

Why Bristol should develop a regional flexible framework:

- Better for Children and Young People:
 - Bristol and its partners having more choice and control over who is on the framework means we can guarantee quality and excellence, resulting in the most appropriate and effective placements for our young people.
 - This market is heavily provider led and it would not be effective for a local authority like Bristol, with our level of spend, to set up our own contract without other local authority partners. It is the collaboration that will give the authorities the best negotiating ability with this market.
 - In addition the best outcomes will be achieved through engagement with the providers to work together to co-design the contract. This will be further enhanced through the engagement and involvement of parent/carers and the children who are placed in these schools.

- Working in a collaborative way with other Local Authorities who want to join us:
 - This is an excellent opportunity to build good connections with other economically powerful Local Authority's, and draw on their local knowledge and experience. Similarly, we will be able to further develop our relationship with LA beyond with West of England.
 - We will aim to develop a joint and shared Quality Assurance framework that will reduce the burden on providers and enable the collaboration partners to share QA visit paperwork and intelligence.
 - We aim to develop a common approach to uplifts that is fair for both LAs and the providers and helps to manage unreasonable demands.
 - A number of Local Authorities have already formally left the West Sussex DPS because they feel a Bristol led flexible framework will be more effective and produce better outcomes. If we back out now this will damage our reputation with them.
 - A number of Local Authorities who were not originally invited to be part of the West Sussex DPS have joined the Bristol led flexible framework. If we back out now it will also damage our relationship with them.
 - We will be able to maintain a good relationship with West Sussex and have left open the possibility of collaborative working with them in the future. For example, they are willing to let us use their tender documentation as a foundation for the Bristol led flexible framework.

- Proactive approach to market engagement
 - We aim to have a 'continuous engagement' approach to our market engagement. We have been and will be in regular contact with providers, seeking their feedback and input whilst creating the flexible framework.

- We intended to use the Market Engagement day to seek provider's views about how to make the tender and subsequent contracts successful and achieve better outcomes for pupils and students.
 - Government has indicated that they want these kinds of placements to be exempt from the Procurement regulations however we will still need some sort of framework of providers to ensure we can appropriately manage the market for quality and value for money as well as incorporate parental choice - the consortium is keen to work with the market to explore what this could look like.
- Challenges with the existing proposals:
 - The current approach to partnership working is not as collaborative as we would like. We do not feel that Bristol, and other partner authorities, have been involved in the decision making process in the West Sussex DPS. Similarly, we were not consulted with on the final version of the process or the documentation.
 - The flow of communication between partners has not been as open as we would like.