers
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## Mid July figures



Cat No	Cat Description	Number of Contracts Awarded	
01	Catering and hospitality	4	
02	Construction, planning and the built environment	9	
03	Cleaning and facilities management	1	
04	Engineering and manufacturing technologies	1	
05	Retail and commercial enterprise	5	
06	Health, Public Services and Care	0	
07	Business, leadership, administration and law	1	
08	Arts, media and publishing	7	
09	Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	1	
10	Sport, leisure, travel and tourism	2	
11	Science, Humanities and Language	0	
12	ICT	0	
13	Lifeskills	6	
14	Services and Support LDD	0	
15	Other educational services not specified	7	
16	Resettlement	2	
17	IAG	29	£4.1M on IAG contracts
		75	
		Total £6.1M	



HMPPS and MOJ have now implemented:

Weekly newsletter

Intranet with supporting materials

Face to face training for Learning and Skills managers

Super users who are cascading training

User helpline

Dedicated support team

Is this making a difference?



# NEXT STEPS

What changes would be most helpful now?

What should the PLA be asking for?

