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To: All Welfare to Work providers

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Dear Welfare to Work Provider,

The Invitation to Tender (ITT) for DWP's Community Work Placements initiative was, as you will be aware, published in October.

I would like to take the opportunity of this commissioning exercise and others to follow, to remind you of the importance and benefits of using the standard Expression of Interest (EOI) in the selection of your delivery partners.

The new electronic EOI template was launched in April 2013, and is available for completion and to view via the Merlin Standard website <http://www.merlinstandard.co.uk/search-eoi-beta.php>.

It was developed by ERSA and other representatives of the Welfare to Work sector as a standard document that can be used by all prime contractors, to avoid placing resource intensive demands on sub-contractors to complete numerous different EOIs.

Completion and storage of the standard EOI on the Merlin website brings the added benefit of a search facility - an easy way for prime providers and subcontractors to identify suitable delivery partners. A search function is attached to the EOI database, whereby the database can be searched by a wide variety of criteria such as location, contracts held and services offered. This can be used by organisations wishing to identify delivery partners to produce a schedule of organisations meeting the selected criteria. Online access to the full EOI can then be requested by the click of a button beside each listed organisation.

Previous correspondence on 9th May, followed by another on 29th July was issued through the DWP CCSD Business Management Team to existing Prime contractors, to strongly encourage use of the standard EOI.

It is a practical way in which prime contractors can demonstrate delivery of the principles of the Merlin Standard that will be taken into account in future assessments, specifically providing evidence of good practice against element 2c.6:

'... the requirements of Supply Chain Partners have been taken into account in pre and post contract award processes...'

It is concerning to hear of instances where the standard EOI is not being used, and I would urge you to act now, if you have not already, to embed this industry developed best practice into commercial processes. If you feel that the EOI is not suitable for your purposes, I should be grateful if you would feedback any omissions or deficiencies you feel the current version has.

Please contact Monya Ladipo on 0207 449 7278 or Jane Malbasa on 0207 449 7711 of the DWP Merlin Team if you would like any clarification or to talk through the detail.

Barry Clarke
