

FAO: The Headteacher	For Action	For Information	Meeting/Event
All Schools	√		

3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021

Dear Colleague

**New Arrangement for Buying (Commissioning) Independent Alternative Provision Services for Children and Young People**

“Alternative provision can be defined as something in which a young person participates as part of their regular timetable away from the site of the school or the pupil referral unit where they are enrolled and not led by school staff.” OFSTED Alternative Provision July 2014.

The demand for alternative provision is such that a significant amount of provision is currently purchased from the external, unregulated market and evaluation shows that this trend is expected to continue.

Schools wishing to access this market were required to manage their own quality assurance of the provision, which is a lot to ask of a busy school especially where they have little expertise in this work.

Therefore, to meet demand and support schools, the WSCC has now launched an open contract called a ‘Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)’ to enable the efficient sourcing of Independent Alternative Provision services from a list of qualified providers. This DPS came into effect from 1st September 2021.

The County Council has ensured maintained, free and academy schools will be able to use the DPS to source provision. We hope this will provide a consistent way forward to monitor the use of non-regulated independent alternative provision and intervene in supporting the children and young people of West Sussex early.

There are five categories of alternative provision to select from:

1. **Early intervention and prevention:** example of types of provision include but are not exclusive to tutoring groups/1-2-1, arts and crafts, cooking, animal therapies, forest school, fishing, and equine therapy.
2. **Vocational opportunities (including post 16 provision):** examples of provisions include forest school, angling, outdoor and indoor activities, vocational courses.
3. **Interim provision for learning waiting an education placement or who have been excluded:** provision of temporary education to the learner whilst an education placement is sought by WSCC.

4. **Online tutoring (also known as a blended package):** learners are taught remotely through online platforms.
5. **Complex learners:** support for learners who due to their mental health and/or medical reasons cannot attend their education setting or who are unable to verbally express their unmet social and emotional needs so communicate this by becoming withdrawn, self-harming, isolate or display disruptive or disturbing behaviour.

### **Using the DPS**

You will find the WSCC Partnership Agreement alongside this letter. Your school/setting will be required to complete and sign the partnership agreement before being able to use the DPS. Once you have signed the Partnership Agreement, please email the agreement to [AlternativeProvisionReports@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:AlternativeProvisionReports@westsussex.gov.uk). Please returned Partnership Agreements by **1<sup>st</sup> December 2021**.

### **Further Information**

WSCC will be hosting several webinars, to provide an overview of the DPS for IAP. The team will provide an overview of the DPS along with any questions you may have in using this within the context of your school/service, or how you get new providers to join. Please do take the opportunity to join a webinar on one of the following dates:

- Tuesday 16th November 15:00 - 16:00
- Wednesday 24th November 15:00 - 16:00
- Wednesday 8th December 15:00 - 16:00

To register for a webinar please visit the [Eventbrite booking page](#).

### **Current/New Providers**

WSCC currently has eighteen providers that can provide support to children and young people through the DPS. Any provider who is not currently registered on the DPS should refer to information on the [West Sussex Local Offer website](#). Should you have any questions then please do not hesitate to Bradley Hollick (Senior Contracts Officer SEND) via [Bradley.Hollick@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Bradley.Hollick@westsussex.gov.uk) or 0330 222 3279.

Your Sincerely

**CHARLOTTE SMITH & KATE WATSON**

SEND Contracts and Commissioning Manager & Partnership Project Manager AP