

Contracting for the YPLA 2011/12

This document contains the following:

- Information for providers that wish to become contractors to the YPLA;
- Information for providers sub-contracted to YPLA providers that wish to pursue a direct contract;
- Information on how the YPLA intends to open up the market for young people's learning.

Of interest to providers of education and training for young people aged 16-19 and other stakeholders.

July 2011

Version 1

Purpose of this Guidance

This guidance is aimed at all independent providers of education and/or training for young people aged 16-19, whether or not they are currently contracted to the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA).

It sets out the YPLA's general approach to opening access to YPLA contracts to new providers. This is designed to be simple and transparent, in line with the approach outlined in the YPLA Statutory Guidance.

It also describes how and when independent providers can gain access to a YPLA contract, including those that are currently sub-contracted to a provider with a direct contract.

Opening up the market for 16-19 Learning

The YPLA is committed to opening up the young people's learning market to new providers. This is in line with government policy on openness and transparency.

All providers will have the option of:

- Participating in any YPLA procurement exercises that occur;
- Applying to the Department for Education to establish new provision – either a Free School, University Technical College or Studio School – as and when the Department runs an applications round. Details will be available on www.education.gov.uk at the relevant times
- With the agreement of the local authority and YPLA, setting up and delivering education or training with the aim of being funded via lagged learner numbers in the following year¹;
- Approaching YPLA contractors with the aim of becoming a sub-contractor or delivery partner.

¹ In general, agreement will only be forthcoming where the local authority has indicated that a gap in provision has arisen. Any provider wishing to pursue this route provider must be prepared to make any necessary investment and acknowledge that the undertaking is entirely at its own risk. Providers will have to demonstrate that they are able to recruit eligible learners, complete the Individualised Learner Record and meet all funding conditions against a £0 funding rate per Standard Learner Number (See YPLA Funding Guidance at http://readingroom.ypla.gov.uk/ypla/YPLA_Funding_Guidance_2010-11_-_Full_Links_Documen.pdf). The YPLA will fund lagged learner numbers in the following year, subject to satisfactory performance in meeting all required conditions.

New Providers and Sub-contractors seeking a YPLA Contract

In most cases, YPLA funding is committed year on year to providers based on 'lagged learner numbers' whereby a provider is funded in any given year based on the learner numbers they delivered in the previous year. This ensures that funding is directed towards providers who have already demonstrated they can meet learner demand and satisfy 'fitness for funding' criteria.

In some situations, this approach cannot be applied due to provider withdrawal or failure, or where there is a need to fill a significant gap in provision. When this occurs, the YPLA may need to access new providers via a procurement process.

All procurements will be advertised on Contracts Finder², the government's preferred portal, and will generally take place in spring or early summer with the aim of commencing delivery from September the same year. However, they may take place at other times when an unexpected gap in provision arises.

All procurement exercises will be open to any provider to participate:

- Those already registered with Skills Funding Agency and existing YPLA providers will not usually need to provide additional information to prove that they are fit organisations to receive funding;
- Providers new to the YPLA will have to supply evidence and supporting information before they can be approved for YPLA funding.

Providers interested in delivering YPLA-funded provision 16-19 year olds are therefore encouraged to register with Contracts Finder and monitor it regularly.

² Contracts Finder works as an online notice board, allowing government buyers to publish procurement and sub-contracting opportunities in one place. Contracts Finder holds all central government tender documents and contracts and can be found at <http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/>