



A word from Mark Leigh:

As always it's been busy within the Employment Category, so much has happened since the last time we wrote out to you all. Restart went live at the end of June and we're working closely with providers and stakeholders to get volumes to anticipated numbers. On the JETS front we passed 100,000 starts at the end of May with numbers rising continually, we've also been working to extend contracts for JETS/JETS Scotland to ensure we help as many customers as possible. We continue to work with the department on the Kickstart Scheme with decisions being made on access for a number of contracted employment provision with further details on outstanding provision to follow.



This edition includes articles on; Prompt Payment code, FSF DPS2, Supply Chain Mapping, Survey Action Plan, Future Market Strategy and Kickstart which we hope you find useful and informative.

This edition also contains some good news stories from DWP's JETS and ESF programmes which highlights the good work we are all doing to help our customers. Also we would really appreciate your feedback on the newsletter (further details included within newsletter) as we've published a number of newsletters to date and would like to ensure you're finding them useful. As always, keep watching this space for further news...

Prompt Payment Code

Prompt Payment of supply chain partners is an important behaviour for DWP Commercial and something that we are keen to promote. These behaviours are now also encapsulated in PPN 04/19 which could result in organisations being excluded from bidding for procurement/call-off for non-compliance

The Department seeks to test this on a regular basis by speaking directly to supply chain partners, anonymising the feedback and addressing any issues and concerns that may be raised. This has resulted in some changed behaviour and also amendments to supply chain contracts as the terms contained within the Prime Contract should be passed down on the same, or more advantageous terms to the Supply Chain Partner (SCP).

Our recent contact with SCPs has not indicated any major issues or concerns which we take as really positive news, but this does not mean we will be relaxing our checking! Over the coming weeks we will be seeking to streamline the process by introducing a survey tool to collect and initially analyse Prompt Payment feedback, following up with calls as necessary and on an ad-hoc basis. We would ask supply chain partners to engage with this process, without your input we will not be able to identify and address poor behaviours. If you are uncertain that the call is from the Department decline the call and ask the member of staff to drop an email through confirming who they are and where they are from - emails will come from @dwp.gov.uk and all information will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence.

Restart Scheme Update

We are pleased to announce that, since the last Employment Category Newsletter was issued, referrals to the Restart Scheme have begun.

Over the next 3 years we expect over 1 million people to be referred to the scheme and to see hundreds of thousands of participants secure employment so this is a very exciting moment for us.

We look forward to working with our prime providers and many supply chain partners to deliver what will be one of our largest ever employment programmes. From inception to go-live the timelines for delivery have been short and we would like to thank our providers, subcontractors and everyone involved for the exceptional efforts to ensure the Restart Scheme was ready to start on time.

Providers involved with the Restart Scheme will be aware that in the early weeks we have seen somewhat lower referral numbers than had been anticipated as our operational teams adjust their processes. Huge efforts are underway to correct these teething problems and we are already seeing a significant uplift in referrals so we are confident that the customers are there and that volumes will come through once the current teething problems have been overcome. And, while it's still early days, it's been great to already see our first customers already starting employment.

Restart Scheme procurement lessons learned

We are always seeking to improve our processes and approaches. That is why we have been undergoing a comprehensive lessons learned exercise of the Restart Scheme procurement, following the contract award in April 2021.

We sought feedback from internal and external stakeholders involved in all stages of the procurement, from design through to bid evaluation. This included speaking to a sample of successful and unsuccessful bidding organisations and supply chain partners. This is the first time that we have included supply chain partners in a lessons learned activity and it gave us a great new perspective. We will carry this forward into our future procurements.

We would like to thank everyone who generously offered their time and honest feedback to support this exercise. Your insights were incredibly valuable and helped us to understand what worked well and what could have been improved.

We want to use this opportunity to share some of the key learning from the exercise, which will inform and improve future procurements.

Market engagement

There was positive feedback about the communication and engagement between DWP and the market, particularly through ERSA and IEP. The supply chain partners we spoke to appreciated being able to access all procurement documents through the Virtual Data Room (VDR).

Continued on next page

Restart Scheme procurement lessons learned - continued

This was an important development for this procurement and something we intend to use again in the future, making as much information available as early as possible. It was thought that virtual events generally worked well. However, the market would prefer to return to face to face sessions for some events to allow for more networking between suppliers.

Commercial process

The suppliers we spoke to appreciated the early release of the specification and the break over the Christmas period. In general, the bidding organisations we spoke to liked the pricing and performance “cap and collar”, which prevented a race to the bottom and underfunded programmes. They were also positive about the process of submitting an unscored first bid, followed by commercial dialogue, then refining their bid before submitting their Best And Final Offer. These are elements we will look to replicate in future procurements.

Bidding organisations and supply chain partners would have appreciated more time during the bidding process to allow them to build stronger relationships. Similarly, earlier finalisation of questions, terms and conditions and Contract Package Area (CPA) selection would have been helpful. Where possible, we will seek to provide as much time as possible for future procurements.

Supply chain partners found submitting expressions of interest and other information to bidding organisations challenging, due to the lack of consistent templates. This is particularly burdensome when supply chain partners are supporting multiple bids. We are considering how we can work with the market to make this process easier for all parties.

Bidding organisations and supply chain partners commented on the challenges of the new security accreditation requirements implemented with the Restart Scheme. We acknowledge these challenges and we will seek to improve our communications and clarify requirements.

Tender assurance

Organisations appreciated the intent of tender assurance and felt that it improved transparency. We are exploring how we can strengthen this process even further. In particular, we are considering how we can improve the process of inviting suppliers to tender assurance interviews and have more detailed conversations.

Commercial dialogue

The bidding organisations we spoke to generally welcomed the dialogue sessions, as this was an opportunity to have honest conversations, build relationships and refine bids. They would have appreciated receiving guidance on the sessions earlier and would have welcomed a stronger focus on localism during the dialogue sessions. We will work to provide earlier guidance and improve clarity on how the tender assurance, commercial dialogue and evaluation interact.

We are proud to have delivered a successful procurement process in a challenging timescale. We are always looking to improve our processes even further. Thank you to everyone who has supported us to learn and develop through this exercise. You will start to see the learning reflected in future procurements and we will continue to seek ways to improve.

If you would like to provide any further feedback on the Restart Scheme procurement, please email commercialdirectorate.restartteam@dwp.gov.uk

Coming Soon... FSF DPS 2

The Flexible Support Fund Dynamic Purchasing System 2 (FSF DPS 2) is the replacement for the DWP Dynamic Purchasing System for provision of work-focused activities known as the Flexible Support Fund DPS (FSF DPS). The current FSF DPS will expire on 31st October 2021 and FSF DPS2 will replace it for new call-offs from 1st November 2021. We plan for the transition to be as smooth as possible but there will be some changes and actions to take for suppliers. Prior to the November launch the new DPS will open to suppliers to accredit in Autumn 2021 and to support this DWP will be holding a number of engagement events, which are currently underway. These will cover the key changes and what suppliers will need to do to register and later bid for call-off contracts.

We have one Pre-launch event remaining for attendance on the 14th September; which you can register to attend below:

Pre-Launch Events - [Flexible Support Fund Dynamic Purchasing System 2 \(FSF DPS 2\)- Market Event Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)



Our post-launch events will then begin at the end of September; you can register to attend these sessions below:

Post Launch Events - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/flexible-support-fund-dynamic-purchasing-system-fsf-dps-2-post-launch-tickets-165138925973>

Details of FSF DPS 2 can be found on our Prior Information Notice (PIN) here – [FSF Dynamic Purchasing System 2 - For the Provision of Work Focused Activities. Project 23908 - Find a Tender \(find-tender.service.gov.uk\)](#).

Building on lessons learnt and supplier feedback on the existing DPS we are aiming to introduce a number of improvements. Full details on the DPS design will be provided in these sessions including key changes such as:

- the introduction of a Request for Quote (RFQ) approach
- an updated Employability Journey and Payment model
- streamlined accreditation process
- new evaluation & supplier feedback approach for call-offs

All suppliers interested in joining FSF DPS2 will be required to register when the DPS is launched for accreditation applications, including suppliers who are already accredited to the existing FSF DPS.

Supply Chain Mapping

The Employment Category has built, and continues to iterate, a database to capture Prime Providers and their Supply Chain Partners across all major contracts managed by the DWP Employment Category. Programmes covered include, for example, Restart, Work and Health Programme, and Intensive Personalised Employment Support.

It is our intention to roll this out to include Other Government Departments, to enable a rich picture of organisations who supply services across the Employability, Skills and Training market to be made visible in an effort to try and engage with other commissioners to manage the wider market strategically as we move through spending cycles and as we develop our 2024 Future Market Strategy [FMS24].

Why are we doing it?

This database enables the Department to record and track prime and supply chain organisations across multiple programmes in one central place, to help the Category;

- Identify critical supply chain partners who deliver across multiple contracts and/or deliver a large percentage of programme delivery;
- Manage Risk and Develop Contingency Plans;
- Support the stewardship of the Employment Market;
- Support the development of the future DWP Employment market (FMS24) and the providers within;
- Support DWPs SME Agenda; and
- Support our current and future engagement with Supply Chain organisations

The Supply chain database also supports our work on Prompt Payment and responses to appropriate Official Correspondence.

Survey Action Plan

Back in November 2020 the Employment Category ran its second annual survey to gain views from the Employment Category market and in March we gave a high level overview of the key highlights from the survey. We have been working through the comments, in more detail, and want to provide details of the key actions that the team will be progressing or continue to progress to support our continuous improvement journey.

Please watch out for future articles on some of these themes through 2021 and early 2022 which will inform you of the work that has been completed, and or continues to be progressed by the category.

	High Level Theme	Summary of actions to be progressed
1,	Achievable Contract Requirements	Pre-market engagement will continue to be used to validate and strengthen approaches. Procurement specific survey to be used to support final shaping of procurements.

Continued on next page

Survey Action Plan - continued

	High Level Theme	Summary of actions to be progressed
2.	Contract Size and Geographical Coverage/ More Specialised and Localised Provision	Publication of the 2021 Commissioning Strategy. Publication of the Employment Category Pipeline Developments on the Flexible Support Fund (FSF) Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) Commercial Agreement for Employment and Health related Services (CAEHRS) Tier 2 opportunities
3.	Supplier Innovation	Strategic Supplier Relationship Management re-launched – Innovation and Continuous Improvement Testing innovation through the Individual Personalised Employment Support (IPES) Additional Services and Innovation
4.	Procurement (Quality of ItT Documentation, Simplification / Ease of use of the procurement system (DPS and Jaggaer) /procurement process	Lessons learned from procurements inc. Restart and Job Finding Support Simplification /Ease of use of the procurement system – DPS
5.	Non Financial Value (social, environmental, ethical) given appropriate importance	Review of Social Value approach taken in Restart to inform future approach of Social Value
6.	Financial Thresholds/ Capacity / Payment by Results (PbR) models/ Cash flow/ Costs	Explaining our financial approach to the market – why certain financial thresholds and PbR models are used Review costs including; Accreditation, Cyber Essentials, PRaP etc.
7.	Performance Metric /Payment Models	Open Book Contract Management and Should Cost Modelling will continue be used to inform design of payment models
8.	Protection for Sub-contractors (improve transparency of what we do)	Continue Prompt Payment Calls to Supply Chain Partners Supplier Code of Conduct Supply Chain forum (representative)
10.	Market Experience of Bidding for DWP/ Employment contracts	Development of events in collaboration with ERSA and other representative Trade Bodies
11.	Future contract opportunities	Publication of Employment Programme Procurement Pipeline
12.	Authority Obligations met in a timely manor	To be measured on Employment contracts – starting with Restart Critical and continuous review of obligations
13.	Communications	Continue with Employment Category Newsletter
14.	Help for subcontractors – Standard EOI approach	SRM collaboration opportunity

Future Market Strategy

Within the Employment Category, we have been considering and reviewing the Future Labour Market. We understand that many of our current provision are due to end by, or in, 2024 and we are taking time to consider what we want future provision to look like, and what we need from the market to be able to support this. From now until 2023 we will be developing our plan to procure potential new provision that is suitable for our customers, the Department and the market. In broad terms this means that:

- 2021 will be see us developing what we will want the market to look like in 2024;
- 2022 will be focused on preparing the market for what we are likely to require;
- 2023 is likely to be procurement; and
- 2024 implementation and go-live.

Our overarching goal is to try stabilise the 'peaks and troughs' in demand and flatten the curve to ensure consistent demand and a steady state pipeline where possible. This will allow providers to be able to plan resource and strategy into the future, and help ensure the market always has capacity to meet the demands of the labour market and the Department.

To date we have considered how the Department can support the market and enhance market capability. Focussing on areas such as the markets ability to deliver social value and offering tools such as the Supplier Quality Assurance Scorecard, in which providers can assess their entire business, not just contractual performance, against defined criteria – rating either bronze, silver or gold. This helps to identify areas for improvements and provides milestones and targets to drive change. This tool is currently being developed and will be shared with providers and supply chains in due course.

We are in the process of updating our commissioning strategy and our current plan is that is published in October setting out our developing market expectations and aspirations.

Letter to providers on Kickstart

Referrals to Restart, NEA, IPES and ESF14/20: Letter dated 20th July 21 went out to all Contracted Employment Provision to inform them that participants can take part in both the Kickstart scheme and Restart, NEA, IPES or ESF14/20 on a sequential basis (i.e. not at the same time). Decision on participation on JFS, JETs and WHP are still being made and suppliers will hear in due course. We appreciate your patience while DWP continues to consider this complex issue.

Procurement Policy Notes (PPN) Notices

Below is a list of new and updated PPNs that apply to public bodies that may impact on suppliers:

PPN 03/21 The Sourcing and Consultancy Playbooks

The Sourcing Playbook is the third annual refresh of the Outsourcing Playbook. It sets out how departments should approach service delivery and its application is assured through Cabinet Office controls. It outlines the Government's expectations for how contracting authorities and suppliers should engage with each other.

The Outsourcing Playbook was launched in February 2019 and Version 2.0 was launched in June 2020. The Sourcing Playbook supersedes that document. Its application will improve how central government departments assess, procure and manage public services to deliver better outcomes and value for money for the public.

The contents of this PPN apply to all Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies. Together these are referred to as 'In-scope Organisations'. The Sourcing Playbook, Consultancy Playbook and associated guidance are considered good practice and the wider public sector should consider taking them into account.

PPN 04/21 Applying Exclusions in Public Procurement, Managing Conflicts of Interest and Whistleblowing

The procurement regulations require Public Bodies to take appropriate measures to prevent, identify and remedy conflicts of interest arising in procurement procedures. If measures are not taken, conflicts of interest can have far-reaching consequences, including undermining public confidence in the integrity of organisations and Government as a whole.

This PPN replaces existing policy guidance as set out in PPN 01/19. The guidance has been revised and updated to clarify changes to the procurement regulations following the UK's exit from the EU, and provides supplementary guidance and answers to frequently asked questions to deepen commercial teams' understanding of the exclusion provisions in procurement regulations, including case law and additional support material. It also builds upon the previous PPN, with further guidance to assist In-scope Organisations to develop and enhance local strategies, systems, processes and procedures to prevent, identify and remedy conflicts of interest.

PPN 07/21 Update to Legal and Policy requirements to publish procurement information on Contracts Finder

This update reminds In-scope Organisations of the requirements to publish procurement information on Contracts Finder.

This PPN provides consolidated guidance that reminds public bodies of the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCRs 2015) to publish information about opportunities and awards over certain low value thresholds on Contracts Finder (CFS).

For Central Government authorities, reasonable time means 30 calendar days after the contract award date. There are additional requirements to publish the contact documents alongside the award details - these are set out in Part 2. In-Scope Organisations should comply with these timeframes for publication on Contracts Finder unless there is a good reason not to, which should be documented.

Good News Stories

Molly's story

Molly, 25, discovered her love of baking during lockdown: "While I was building up my baking skills, I was applying for so many jobs, but I just wasn't getting anywhere because so many people were also looking for work at that time. So I started to think about how I could make myself a job."

She was referred to the Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) scheme, and worked closely with the provider's Employment Adviser who encouraged and supported her to start her own bakery business. "Richard helped me with the marketing of my business through social media content and suggestions for getting my name out there, like charity cakes. I speak with him every couple of weeks and it's so great to have that reassurance that I'm doing the right thing."

Molly is one of 25,000 moved into work through the scheme so far.

"Right now, I'm working the hardest that I've ever worked, but I love it. Every now and again, a customer will send me video of their child blowing out their birthday candles on one of my cakes and it just feels amazing," said Molly, who is hoping to expand her business soon: "My kitchen is overrun with baking equipment! So I'm planning to look for a little unit or shop."

Matt's story

Two weeks before starting on JETS, Matt received an eviction notice, but by getting back into work through JETS he was able to keep his home. "I just feel an overwhelming sense of joy," he said. "I've pulled myself out of a hole and can finally start planning my life."

Matt had joined the Royal Engineers but was discharged a year later with mental health issues which spiralled into depression. He found building work but had a relapse and had to be admitted to psychiatric ward.

JETS helped him turn his life around. "Within a week of working with Employment Adviser Demelza, I passed my Construction Skills Certification Scheme test and could get back to working in construction. I get to look at a project such as a house being built and think 'that part is there because of me.'"

Continued on next page

Good News Stories - continued

Naazneen's story

Naazneen's support from her ESF programme provider during Covid19 pandemic had all been via telephone communication. She last worked in 2011 as a supermarket cashier but left to become a full time stay at home mother.

When she spoke with her adviser she said she was very keen to work in an office environment and wanted a career change. Despite not working since 2011 and having no current experience Naazneen did not let that come in her way. Whilst receiving support from her adviser she secured various interviews for office positions however there was always applicants who were more experienced than her so her applications were unsuccessful. This did not make Naazneen give up on her goal of working in an office. The adviser said that Naazneen's dedication and attitude made the adviser want to support her more on a daily basis, she would get declined after interview stage but always came back bouncing like a breath of fresh air.

She attended various employability workshops via zoom with her Tutor and the adviser was given very good feedback on Naazneen. There came an opportunity for an Apprenticeship Administrator position to work in Child Maintenance within the Department for Work and Pensions, she applied and secured an interview and she was offered the position to start on the 26/04/2021. Naazneen was overjoyed and thanked her adviser for all the motivation and support that was given and for not giving up on her.

Supplier feedback on the Newsletter

We're on edition 9 of the Employment Market Newsletter since publication began in 2019. In order to know if you're finding these newsletters helpful, we need your feedback. Please tell us what has worked well, where you think we could improve, what you'd like more/less of, future content ideas and your general thoughts on the Newsletter as this would provide us with invaluable insights and give us an opportunity to make sure the Newsletter is fit for purpose going forward. Please email us at: cd.emnewsletter@dwp.gov.uk with any comments.

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this latest edition of the DWP Employment Market Newsletter.

If you would like to share any good news stories, please contact us at:
cd.emnewsletter@dwp.gov.uk

