

## **Prison Libraries – Q&A**

*Will there be a separate Libraries webinar as discussed previously?*

1. We posted a message about future prison library provision on Bravo on 24 November 2017, and had assumed that this would answer most queries. Thus, we set aside our plans to run a separate Libraries webinar.
2. However, it is clear that many questions still remain. That means we have concluded that a specific separate Libraries webinar could add value and will arrange that for early January.

*What are the plans for future prison library provision?*

3. Where both parties are happy with the current delivery arrangements, with a Service Level Agreement formalising the relationship, we have suggested to governors that they extend any SLAs that do not already run to 31 March 2019 to that date.
4. We will include library services in our education procurement activity. Doing so gives us some protection for the future should current providers pull out, gives governors options should they be unhappy with their current provider's service, and enables new and existing library providers to enter the prison library delivery market.
5. We expect our procurement processes to be complete next summer, allowing governors time to make decisions, including through a procurement process, about who will provide prison library services from April 2019.
6. To be clear, governors who want to continue the arrangement with a Public Library Authority from April 2019 can, where the Public Library Authority is content to do so, simply put in place a successor Service Level Agreement for the ongoing delivery of a prison library service.

*If a governor wants to continue with an SLA for libraries do we still have to prepare tender documents?*

7. Governors may choose to clarify aspects of the service being offered by a Public Library Authority as part of a future Service Level Agreement, but no formal procurement process is needed.

*Should library providers attend the procurement launch events?*

8. That would be a matter for library providers to decide: those who decide to come will be very welcome. Public Library Authorities who do not wish to extend their activity beyond the prisons in which they currently deliver may feel that para 6 above gives them sufficient comfort not to attend. Any Public Library Authorities who aim to continue delivering but through a contract rather than a Service Level Agreement will need to engage with the procurement process, of course.
9. Organisations that are not contracting authorities holding 'objectives in common' with the Ministry of Justice will not be able to continue prison library

delivery via a Service Level Agreement after March 2019. They will need to engage with the procurement process.

10. Local Authorities are specifically included in the definition of “contracting authorities” in The Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Organisations who are not clear whether they are a contracting authority in those Regulations or whether they meet the ‘objectives in common’ criterion should contact Richard Ward ([richard.ward1@justice.gov.uk](mailto:richard.ward1@justice.gov.uk), cc’ing Michelle Oliver - [michelle.j.oliver@noms.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.j.oliver@noms.gsi.gov.uk)) to arrange for their circumstances to be clarified.

*Are there any plans for further documented guidance on prison libraries outside of the main ITT?*

11. No, but we will keep this under review should further issues arise.

*As Governors have the flexibility of choosing to procure Libraries either from the PEF or the DPS, does this mean that providers need to bid twice for each Framework?*

12. We are reconsidering whether it is appropriate to offer both procurement routes for this service.

*Will Libraries be in Lots?*

13. Where prison library services are procured via the Prison Education Framework, that procurement will be in the prison group Lots. Governors securing Public Library Authority delivery of library services through a Service Level Agreement will make that arrangement at establishment level.