

# A brief guide to the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)

**How voluntary organisations and individuals  
can access funded opportunities to deliver  
education and other provision in prison**



**Briefing**

September 2022

## Background

There are various ways that organisations can secure contracts to provide services in the criminal justice system. In 2019, significant changes were implemented by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) where the existing Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) provisions was replaced by two primary funding structures:

1. the Prison Education Framework (PEF), covering core education provision, for example English, Maths, ICT (Information & Communications Technology) and ESOL (English as a Second Language); and
2. the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), covering more niche and localised provision that is short terms (up to two years), for example, training on employment, advice on housing, life skills and arts therapies.

This guide summarises the second of these, the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), as this represents the most likely opportunity of the two for voluntary organisations. Although the changes were introduced in 2019, feedback has indicated that many Clinks members are unaware of the new system – in part due to its rollout coinciding with Covid-19 and lockdown, but also due to the system being perceived as inaccessible and a lack of guidance available.

## What is the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)?

The DPS is an online application process for prisons to commission specialist education services. The system is designed to be more accessible and enable prison governors to make decisions directly and choose the best supplier to meet their population needs whenever they arise during the year. The MoJ have recognised that, previously, its suppliers have been dominated by larger organisations and the DPS is therefore an opportunity for smaller and more local organisations to deliver education and other specialist services inside prisons more frequently.

During 2021/22, more than 250 contracts totalling approximately £19m were commissioned through the DPS. The statistics are encouraging: DPS contracts were awarded to 89 different organisations, 80% of which were classified as small or medium in size. The average contract value was £79,373 and the average time between advertising DPS opportunities to awarding contracts to organisations was 9.4 weeks.

The DPS is currently operational in 5 geographical areas: London and the South, North East, Midlands, South West and North West England. There are 17 different categories of educational contracts that organisations can apply for:

1. Catering and hospitality
2. Construction, planning and the built environment
3. Cleaning and facilities management
4. Engineering and manufacturing technologies
5. Retail and commercial enterprise
6. Health, public services and care
7. Business, leadership, administration and law
8. Arts, media and publishing
9. Agriculture, horticulture and animal care
10. Sport, leisure, travel and tourism
11. Science, humanities and languages (Not ESOL)
12. Information and Communication Technology (not core curriculum)
13. Life skills
14. Services to support individuals with additional learning needs
15. Resettlement services
16. Preparation for work and information, advice and guidance services
17. Other educational services not specified above

## How does the DPS work?

### Registering on the Ministry of Justice's commissioning portal, Jaggaer

Voluntary sector organisations interested in accessing DPS opportunities should first register on Jaggaer, which is the MoJ's commissioning portal (formally known as Bravo).

You can register through the following website <https://ministryofjusticecommercial.bravosolution.co.uk/>

If you believe you already have an account or if you have any questions, the MoJ service team can be contacted on 0845 0100 132 or [esourcing@justice.gov.uk](mailto:esourcing@justice.gov.uk). The MOJ will usually process registrations in a few hours and will then email you with log-in details for the commissioning portal.

### Accessing DPS opportunities

Once registered on the commissioning portal, organisations can then review all the procurement opportunities available. Those wishing to access DPS opportunities should select "PQQs Open to All Suppliers" and then "PQQ139 Prison Education DPS Continuous" to express an interest in providing services in this area.

The subsequent PQQ (Pre-Qualifying Questionnaire) must then be completed for organisations to pass through the selection stage and become eligible for DPS opportunities. Although daunting due to its complicated format and size, it is pre-populated with details from the initial registration form and contains other questions relating to your organisation which must be answered. Users may (on request) need to provide their audited accounts for the past two years and make several declarations regarding any criminal convictions and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Once the PQQ has been submitted, it will be reviewed by the MoJ and your online account will successfully pass through the selection stage and be approved to view DPS opportunities advertised by prisons for which you may be eligible to apply to (known as the "Call Off Completion Stage"). You will have access to DPS opportunities that are in your specified geographic category area.

The main contact for each opportunity advertised will be with a member of staff or representative from the prison. The individual prison establishment is subsequently responsible for running the entire process (from proposing the contract to agreeing a price).

### How does the DPS differ from the Prison Education Service?

The DPS is currently in operation, alongside the Prison Education Framework and the existing providers of prison education. Alongside this, the Ministry of Justice is currently looking at developing a future Prison Education Service (PES) and has a programme of work around this. The PES programme includes engaging with organisations on what the future prison education service should look like. At this stage it is not decided if/how the DPS will run alongside a future education service.

Clinks is engaging with the MoJ to explore the ways in which the voluntary sector can share their expertise in helping to design the future Prison Education Service to make sure that it responds to the needs of those that they support. You can find [our blog here](#) discussing what the future Prison Education Service should look like, including a summary of feedback provided by more than 40 voluntary organisations who attended a consultation event in July 2022 hosted by Clinks with HMPPS.

## Our vision

Our vision is of a vibrant, independent and resilient voluntary sector that enables people to transform their lives.

## Our mission

To support, represent and advocate for the voluntary sector in criminal justice, enabling it to provide the best possible opportunities for individuals and their families.

## Join Clinks: be heard, informed, and supported

### Are you a voluntary organisation supporting people in the criminal justice system?

Join our network of over 600 members.

Clinks membership offers you:

- A voice to influence change
- Practical assistance to be effective and resilient
- Support from a community of like-minded professionals.

Membership starts at just £20 per year and is free for organisations with little income.

[www.clinks.org/membership](http://www.clinks.org/membership)

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