

Brighton & Hove City Council – how will it work?

Brighton & Hove City Council is working with *adam* to introduce a web-based system, SProc.Net, to manage the Council's Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). The Council will use this system for the procurement of Supported Living for adults, as and when required over the four year lifespan of the DPS contract. As a potential provider, this document will take you through what a DPS is and how the Council will manage their commissioning process using SProc.Net.

What is a Dynamic Procurement System (DPS)?

A DPS is a fully electronic system used by public sector bodies to award contracts for works or services and is governed by Regulation 34 of The Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended from time to time). The use of a DPS to award such contracts ensures the end-to-end procurement process is competitive, fair and transparent. Providers must meet the Council's minimum criteria for entry to the DPS, but there are no other restrictions on who can or cannot join.

The DPS is a fair and transparent process for all service providers. As a provider, you will benefit from access to all opportunities to provide services in their specialism because the use of SProc.Net means:

- You will be competing on a level playing field with other organisations for new opportunities to provide services
- You will have reduced administration costs and an easy to use, streamlined process
- The full history and a complete audit trail of all buying decisions and communications are captured in one easy to access location.

How will the DPS will operate?

1. Requirements

When the Council require a Supported Living service, they will create and distribute a Requirement to the supply base. A Requirement is the name used for a tender in the SProc.Net DPS system. All Requirements will be automatically distributed to providers subscribed to the respective Service Category via SProc.Net. Depending on when the service is required to begin, the Council will stipulate the relevant timescales, whereby different actions can be taken during the subsequent periods described in this guide.

There may arise a situation that offers an exception to the standard DPS process. In this situation, the

Council reserve the right to contact a single provider, or a specified selection of providers. A retrospective Requirement will be placed on SProc.Net. Detailed below is a list of example situations in which this may occur:

- Service procured out of core office hours, weekends and formal holiday referrals (including the Christmas holidays)
- Out-of-area placements
- Continuity of service is required
- Package sourced as an emergency
- Specialist care required
- Service User and family choice

In these cases, a retrospective Requirement will be placed on SProc.Net by the Council.

2. Open for Offers period

Once the Requirement has been distributed, you can submit an Offer during the 'Open for Offers' period. An Offer is the name used for a proposal submitted by a provider. The Council will stipulate the timescale of this period on the Requirement. Once this period ends, no further Offers can be submitted by the supply base.

To create an Offer, Providers will state whether or not they can meet the requirements ('Attributes'), how they will meet the outcomes ('Outcome Statements') and submit a price ('Price'). On each Offer, there is a weighted split of 60% **Quality** and 40% **Price**.

- **Quality (Outcome Statements) – 60%**

These are free-text questions which are related to an outcome and/or a choice. These are defined by the Council and require free-text responses from tenderers. The tenderer's response to the outcome statements must demonstrate how they will meet the service user's needs.

- **Price – 40%**

Price is weighted to represent 40% of the provider's total score. Providers are required to enter the cost of the Requirement. Price scores are then calculated by the system by comparing provider's rates using the following formula:

$(\text{Best Price} \div \text{Bid Price}) \times (\text{Price Weighting})$

Please note, to ensure a high quality of care for service users, the Council may introduce a price floor and ceiling over the course of the DPS contract.

If there are any conditions to your Offer then these must be specified.

During the Open for Offers period, you will have visibility of your overall ranking in the list. Whilst the Open for Offers period is open, and quality has been secured, as a provider, you have the opportunity to revise the submitted price in an effort to improve the ranking of your offer.

When the Open for Offers period ends, all submitted Offers will be electronically sorted into a list. This will rank the Offers in order of the score which they have received so far. The Council has stipulated that the top 3 Offers will be placed into a shortlist based on their Attributes (15%) and Price (40%).

Requirement Messaging Tool

A messaging tool is available during the Open for Offers period for you to communicate with the Council to clarify any specifics of the Requirement. Requirement messages and their responses will be published on the Requirement and can be seen by all providers who are placing Offers. As such, you must not include anything which identifies you or your business in any Requirement messages.

The following policy must be adhered to for its use. This policy is to ensure a full auditable trail and alleviate any risks to the Council or the provider through miscommunication or malicious practice:

1. Identification

There must be nothing communicated through the messaging system which identifies either you as the Provider or a member of the Council.

2. Prejudice

Nothing which betrays a bias for or against you as the Provider should be communicated through Requirement Messaging.

3. Data protection

There must not be any sensitive information of a personal or commercial nature, pertaining to either you the Provider, a member of the Council or Service User communicated through Requirement Messaging.

4. Off-contract risk

There will be nothing which incites engagement outside of the system communicated through Requirement Messaging.

5. Clarification

Further details to support the Requirement and aid Providers in constructing their Offers must always be communicated through Requirement Messaging.

3. Client Review period

Following the Open for Offers period, the Council will evaluate the Outcome statements (45%) of the top 3 shortlisted providers (as above). The purpose of the Client Review period is to ensure that the accepted Offer is the one that best meets the needs of the service user.

The Outcome Statements are reviewed and evaluated by the Council, and used to determine the score of each tender weighted to represent 45% of a tenderer's total score. To ensure that the evaluation and scoring of the Outcome Statements is consistent and fair, the Council will score all answers out of a set figure of 5.

Once scored, the Total Score is generated for each of the top 3 Offers by the system based on the combined final Quality (Attributes & Outcomes) and Cost weighted scores. These scores are then used to rank all Offers in descending order (i.e. the highest score achieves rank 1 and so on).

At the end of this final period, the Council will award the Supported Living contract to the top-ranked offer which represents the most economically advantageous tender: a combination of both quality and price. There are no guarantees that the cheapest offer, or the offer with the highest quality score will win; it is based on a combination of both quality and price. The Council reserve the right to reject Offers from the shortlist should they be deemed inappropriate. For example, but not limited to, Offer price is inappropriate, provider is under financial distress etc.

The Council reserves its right to amend the award criteria from time to time, subject to prior notification to providers, including the use of Service User feedback and historical Service Provider performance data.

4. Service Agreements

If your Offer is successful, a Service Agreement will be created on SProc.Net between you and the Council. The Council will aim to inform you of the outcome of your Offer via SProc.Net following the end of the Client Review period.

Changes to Service Agreements

If a change needs to be made to an active Service Agreement, the Change Order function in the system will be used by Council. The Change Order policy below outlines what changes to an active Service Agreement can be requested, and what constitutes a material change resulting in the active Service Agreement ending and a new requirement being distributed to the supply chain. Changes are at the discretion of the Council.

- **Alterations to a Service Agreement**

Where an impromptu alteration in the service is required, it is permissible to request a change with the service provider. This alteration will be recorded in the system, but does not constitute a material change and so the Service Agreement does not need to be redistributed to the supply chain.

Example: Time – the Council may wish to change when a service is provided on a particular day or at a particular time.

- **Price**

If an alteration results in a change in price of over 50% of the original Service Agreement price, the Council reserves the right to end the active Service Agreement and redistribute it to the supply chain. This decision will be taken in conjunction with the Service User and the Service Provider.

- **Ending a Service Agreement**

A change, when considered major, may result in the Service Agreement ending. The Council reserve the right to end the active Service Agreement and create a new Requirement to distribute to the supply chain. Examples of a major change are, but are not limited to:

- Allegations of abuse and/or Safeguarding and child protection concerns
- Upheld complaints concerning Service Provider competence ○
- Significant alterations in duration of support required

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All decisions will be made in consultation with all parties involved, prior to the ending of a Service Agreement.

- **Death of a Service User**

The service provider must notify the Council of the death of a Service User by completing the Cessation Form (as detailed in the Provider Agreement) and returning it to the Council within 24 hours. The death of a user will terminate the Service Agreement and payment will be met by the Council up to and including the date of death.

As a provider, if a change to service is identified, this will need to be raised to the Council via the Messaging functionality on the Service Agreement.

Intermissions

Occasionally, there may be an event which “interrupts” the delivery of the care package to an individual. When a service is not being delivered due to a change in circumstances, the contract needs to be placed into an ‘on hold’ status on the system. This is called an Intermission.

- **Unforeseen Circumstances**

In the event that the intermission is a result of a holiday or unforeseen hospital admission, the price agreed in the contract will be met in full for one week. In the case that the Service User requires support during the intermission period, the price will be met in full for the duration of this period. When an intermission occurs, the Council may consider the need for the continuation of the service. Following a review, if deemed no longer necessary, the Council may terminate the Service Agreement, giving the provider of the service 28 days’ notice.

Suspensions

The Council reserve the right to suspend a provider from the DPS supply chain, for reasons such as, but not limited to;

- Safeguarding concerns
- Liquidation
- Local Authorities Notifications of Suspension
- Suspended under Safeguarding Improvement Programme (SIP) □ Legislative changes

A Suspension means that a provider will not receive new Requirements distributed by the Council. A joint discussion between the provider and the Council (and other appropriate parties), will determine the impact, and any necessary action, in respect of the provider's other active Service Agreements.

Providers may also choose a voluntary suspension of placements while addressing concerns in partnership with the Local Authority.

5. Billing

Once a Service Agreement has been created and delivery of care services has commenced, as a provider, you will be required to submit weekly bills to the Council directly.

6. Communication

Supplier Relationship Management module

The Council will be using the Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) module within SProc.Net to communicate with approved providers. The SRM module will allow the providers to communicate directly with Council officers in an open and transparent manner. Further information can be found in the System User Guide on SProc.Net (post Go-Live).

Feedback and Complaints

If you wish to request any feedback or to lodge a complaint, please contact the Council via email to Procurement@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Next steps: how to join the DPS

Providers who wish to supply services to Brighton & Hove City Council will need to meet the Council's minimum entry criteria by applying online at www.sproc.net. It is a simple three step process consisting of Registration, Accreditation and Enrolment. Please refer to the 'How to become an Approved Provider for Brighton & Hove City Council' for details on the entry criteria and an explanation of the process.

Glossary

Accreditation – this is the first step that a Provider is required to complete when joining the supply chain, it is a series of objective questions and document uploads.

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DPS – Dynamic Purchasing System used for the procurement of services.

Enrolment – this is the second step a Provider needs to complete to join the supply base, it is a subjective evaluation of the quality of each location within your organisation.

Intermission – a “hold” on the delivery of a service whilst the Service Agreement remains in force.

Open for Offers – timeframe in which you are able submit an Offer against the Council Requirement.

Offer – your submission against a Requirement to state what you are able to deliver and at what price.

Public Contract Regulations – the regulations within which the DPS and all public sector procurement must operate.

Provider Quality Score (PQS) – a score assigned per Provider by the Council based on a defined set of quality criteria. The score reflects the quality of service delivery of your organisation.

Requirements – the opportunities that are being tendered by the Council.

Service Agreement – this is the contract to deliver services, binding the Requirement and Offer to agree what service is going to be delivered and at what price.

SProc.Net – this is internet based technology platform through which the Council will be procuring services (web link is www.sproc.net).

Provider Agreement – this is the overarching contract between the Council and a Provider. A Provider will need to agree to this document at the Accreditation stage.