

Sarina Russo Job Access Approved Provider Process

Instructions & Application Form



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INSTRUCTIONS PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Dear potential partner,

The introduction of Prime Contracting in recent years has dramatically changed how the Public Sector procures services in the arena of education, training and employment-related services. As with any major industrial change, this has not been a painless process by any means and many lessons have been learned along the way.

Some of these lessons have been crystallised in the form of DWP's Code of Conduct and the imminent roll-out of the Merlin Standard. It is quite right that organisations that make a tender commitment to working with certain partners should see that commitment through. In this vein, Sarina Russo Job Access will continue to deliver services through a supply chain of appropriate partners and subcontractors, an approach that has seen over 9,000 young people referred to our Community Task Force contracts – 50% to Sarina Russo Job Access delivery teams and 50% to our network of subcontractors.

Similarly, it is quite right that organisations who are engaging supply chains should do so openly and fairly – with clear communication of opportunities, transparent and objective evaluation, and clear and full feedback for unsuccessful applicants. However, as a Flexible New Deal subcontractor ourselves, we are aware of the frustration of submitting the same information in different Expression of Interest forms to 20 or more Prime Contractors. At Sarina Russo Job Access, we have tried different ways of balancing the need for a fair and open process for selecting subcontractors against a desire to keep the process as simple and streamlined as possible. We have taken feedback from many of our partners and subcontractors to develop this – our new Approved Provider Process.

Our Approved Provider Process has been designed to reduce the duplication that potential partners need to go through. Our vision is that, once an organisation has successfully passed our Approved Provider Process, they will never need to fill out an Expression of Interest form for us ever again. In reality, this may be over ambitious, as we may well need additional details to select subcontractors for different contracting opportunities. Nonetheless, we hope this will go a long way to cutting the cost and time spent in bureaucracy for the 200+ organisations that have expressed an interest in working with us over the past 2 years.

As an organisation, Sarina Russo Job Access has always tried to provide feedback as part of our subcontractor application processes. It goes without saying that the feedback we have provided hasn't always met with agreement! Nonetheless, we believe that it is in our interests to help potential partners to make their applications as good as they can be – as this helps us in turn to make well-informed, consistent decisions as to who can best support us in achieving our aims of helping people back into long-term employment.



With this in mind, I actively encourage you to contact me and provide your feedback on our Approved Provider Process. I am aware that we are asking a wide range of questions, some of which may require a more detailed response than we have asked for in the past. It is our hope, though, that this will pay off in the longer term by minimising duplication in the months and years to come. Whether we succeed or not, only you can tell. So please do get in touch and help us to make this process work for everyone – helping us to streamline our supply chain selection, helping you to more effectively promote your unique services, and ultimately helping more jobseekers to find out how to get that job.

Thanks for your interest and I look forward to hearing from you.

Phil Dack
Head of Business Development
Sarina Russo Job Access
Email: dackp@sarinarusso.co.uk

INSTRUCTIONS PART 2: APPROVED PROVIDER PROCESS

- 2.1 Sarina Russo Job Access is on the DWP Framework for Employment Related Support Services in the following regions:
- London
 - South East
 - West Midlands
- 2.2 We are looking for organisations to join our supply chain and help us to deliver a wide range of provision to secure long-term sustainable job outcomes for unemployed customers in these areas. Our new Approved Provider Process has been designed to allow you to present your key strengths and expertise while allowing us to be confident that our supply chain partners are robust, legitimate organisations.

Who is Sarina Russo Job Access?

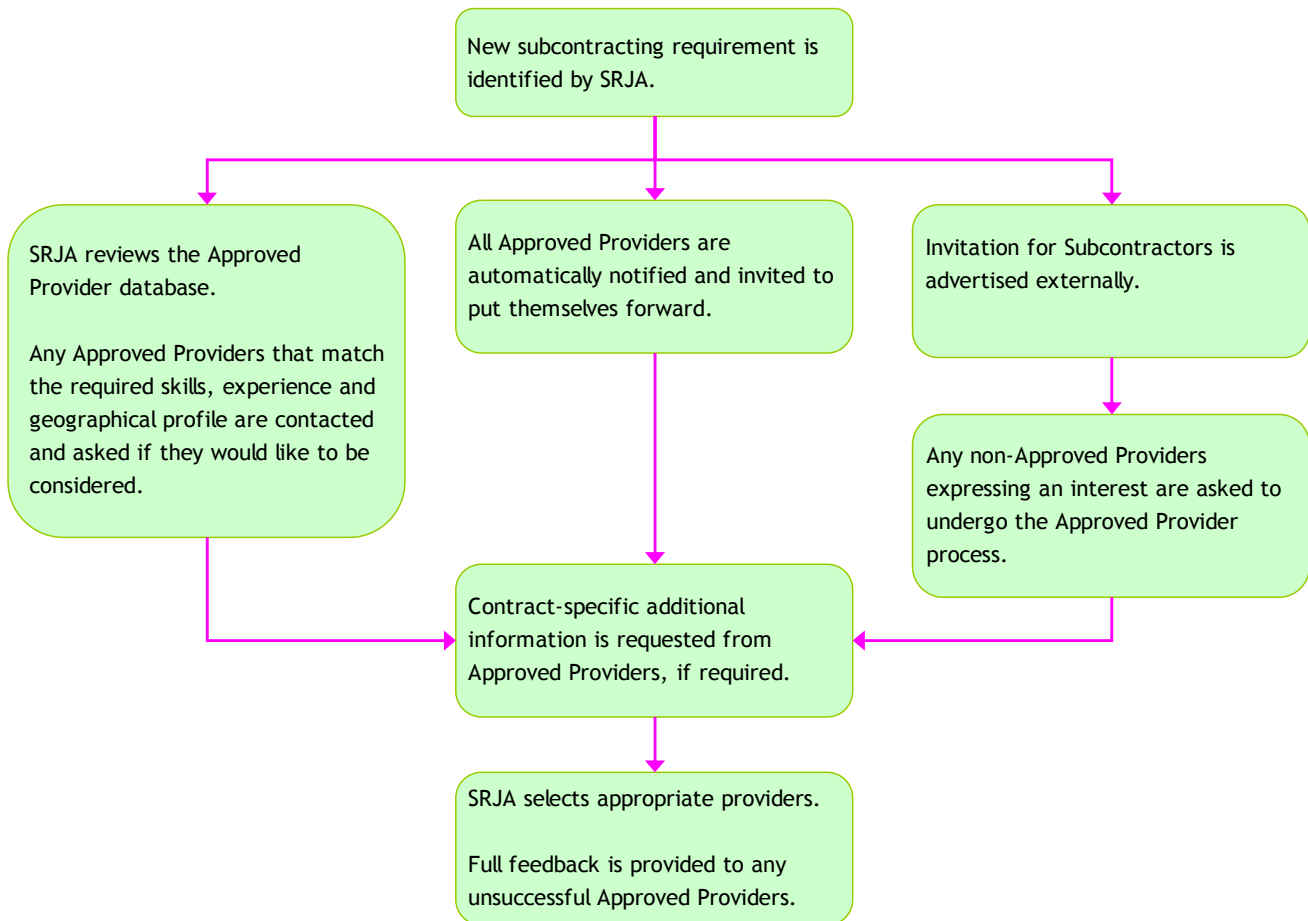
- 2.3 The Sarina Russo Group has been a leader in education, training and recruitment for 31 years, beginning with humble origins when Sarina Russo started her first vocational typing school in 1979. Sarina Russo Job Access is now one of the largest welfare-to-work providers in Australia, having helped over 1150,000 customers into work and assisted 100,000 employers since 2003.
- 2.4 Through the Group, we have developed a unique model of integrated services.
- Sarina Russo Apprenticeship Services Serviced over 94,000 apprentices across 600 training qualifications.
 - Our employer offer combines welfare to work recruitment with commercial support delivered through Russo Recruitment.
 - Sarina Russo Schools Australia educate 5,000 students from 40 countries annually in Business, hospitality, Tourism and English language courses.
 - Russo Higher Education has educated over 3,000 students from 66 countries in foundation programs, undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses since 2006.
- 2.5 Sarina Russo Job Access has been delivering services to jobseekers in the UK for the last 12 months, having opened a network of 15 delivery sites and recruited more than 100 staff to deliver FND and Community Task Force provision since October 2009. Our vision is to develop our international expertise to provide high-performing services tailored for the UK labour market.

What is the SRJA Approved Provider Process?

- 2.6 The Sarina Russo Job Access Approved Provider Process is designed to streamline the process for responding to subcontracting opportunities under the DWP Framework and other future employment, education and training contracts.
- 2.7 Our Approved Provider Process has been designed to mirror the DWP Framework for the provision of Employment Related Support Services. It allows us to pre-identify a wide range of potential suppliers, all of whom have proven that they have the credentials required to deliver services that can support Sarina Russo Job

Access. This then, in turn, allows SRJA to respond quickly to changing local requirements by drawing on this pool of expertise.

2.8 In the past, SRJA has asked potential partners to submit an Expression of Interest for each new contracting opportunity. This has been replaced with the Approved Provider Process. Once an organisation has been approved, they will automatically be considered for all future contracting opportunities as set out in the diagram below:



2.9 Becoming an Approved Provider means that you will automatically be considered for any future partnership opportunities we may have, including call-off contracts and the opportunity to collaborate in tendering for contracts. In addition, as set out above, where your skills and geographical presence directly meet our requirement, we will contact you to ensure that you're aware of our requirements and encourage you to put your name forward.

2.10 For most opportunities, we will have to ask Approved Providers to give us some additional information. This may be as little as confirming the price of a service, or we may have to ask you to complete a series of detailed questions relating to specific services that we want to buy. Please be reassured that we will keep any further questions to the bare minimum.

2.11 Being an Approved Provider does not mean that you are guaranteed to secure a contract with us. However, it does mean that you will not need to fill out a new Expression of Interest form for each new opportunity that arises.

Advertising for Opportunities

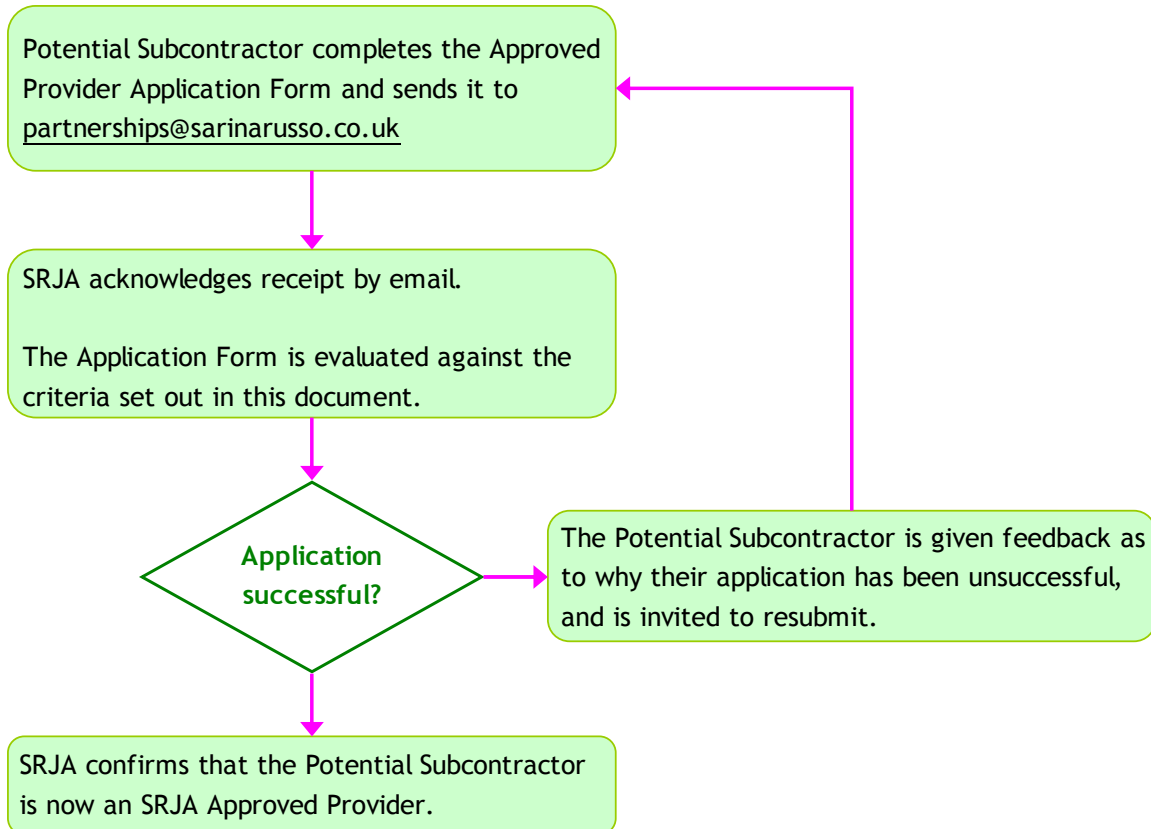
- 2.12 All subcontracting opportunities will automatically be advertised both to our Approved Providers and externally. However, any external applicants will need to complete the Approved Provider application process before being considered.
- 2.13 For call-off services and specialist provision, where SRJA Approved Providers already have the necessary skills and expertise, we reserve the right to contract within our Approved Provider supply chain without advertising externally. However, where this is the case, all organisations who match our requirements will be notified and given the chance to respond to the opportunity.

Deadline for Completion

- 2.14 The Sarina Russo Job Access Approved Provider Process is an open opportunity for organisations to submit an interest in working with us. There is no deadline for completing the application, and the process will remain open indefinitely.
- 2.15 For practical reasons, we may need to set specific deadlines in respect of particular partnership opportunities. Where this is the case, organisations who submit their applications after this date may not be evaluated in time to be considered for that specific opportunity.

INSTRUCTIONS PART 3: APPROVED PROVIDER EVALUATION

3.1 The overall Approved Provider evaluation process is as set out below:



3.2 Approved Provider Applications should be submitted by email, as set out in *Next Steps*, on page 14. Applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received.

3.3 Approved Provider Applications will be scored with an overall Pass/Fail, with each question being marked as Essential, Required or Added-Value.

- **Essential** questions require a thorough answer where appropriate and poor answers may lead to you failing the approved provider process.
- **Required** questions must be completed and will be marked, but poor answers may not fail the process outright.
- **Added-value** questions allow you to supply additional information that may support your case in becoming an approved provider or may affect what opportunities we will consider you for. Most of these questions are scored, but are unlikely to affect the overall outcome of the evaluation.

Our Criteria

3.4 The Approved Provider Process is designed to help us identify organisations that can make a real contribution to helping thousands of jobseekers into work as part of our supply chain. As such we are looking for:

- Evidence that organisations are legally constituted and that they have a legitimate trading history.
- Evidence that organisations are in sound financial health.
- Evidence that organisations provide services that would be beneficial within the context of employment-related services and an understanding of where organisations currently provide their services.
- Evidence that organisations have a track record of delivering effective provision and meeting their contractual targets.
- Evidence that organisations have appropriate management and monitoring procedures in place.

3.5 For organisations seeking a significant subcontracting role, we will look for additional information, including evidence of potential working capital and confirmation of their knowledge and experience of TUPE-related matters. Organisations who do not provide this information can still become Approved Providers, but may be restricted in respect of which subcontracting opportunities they can pursue.

3.6 As with any application of this type, we will only evaluate information provided in the Approved Provider application form. **Please do not send marketing material** or any other Expression of Interest forms, as we will not consider these.

Existing Subcontractors

3.7 Sarina Russo Job Access is already working with a number of subcontractors. As our Approved Provider process is a new way of managing our supply chains, we would request that if you are one of our current subcontractors, please **do** complete the Approved Provider form. However, you do not need to provide information relating to any SRJA subcontracts as we will automatically take this into account in determining the outcome of the Approved Provider process.

Unsuccessful Applications

3.8 Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email, including a breakdown of how they have scored for each question. If requested, we are happy to provide additional individual feedback to further clarify our decisions.

3.9 Unsuccessful applicants can reapply at any time. There is no limit to the number of times you can apply to be an Approved Provider.

INSTRUCTIONS PART 4: HOW TO COMPLETE THIS FORM

- 4.1 Organisations wishing to become a Sarina Russo Job Access Approved Provider should complete the enclosed application form as comprehensively as possible.
- 4.2 Please follow the instructions to ensure you fill out all appropriate sections, concisely but with enough detail to allow us to show why you would make an excellent partner for SRJA.
- 4.3 As highlighted in instructions paragraph 3.3, some questions are marked as being “Added Value”. If you do not complete these questions, it is unlikely to affect whether or not you are successful in achieving Approved Provider status. However, you may be precluded from certain contracting opportunities until that information is provided.
- 4.4 We understand that certain questions will not be relevant or appropriate for your organisation to complete. Where this is the case, we would request that you write “N/a” to show that you have read and acknowledged the question and not simply missed it. If space permits, a short explanation might also be valuable.

Word Limits

- 4.5 Answers should be concise throughout. We are not applying any strict word limit, as we would rather select organisations on the basis of their skills and experience, rather than on their writing skills. However, we have provided guideline limits for most questions – if your response is significantly over this, you should consider how you can make your point more concisely.

A short, well-evidenced answer is easier to read – and as a result is more likely to attract a high score!

- 4.6 We reserve the right to reject applications that significantly exceed the word limits. Where that is the case, we will provide you with specific feedback so that you can resubmit at the earliest opportunity.

Page layout, Margins, Paragraph-spacing and Fonts

- 4.7 Our Application Form has not been protected in any way, so if you wish to adjust any of the formatting settings you are able to do so. However, we have designed the form with our own specific requirements in mind and any changes that make it more difficult for us to evaluate your answers may affect your chances of success.
- 4.8 In particular, when pasting text from other documents into this application form, we recommend that you use the ‘Paste Special’ function found in most Word Processor programs. This will allow you to Copy and Paste information as unformatted text, which minimises the risk of you accidentally affecting the formatting of the overall Application Form.
- 4.9 The document has been set up in such a way to suggest the amount of space you might want to take for your responses. If you do need to add extra rows to tables or increase the space of any text boxes, please feel free to do so.

Section 1: Organisation Details

- 4.10 This section will provide us with basic and legal information about your organisation. Please follow the instructions and complete the sections relevant to you.

Section 2: Financial Information

- 4.11 This section includes questions relating to your recent financial history. SRJA will evaluate financial risk for all applicants, including whether we consider your organisation suitable for contracting using outcome-related funding. Financial information will be investigated further during Due Diligence checks for any organisations with whom we wish to contract.
- 4.12 Organisations will be evaluated using criteria similar to those published by DWP in their Framework for Employment Related Support Services, including an assessment of your Acid Test ratio and Debt ratio. The results of this evaluation will not directly affect your Approved Provider status, but may limit the opportunities that we consider you suitable for.
- 4.13 We understand that some organisations will not be able to answer all of these questions for various reasons. Where that is the case, we would request that you use the space available to write a short explanation or use the designator “n/a” to clearly indicate that you have acknowledged the question and not simply missed it.

Section 3: Delivery Locations

- 4.14 This section requires you to provide information about your delivery locations. SRJA will use this information to map our anticipated need against your geographical service area.
- 4.15 We will not restrict organisations to opportunities that match their existing geographical presence. However, we are committed to identifying and supporting existing local businesses wherever possible.
- 4.16 If you are currently sourcing and opening new delivery locations, please provide as much detail as possible. However, please do **not** provide detail of any locations where you are “interested” in working but have not yet made firm commitments.
- 4.17 As with all of the Application form, this section will be reviewed in the context of the service you provide – so if, for example, you provide an online service, your lack of local delivery sites will not disadvantage your application in any way.

Section 4: Your Services

- 4.18 This section includes questions about the services your organisation offers, and your experience in delivering them. SRJA will evaluate how your organisations’ services can assist us in the delivery of contracts. We have grouped services into five broad categories:
- **Advice & Guidance** – please detail any experience you have of providing assessment and diagnostic services, as well as advice and guidance to help identify and overcome employment barriers, social exclusion issues and skills needs.
 - **Specialist Interventions** – please detail any experience you have either of supporting individuals from particular customer groups, or of providing services that help tackle specific needs. If you are interested in delivering

“end to end welfare to work” provision, you are not required to complete this question although it may improve your chances of being selected.

- **Employment Services** – please detail any experience you have of delivering services that help people get back to work. This may include employability training, job search provision, self-employment support and employer engagement services.
- **Vocational Training** – please detail any experience you have of providing training provision, particularly where that training is directly linked to genuine employment opportunities.
- **Other Services** – please detail any other services you provide that you believe could be valuable to Sarina Russo Job Access.

4.19 **“End to End welfare to work provision”** is a service whereby a single organisation takes responsibility for working with jobseekers on a case-management basis, identifying and resolving their barriers to work, linking with other specialist organisations as required and ultimately helping them into long-term sustainable employment. Organisations wishing to be considered for these opportunities must complete, as a minimum:

- Section 4.1 Assessment, Advice & Guidance
- Section 4.3 Employment-related Services

Section 5: Performance

4.20 This section asks for information on previous contracts your organisation has delivered. SRJA wants to know how well your organisation has performed in the past, so that we can anticipate performance on potential opportunities.

4.21 Please provide detail on as many contracts as you feel necessary to illustrate your experience. However, if we are aware of major contracts you deliver which have not been listed, we may come back to you for further information before concluding the evaluation.

4.22 Your responses to this question should clearly link back to the detail provided in Section 4 – e.g. if you’ve stated that you have experience of delivering Employment Services, we would expect to see at least one contract for Employment Services in this section to support that statement.

Section 6: Quality

4.23 This section asks questions about the policies and quality standards your organisation holds. SRJA is committed to working with organisations who value both their customers and employees.

4.24 Most of this section is Added-Value, meaning it is likely to have a minimal affect on your Approved Provider score. However, we do need to see that you have appropriate management and monitoring procedures in place, in order to give us confidence that you will deliver the services we require to the appropriate standards.

4.25 We want to determine the level of support we will need to put in place to ensure that our supply chain meets the Government’s rigorous data security standards. To do so, we require all applicants to complete the question relating to Data Security. A blank entry for this question will automatically cause the entire application to fail.

Section 7: Human Resources

- 4.26 This section asks questions about your human resources practices. SRJA wants to identify organisations who value and reward employees and understand the requirements for ensuring that the workplace is safe and secure for both customers and staff
- 4.27 The questions relating to TUPE and Pensions are not scored for the Approved Provider process. However, any organisations wishing to be considered for large scale subcontracts or “end to end welfare to work” will need to complete these.

Section 8: Health & Safety

- 4.28 This section asks questions about the health and safety processes within your organisation. Minor issues will not affect the results of your Approved Provider application process, but should be explained in full.

Section 9: Equality & Diversity

- 4.29 This section asks for information about employee diversity and what your organisation has done to implement it. Some of the information here is collected as part of our commitment to monitoring the diversity of our supply chain. However, we do expect our partners to have appropriate diversity monitoring systems in place and a clear commitment to improving equality across their organisations.

Questions

- 4.30 If you have any questions in respect of the Approved Provider process, or require some assistance in completing the Application Form, please do not hesitate to contact us by email at partnerships@sarinarusso.co.uk. Whenever possible, we will respond within 48 hours to any questions you may have.
- 4.31 If necessary, we will collate a Frequently Asked Questions which we will publish on our website alongside our Approved Provider documentation.
- 4.32 The application form has been created using MSWord 2003 and may not present correctly using other Word Processing software. If you are using any other software and are having problems using the document, please get in touch and we will try to accommodate you.

INSTRUCTIONS PART 5: NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Please submit your completed Approved Provider application form by emailing it to:
partnerships@sarinarusso.co.uk
- 5.2 We will contact you within due course to let you know the outcome of your application. If you are successful, we will then contact you in relation to specific tendering opportunities as and when they occur. If you are unsuccessful, you will be provided full feedback and can resubmit at any time.
- 5.3 If you have any feedback on this form, or would like any assistance on completing any section of it, please don't hesitate to contact our business development team on the above email address.

The sooner you submit your application, the sooner we can evaluate it and the more opportunity you will have to resubmit if necessary.

Design Notes

- 5.4 Thank you in advance for completing our Approved Provider Application form. We understand that it does take time and effort on your part and we've tried to keep the form as short and simple as possible whilst capturing all the information we need to develop a strong and lasting supply chain.
- 5.5 We have drawn on best practice from a range of source materials to develop our Approved Provider process, including:
- DWP Accredited Provider process
 - Office of Government Commerce Standard Pre Qualification Questionnaire
 - DWP Pre Qualification Questionnaires, including Flexible New Deal and Framework for Employment Related Support Services
 - LSC / SFA Qualified Provider Framework
 - DWP Standard Information Sharing template
 - Previous SRJA Expressions of Interest
- 5.6 In designing this process, our aim was that any organisation that has completed two or more of the above in the past 2 years should be able to provide the vast majority of the information requested in our Approved Provider application form with no difficulty. If this is not the case, please do let us know so that we can improve our processes in the future.

Approved Provider Form Version Update Notes

Version Number	Changes
2.1	Amended submission date for Work Programme, plus spelling / grammar corrections.
2.2	Amended submission details. Added version control.
2.3	Amended references to Work Programme and email address
3.0	Revised document and separated Instructions and Application form into 2 documents. Added new paragraph 4.17 for clarification.