

Research to inform JLA/ Washstation acquisition

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2. Executive summary

Background and methodology

Managed laundry providers offer rentals or sales agreements to customers who require a bulk laundry service on site. This could include customers from sectors such as care homes, schools, or hotels, but the focus of this research is on Higher Education (universities, colleges and student accommodation providers).

The company JLA/Circuit acquired Washstation on 18 May 2017. The merger was referred to the CMA for an in-depth phase 2 inquiry. A need for research with HE customers has been identified to understand more about their product and service needs, buying process and diversion options available to them.

Key findings

- JLA/Circuit hold a leading position in this market, with relatively little competition. There are a few other providers (many owned by JLA) and there is some overlap between JLA and others in a small minority of cases.
- JLA/Circuit and Washstation have technology to offer a range of payment methods and online services, which other suppliers appear not to offer in most cases.
- Variable rental agreements with commission are most common, but a minority use fixed rental agreements. The exact level of commission on a variable rental agreement varies a great deal with an average of c.a. 40%.
- The selection process method is split between those using formal tenders and those using invitations for a quote. Just less than half roll over the existing contract.
- Price, maintenance of machines/service and previous good experience with the provider are key decision making criteria.
- JLA/Circuit have a good reputation and technology, but are seen as more expensive and there are some reports of service issues. Washstation offer better commission, but poorer coverage. Other suppliers are perceived to lack the technology and experience in the sector.
- Most say they would consider suppliers new to the HE sector, but views are mixed on whether they would consider suppliers not offering a variable rental agreement.
- There is some awareness of the merger and concerns about reduced competition.

3. Introduction

Research objectives

The overarching objective was to inform the inquiry into the acquisition of Washstation by JLA/Circuit. More specifically, the purpose of the research was:

- To understand **which laundry providers are used**, the extent of supplier overlap and number of sites;
- To ascertain the **types of contract** used and **services** provided;
- To understand the **procurement process**, what triggers it and what the selection criteria are;
- To gauge **views on suppliers** in the market and satisfaction with existing suppliers;
- To identify potential barriers to market entry;
- To understand **views on the merger** and its likely impact on the sector.

Methodology

A Computer Aided Telephone Interview (CATI) method was chosen as an effective way to conduct this research.

A questionnaire was developed in partnership with the CMA and shared with merger Parties for comments. Prior to main fieldwork commencing, a number of soft launch interviews were conducted to check flow, length and content of the questionnaire and as no substantive changes were made these were included in the full sample.

Sample

The CMA provided contact details and other information for the target population provided by the two merger Parties and third-party suppliers:

- all JLA/Circuit customers with a contract starting in January 2016 or later;
- all Washstation, Armstrong, Goodman Sparks and Photo-Me customers provided.

The sampling unit was individual customers. Sample records were de-duplicated both within and across supplier customer lists to ensure that only unique contacts for each customer record were included in the sample.

A handful of customers were removed from the sample records. These were the customers whom the CMA subsequently directly approached for information.

After de-duplication and removals, 314 records were loaded (table 1).

All customers in the sample were approached for interview, and interviews focussed on the most recent contract.

Table 1: Total sample (after de-duplication and removals)

Base: total sample (314)

Completed interviews	59
Unused / unusable sample	214
Live sample	151
Unusable	14
Non qualifier	38
Unreachable	7
Respondent does not meet criteria	4
Refusals	41
No time/ Hung up	3
Don't take part in MR/ refusal by secretary	1
Other refusal reason	37

A total of 59 interviews were completed (figure 1).

Figure 1: Completes by contract date



Participation criteria

All respondents were involved in or most knowledgeable about choosing a laundry provider on behalf of an HE organisation, a private student accommodation provider or a company managing student accommodation on behalf of others.

Measures were in place to ensure respondents only took part in the survey once.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork took place between 14th May and 4th June, and interviews lasted for an average of 33 minutes.

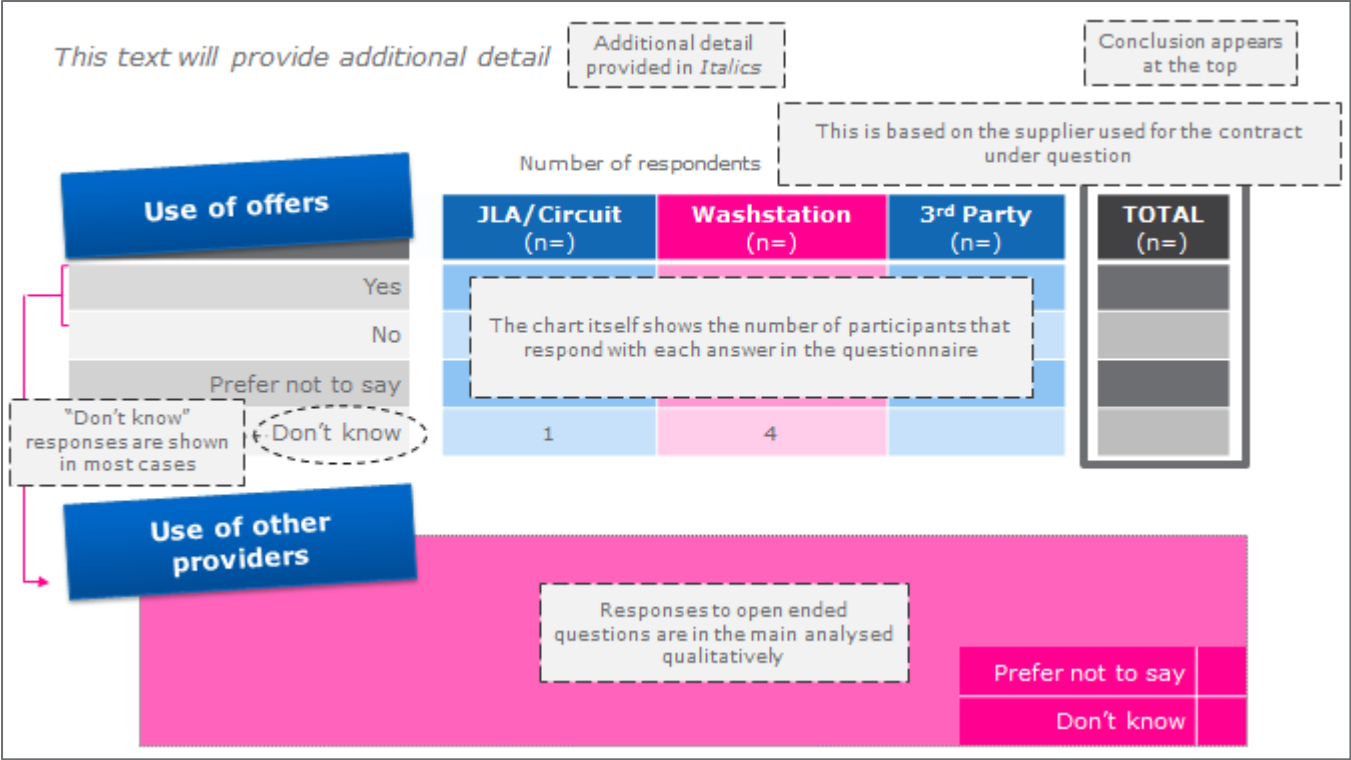
In total 59 telephone interviews were completed, comprising:

- 41 contracts with JLA/Circuit;
- 10 contracts with Washstation;
- 7 contracts with Armstrong;
- and, 1 contract with Goodman Sparks.

Presentation of results

The charts shown in this report take the format below (figure 2).

Figure 2: report format



Note that data is shown as number of respondents throughout.

Respondent profile

A total of 59 respondents were spoken to across a mix of HE organisations and private student accommodation providers (table 2).

Table 2: Organisations spoken to

Base: all respondents (59)

Type	ILA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	TOTAL (n=59)
A university or college	23	6	7	36
A private student accommodation provider	15	3	1	19
A company managing student accommodation on behalf of others e.g. on behalf of a university	3	0	0	3
Other	0	1	0	1

S01. Can I check is your organisation...?

4. Use of laundry providers

In terms of usage of suppliers for laundry services, there is some overlap between JLA/Circuit and other suppliers in just a few instances (table 3).

Table 3: Providers used

Base: all respondents (59)

Number of respondents				
Provider	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	TOTAL (n=59)
JLA/Circuit	41	3	1	45
Washstation	3	10	0	13
Armstrong	1	0	7	8
Goodman Sparks	0	0	1	1
Other	1	0	0	1

Q01a Which laundry provider(s) does your organisation use to offer laundry services to students?

In terms of the number of sites the supplier is used for, the majority are used on less than 10 sites, with just over half using on 5 sites or fewer (table 4).

Table 4: Site usage

Base: all respondents (59)

Number of respondents				
Number of sites	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	TOTAL (n=59)
1	9	3	4	16
2-5	15	4	3	22
6-10	10	2	0	12
11-15	3	0	1	4
16-20	0	0	0	0
More than 20 sites	4	1	0	5
Don't know	0	0	0	0

Q02. On how many sites do you use...?

5. Recent contract and tender information

When asked how many of their laundry rooms were covered by their contract (i.e. the most recent contract with their laundry provider), most stated that fewer than 10 laundry rooms were covered in each contract. In terms of the number of washing machines and dryers in these rooms, this varied a great deal (table 5).

Table 5: Number of laundry rooms and washing machines & dryers

Base: Q06, Q07 all respondents (59)

Number of respondents				
Number of laundry rooms	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	TOTAL (n=59)
1	6	3	2	11
2-5	16	4	4	24
6-10	11	2	1	14
11-15	4	0	1	5
16-20	1	0	0	1
More than 20	3	1	0	4
Don't know	0	0	0	0
Laundry rooms				
Number of machines/ dryers	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	TOTAL (n=59)
Fewer than 10	7	1	4	12
10-19	7	5	3	15
20-29	7	0	0	7
30-39	4	1	0	5
40 or more	14	3	1	18
Don't know	2	0	0	2
Washing machines & dryers				

Q06 And how many of your laundry rooms are covered by this contract?

Q07. In total, how many washing machines and dryers are in these laundry rooms?

In terms of payment methods and online services, a range of these are offered by JLA/Circuit and Washstation, but not by other providers (table 6).

Table 6: Payment methods and online services

Base: Q08, Q09 all respondents (59)

Number of respondents				
Payment method	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	TOTAL (n=59)
Pre-paid/top-up cards	31	8	0	39
Online payment	18*	4	0	22
Cash	13	1	7	21
Mobile payment	19	1	0	20
Debit or credit card	7	1	0	8
Tokens	3	0	1	4
Other payment method	0	0	0	0
No payment is required (free to use)	2	0	1	3
Online services	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	TOTAL (n=59)
Checking the availability of machines online	30	6	0	36
Online payments	30	6	0	36
Receiving SMS or email alerts when washing is finished	12	0	0	12
None of the above	8	1	8	17
Don't know	0	0	0	0

* 17 of these 18 JLA/Circuit customers state that they use online payments in the context of available online services (Q09)

Several respondents who had not selected online payments in the context of "payment methods" at Q08, went on to explain that users had the option of topping up [pre-paid cards] online, and therefore selected online payments in the context of "online services" at Q09.

Q08. Which payment methods are available to users of these laundry rooms?

Q09. Which of the following online services, if any, are available to users of these laundry rooms?

When asked about agreement types, most respondents state that most of their agreements are variable rental agreements with a minority of fixed rental agreements (table 7).

The 3 Washstation customers who claim to be on fixed agreements all said they would be 'very likely' to consider a provider that doesn't offer variable rental agreements (VRA).

In terms of fees, one respondent said they pay £120 as a regular monthly fee, but others did not know.

Table 7: Agreement type

Base: varying respondents responding to questions (see notes below table)

Type of agreement	Number of respondents			TOTAL (n=59)
	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	
Fixed rental agreement*	6	3	0	9
of which pay regular fee	5	1	0	6
Variable rental agreement	33	7	7	47
of which receive commission	31	7	7	45
Sales agreement	1	0	1	2
of which pay regular fee	0	0	0	0
Don't know	1	0	0	1

* 7 of the 9 respondents who stated that they had a 'fixed rental agreement' are on a variable rental agreement according to the Parties' sample information, indicating a degree of confusion concerning the type of agreement. All respondents on a variable rental agreement according to the Parties' sample information also state that they are on a variable rental agreement in the survey.

Q10 Thinking about the contract with <PROVIDER>, which started <DATE>, what type of agreement is it? Base: All respondents, n=59

Q11a Do you receive a commission from <PROVIDER>? Base: All respondents with variable rental agreement, n=47

Q11b What level of commission do you receive, expressed as a percentage of the total amount that end-users pay? Base: All respondents receiving a commission, n=45

Q12 Do you pay a regular fee to <PROVIDER>? Base: All respondents not on variable rental agreement, n=11

Q13 What is the fee that you pay to <PROVIDER>? Base: all respondents who pay a regular fee, n=6

In terms of the level of commission received, this varies a great deal by provider, from less than 5% up to 65% (table 8).

An average (mean) of 42% commission is received, with the most common answer given being 50% (given by 10). The highest level of commission stated is 65%.

Table 8: Commission received

Base: all respondents excluding don't knows (42)

Commission	Number of respondents			TOTAL (n=42)
	JLA/Circuit (n=29)	Washstation (n=6)	3 rd Party (n=7)	
5% or less	2	0	1	3
6%-30%	7	0	3	10
31%-50%	11	4	2	17
>50%	9	2	1	12

Q11b. Which level of commission do you receive, expressed as a percentage of the total amount that end users pay?

Table 9: Commission received by selection process

Base: Q11b all respondents excluding don't knows (37) / Q16a all respondents who state a level of commission they receive (37)

Commission	Number of participants			TOTAL (n=37)
	Provider selection process			
	Extend with existing provider (n=13)	Invite to tender (n=15)	Get Quotes (n=9)	
5% or less	1	1	1	3
6%-30%	6	2	2	10
31%-50%	5	3	5	13
>50%	1	9	1	11

Q11b. Which level of commission do you receive, expressed as a percentage of the total amount that end users pay?

Q16a Which of these best describes the process that you went through to select a provider?

6. Last procurement process

Procurement trigger

Procurement is most likely to be triggered by needing additional laundry services, but also because the previous contract expired (table 10).

Table 10: Triggers for procurement

Base: Q14, Q15 all respondents (59)

Trigger for procurement exercise	Number of participants			TOTAL (n=59)
	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	
Previous contract expired	13	4	4	21
Needed student laundry services on a new/additional site	14	4	2	20
Upgrade of sites/ machines required	5	1	1	7
Dissatisfied with previous provider	3	1 (Circuit mentioned)	3 (1 × Circuit mentioned)	7
Bringing all sites/contracts in line	2	0	0	2
Approach directly by a laundry provider	1	0	0	1
Other (incl. review of costs, procurement driven, student complaints)	6	1	0	7
Don't know	1	0	1	2

*21 of the 59 respondents referred to paperwork relating to the decision making/procurement exercise during the interview

Q14 Can I check whether you have the paperwork relating to this exercise in front of you?

Q15 What was the trigger for this exercise?

Selection criteria used

The top 3 selection criteria mentioned are high quality of maintenance service, good price and previous good experience. Previous good experience as a selection criterion is mentioned more often for JLA/Circuit (table 11).

Table 11: Selection criteria used

Base: all respondents (59)

Selection criteria	Number of participants			TOTAL (n=59)
	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	
Provider selection criteria (unprompted)				
High quality of maintenance service (incl. speed of repairs)	14	6	3	23
Previous good experience of the provider	14	1	2	17
Good price (e.g. commission, monthly rental amount, sale price of machine)	9	5	1	15
Other aspect of student experience	7	0	2	9
High quality/efficiency of the machines	4	2	1	7
Good price charged to students	3	1	1	5
Offers your preferred student payment methods	3	1	1	5
Online services for students	3	2	0	5
Experience of providing laundry services	3	0	0	3
Offers refurbishment of laundry rooms	1	1	0	2
Other, e.g. incumbent provider (x2), added value (x2), upgrades to machines (x2), lack of alternatives, credit rating, coin operated	11	2	1	14
Don't know	2	1	2	5

Q21a What were the most important factors when choosing <PROVIDER> in preference to other providers?

The most important of these selection criteria are high quality of maintenance service and high quality/efficiency of machines (table 12).

Table 12: Importance of selection criteria

Base: all respondents (59)

Selection criteria	Number of participants												TOTAL (n=59)			
	JLA / Circuit (n=41)				Wash- station (n=10)				Other providers (n=8)							
4 essential; 3 very impt; 2 fairly impt; 1 Not impt	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
High quality of maintenance service (incl. speed of repairs)	19	17	5	0	7	2	0	0	6	1	0	0	32	20	5	0
High quality/efficiency of the machines	20	16	5	0	3	5	1	0	3	4	0	0	26	25	6	0
Good price charged to students (if any)	11	16	11	2	4	4	1	0	5	1	1	0	20	21	13	2
Experience of providing laundry services	13	20	7	0	3	5	1	0	3	3	1	0	19	28	9	0
Offers your preferred student payment methods	9	14	15	3	0	8	1	0	0	4	3	0	9	26	19	3
Good price (e.g. commission, monthly rental amount, sale price of machine)	4	21	9	6	3	5	1	0	2	3	1	1	9	29	11	7
Offers a variable rental agreement	7	15	9	8	1	3	1	3	1	2	3	1	9	20	13	12
Offers refurbishment of laundry rooms	6	13	16	6	1	2	4	2	2	3	0	1	9	18	20	9
Experience with other HE clients specifically	5	17	13	6	0	4	3	2	2	2	3	0	7	23	19	8

Essential defined as: 'Only use 'Essential' if the provider wouldn't have been appointed without this feature'.

Q21b I am now going to read out a list of features. For each one I'd like you to tell me how important it was when choosing which provider to appoint. Please use one of the phrases on the following scale to describe your answer ... 'Essential', 'very important', 'fairly important' or 'not important':

Overview of selection process used

In terms of the selection process used, rolling over the contract is given by about a third (private student accommodation providers particularly), with the others split between tenders and inviting for a quote (table 13).

Table 13: Selection process used

Base: all respondents (59)

Selection process	Number of participants						TOTAL (n=59)
	JLA/ Circuit (n=41)	Wash station0(n=10)	3rd Party (n=8)	University or college (n=36)	Private student accommodation provider (n=19)	Company managing student accommodation on behalf of others (n=3)	
Provider selection process							
Extend, rollover or recontract with your existing provider not considering alternatives	17	1	2	7	11*	2	20
Invite providers to tender	11	6	2	16	3	0	19
Consider more than one provider and get a quote from at least one of them	9	2	3	10	3	0	14
None of these**	2	0	1	1	1	1	3
Don't know	2	1	0	2	1	0	3
	Provider			Type of organisation			

*5 of the 11 private student accommodation providers who extended with their existing provider had a minimum of 30 washing machines and dryers in the laundry rooms covered by the contract in question.

**When asked 'which of these best describes the process that you went through to select a provider', six respondents originally selected 'none of these'. However, further questions about the nature of the procurement process revealed that some of those respondents in fact followed one of the three types of selection process listed at Q16a (i.e. rollover, tender or getting quotes directly). This applied to three out of six respondents, whose answers were re-coded after the interview.

Note that the base sizes for subsequent questions do not correspond with the figures in this table, as these respondents were asked follow up questions relevant to the type of procurement process they selected at Q16a

(Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Q16a Which of these best describes the process that you went through to select a provider?

Extend, rollover or recontract with your existing provider not considering alternatives

All respondents who extended/rolled over the contract with their existing provider were asked why they extended the contract with this existing provider (n=19).

A number of reasons were given, including:

- Satisfaction service standards: generally those who extend contracts receive a satisfactory service level from their current supplier, which means there is no real need to search around.

We only use Circuit, due to our comfort with them and our loyalty to the provider.

(Private student accommodation provider)

I am satisfied with all parts of the service provided by my existing provider, Circuit.

(University or college)

- Simplicity: the ease and simplicity of keeping the same supplier means that extending the contract is the most preferred option for some.

We were taking over the property, it was easy to continue with the existing contracts.

(Private student accommodation provider)

- Lack of other options: for others, there is simply a lack of other options available on the market, meaning the most viable option is to keep the same supplier.

We did not like the available alternatives. It was too high risk to run our own laundry service. Other providers do not offer the technical payment solutions that Circuit provides.

(Private student accommodation provider)

There is a lack of other options in the laundry provider marketplace.

(Private student accommodation provider)

Q16ai Why did you extend the contract with your existing provider? (Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Base: All respondents who extended/rolled over contract with existing provider, n=19

Invite providers to tender

Those who invite to tender tend to do so via open competition; where particular providers are invited, very few use framework agreements (table 14).

Table 14 – Invitation to tender / usage of framework agreements

Base: Q17 all respondents who tendered (17) / Q18 all respondents who tendered to a specific provider/set of providers (5)

		Number of participants			
Invite to tender		JLA/Circuit (n=10)	Washstation (n=5)	3 rd Party (n=2)	TOTAL (n=17)
	Open competition	5	3	0	8
	Particular provider/set of providers	2	2	1	5
	Something else	1	0	1	2
	Don't know	2	0	0	2
Use of framework agreement		JLA/Circuit (n=2)	Washstation (n=2)	3 rd Party (n=1)	TOTAL (n=5)
	Yes	0	1	0	1
	No	2	0	1	3
	Don't know	0	1	0	1

Q17 Did you invite a particular provider or set of providers to tender or was it an open competition?

Q18 Did you use a framework agreement?

JLA/Circuit was invited most often to take part in an ITT from a framework agreement (table 15).

Table 15: Provider consideration – customers who tendered and invited particular providers

Base: Q19 all respondents who used a framework agreement with a particular set of providers (1); Q20 all respondents not using a framework agreement and issued ITT to a particular set of providers (3)

Provider consideration	Number of participants	
	Use of framework agreement / Q19 (n=1)	ITT no framework agreement / Q20 (n=3)
Providers considered		
JLA/Circuit	0	3
Washstation	0	2
Armstrong	0	1 (Pre-merger)
Goodman Sparks	0	0
Other	1	2 (Armstrong, PHS)
Don't know	0	0
Procurement route		

Q16c

considered 1 provider: 3

considered 2 providers: 1

considered 3 providers: 1

considered 4 providers: 1

Q20

considered 2 providers: 1

considered 3 providers: 2

Q30:

considered 1 provider: 1

considered 2 providers: 10

considered 3 providers: 3

Q19 Which framework agreement did you use?

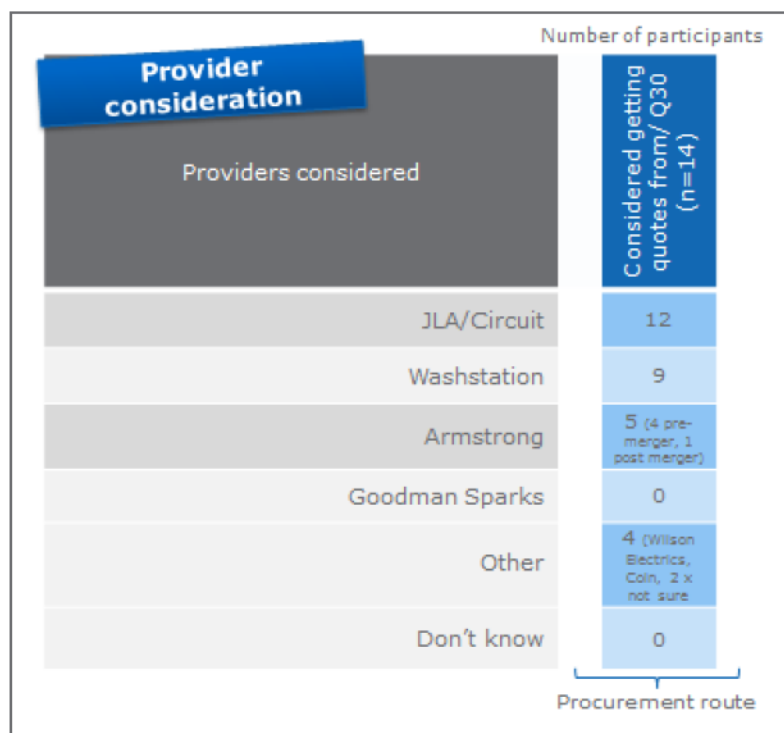
Q20 To which providers did you issue the invitation to tender?

Consider more than one provider and get a quote from at least one of those considered

JLA/Circuit was also most likely to be invited to quote (table 16).

Table 16: Provider consideration - considered getting quotes from

Base: all respondents who got quotes direct (14)



Q30 Which providers did you consider getting quotes from?

Alternative route

Respondents who stated that they used an alternative route to choose a provider were asked why they took this approach (n=6). The alternative route mentioned is a direct approach where no other providers are in consideration in the first instance.

A couple of reasons for this alternative route are given by those considering just one provider:

- Familiarity – for one organisation, they wanted to only approach a provider they were familiar with in the first instance. The building owner would then advise if they should approach others.

We would put forward a proposal from a laundry provider we were familiar with which would be reviewed by the building owner and then if they wanted us to approach other providers we would obtain other proposals.

(A company managing student accommodation on behalf of others)

- Visibility / experience – for another organisation, they only saw one provider, which had HE experience, and so only approached them.

We saw that they were a provider on the internet, a provider within other colleges and we decided to speak to them to see what they could offer and went with it.

(A university or college)

- Three responses do not describe an alternative approach.

Standard procurement process, which is so we're clear about what we need and so that they could have the opportunity to make us aware of the added value to the contract, something they thought may be beneficial, not already pointed out.

(A university or college)

We chose the three providers that we thought were the best. We had no guidance from anyone and asked existing providers for an updated proposal as to how they'd manage the sites.

(A university or college)

It was a continuation with someone else's contract. We had taken over the building, it was a new market for us as well, so it was easier to continue with the existing contract.

(A company managing student accommodation on behalf of others e.g. on behalf of a university)

Q16b Why did you take this approach? (Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Base: all respondents stating none of these at Q16a (6)

Table 17: Provider consideration – alternative procurement route

Base: all respondents stating “None of these” at Q16a (6)

Number of participants	
Provider consideration	Alternative procurement route / Q16c (n=6)
Providers considered	
JLA/Circuit	5
Washstation	2
Armstrong	2 (1 pre-merger, 1 post-merger)
Goodman Sparks	1
Other	2 (PHS, Laundry Serve)
Don't know	0
Procurement route	

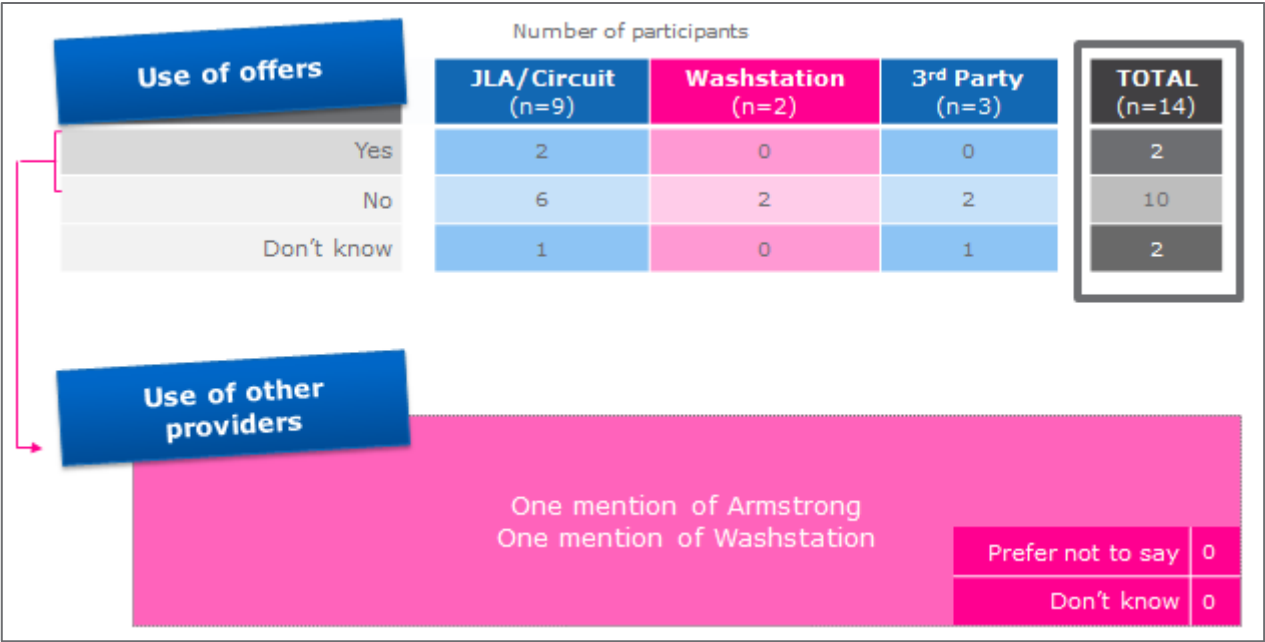
Q16c Which providers did you consider?

Usage of providers as a bargaining chip

Amongst those who get direct quotes from providers, using offers from other providers as a bargaining tool as a strategy to obtain better prices was only used twice (table 18). Amongst those who *do* use offers in this way, Armstrong and Washstation were the only providers mentioned (1 mention each).

Table 18: Use of offers

Base: Q40 all respondents who get quotes direct (14); Q41 all respondents who used another supplier as a bargaining tool (1)



Q40 During the negotiation process, did you use the actual or potential offer from one provider as a bargaining tool to obtain a better offer from another provider?

Q41 Which other provider(s)' offers did you use for this purpose?

7. Supplier assessment

Responding to ITTs

In terms of responding to ITTs, JLA/Circuit submitted the most bids but didn't meet requirements in all cases (table 19). 'Other' bidders named were both later said (in verbatim comments) to have been acquired by JLA/Circuit. There were no mentions at all for Goodman Sparks, Brewer & Bunney, Girbau, Photo-Me, Laundry 365, Wolf Laundry, LPD, Thain Commercial, Hughes, Electrolux Distributor and Miele Distributor.

In the table below we look at all who issued a tender and for each provider we identify if they submitted a bid, if it met requirements and if so whether they came first, second or third in the bid. For example JLA submitted a bid in all cases, but only met requirements in 12 and in these 12 cases they came first, 10 times and second, twice.

Table 19: Responding to ITTs

Base: Q22, Q23 all respondents who tendered (17) / Q25 all respondents who tendered with more than two bids submitted (8) / Q29 all respondents who tendered with more than two bids submitted (See table)

Bidders	Submitted bid / Q22 (n=17)	Met requirements / Q23 (n=17)	Came 1 st (from sample)	Came 2 nd / Q25 (n=8)	Came 3 rd / Q25 (n=2)
JLA/Circuit	17	12	10	2	-
Washstation	11	9	5	4	-
Armstrong	4 (3 pre, 1 post merger)	4	2	2	-
Other (PHS, Clean Machine, unknown)	6	4	-	-	2

Note: Q22 - 13 selected 2 providers; 4 selected 3 providers; Q23 - 7 selected 1 provider; 8 selected 2 providers; 2 selected 3 providers

Q22 Once you issued the invitation to tender, which providers submitted a bid?

Q23 Which of these bidders met your requirements?

Q25 Who came second in the bids evaluation? And third? etc.

Q29 How close did <PROVIDER RANKED 2nd> get to winning the bid?

Both Washstation and Armstrong came very close in the bids evaluation on some of the tenders that JLA/Circuit won (table 20).

In the table below, in each row we look at the group of respondents who said each provider came first in the case where more than one bid was submitted. In each row we outline how many times each competing provider was second when that provider was first, how close each was to winning the bid and how often they came third. For example JLA won 10 competitive bid situations and in 4 of these cases Washstation was second (twice they came very close, once they came close and one said don't know), in 2 of these cases Armstrong was second (once they came every close and once close) and in 1 case another supplier came second. In the remaining 3 cases there was no other.

Table 20: Positioning in bids evaluation

Base: all respondents who tendered with more than two bids submitted (x)

Bidders				CAME SECOND								
CAME FIRST	JLA/Circuit			Washstation			Armstrong			Others		
	Number of respondents	Closeness to winning the bid	Who came third	Number of respondents	Closeness to winning the bid	Who came third	Number of respondents	Closeness to winning the bid	Came 3rd	Number of respondents	Closeness to winning the bid	Who came third
JLA/Circuit (10)	x	x	-	4	2 - very close; 1 - close; 1 don't know	-	2	1 - very close; 1 - close	-	1- Can't remember	1 - don't know	-
Washstation (5)	1	1 - close	-	x	x	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
Armstrong (2)	2	1 - not very close; 1 - don't know	-	0	-	-	x	x	-	0	1 - not very close; 1 - don't know	2 - PHS
Other provider	0	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	x	x	x

Q25 Who came second in the bids evaluation? And third? etc.

Q29 How close did <PROVIDER RANKED 2nd> get to winning the bid?

Direct quotes

Almost all providers, apart from Washstation, submitted a quote on each occasion they were approached (table 21).

In the table below we look at all who got quotes and for each provider we identify if they received a quote, if it met requirements and if so whether they came first, second or third. For example JLA submitted a bid in 11 cases and in these 11 cases they came first, 9 times and second, twice.

Table 21: Direct quotes

Base: Q31 All respondents who got quotes direct (14) / Q33 all respondents who got quotes direct from more than one provider (14) / Q 35 all respondents who got quotes direct from more than one provider (varies by provider) / Q39 all respondents who got quotes direct, but only received one quote (3)

Providers	Approached / Q31 (n=14)	Received quote/ Q33 (n=14)	1 st choice (from sample)	Next choice (2 nd)/ Q35	Next best choice (3 rd)/ Q35	Next best alternative/ Q39 (n=3)
JLA/Circuit	11	11	9	2		
Washstation	7	6	2	4		1
Armstrong	5 (4 pre, 1 post merger)	5	3	2		
Other (Wilson Electrics, unknown)	3	3	-	2	1	2 (undecided)

Note: Q31 - 4 selected 1 provider; 8 selected 2 providers; 2 selected 3 providers; Q33 - 4 selected 1 provider; 10 selected 2 providers; 1 selected 3 providers

Q31 And which of these providers did you approach?

Q33 Which of the providers that you approached did you get quotes from?

Q35: Which one of these providers would you have chosen if you had not appointed <PROVIDER>?

Q39 If <PROVIDER> had not quoted, who do you think would have been your next best alternative?

JLA/Circuit was approached for quotes for all contracts that Washstation won, and would have been the alternative choice in both instances (table 22).

In the table below, in each row we look at the group of respondents who said each provider came first in the case where quotes were requested. In each row we outline how many times each competing provider was second when that provider was first, how close each was to winning and how often they came third. For example JLA won 9 competitive bid situations and in 4 of these cases Washstation was second (twice they came very close, once they came close and one said don't know), in 2 of these cases Armstrong was second (once they came every close and once close) and in 1 case another supplier came second. In the remaining 2 cases there was no other.

Table 22: Direct quotes

Base: Q35 all respondents who got quotes direct from more than one provider (varies by provider) / Q38 all respondents who did not tender and who got quotes from 2 or more providers (varies by provider)

Providers	CAME SECOND											
	JLA/Circuit			Washstation			Armstrong			Others		
	Would have chosen	Closeness to winning the bid	Who came third	Would have chosen	Closeness to winning the bid	Who came third	Would have chosen	Closeness to winning the bid	Came 3	Would have chosen	Closeness to winning the bid	Who came third
JLA/Circuit (9)	x	x	-	4	n/a	-	2	n/a	-	1 – not sure of the name	n/a	
Washstation (2)	2	1 - close	-	x	x	-	0	-	-	0	-	Wilson Electrics
Armstrong (3)	0	0	-	0	0	-	x	x	-	1 – not sure	n/a	
Other provider	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	x	x	

Q35: Which one of these providers would you have chosen if you had not appointed <PROVIDER>?

Q38: How close did <PROVIDER RANKED 1st AT Q35> get to winning the bid?

Views of suppliers

JLA/Circuit

All respondents (n=9) who rejected JLA/Circuit at some point in the provider selection process were asked for their opinions of JLA/Circuit, including JLA/Circuit's strengths and weaknesses, ways in which JLA/Circuit did not meet requirements, why JLA/Circuit were not approached for a quote and why they did not get a quote from them.

Findings suggest that JLA/Circuit hold a strong reputation and offer advanced systems, but can be more expensive and reactive in terms of service.

A variety of strengths are referred to:

- Strong market presence
- Familiarity/ historical use
- Knowledge
- Good service / easy to deal with
- Added technology (mobile use / online top-ups)

They were a known entity and in situ, the incumbent provider.
(A university or college)

They are easy to deal with, we can get hold of someone and they do what they say they will do, they are helpful.
(A company managing student accommodation on behalf of others e.g. on behalf of a university)

A number of weaknesses are also mentioned:

- The company has grown too quickly, impacting on service levels
- A lack of planned maintenance (reactive)
- Lower commission
- Unable to refurbish facilities
- Higher costs to students

Lower commission and they were not going to refurbish the laundry rooms. A new provider would offer to bring in new machines and refurbish the facilities.
(A university or college)

More expensive price for students. They would provide fewer machines.
(A university or college)

In terms of a reason why JLA/Circuit might not be adopted, the main reason given is that the higher cost for new machines is unsustainable.

We used Circuit previously and the cost of getting new machines was too high, we would have had to halve the machines, which we decided was not feasible.

(A university or college)

Q16di/Q27/Q36 What are the strengths of JLA/Circuit?

Q16dii/Q28/Q37 In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of JLA/Circuit?

Q24 In what way, or ways did JLA/Circuit not meet the requirements?

Q32 Why did you not approach JLA/Circuit for a quote?

Q34 Why didn't you get a quote from JLA/Circuit?

(Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Base: Respondents who rejected JLA/Circuit at some point in the provider selection process (9)

Washstation

All respondents (n=11) who rejected Washstation at some point in the provider selection process were asked for their opinions of Washstation, including Washstation's strengths and weaknesses, ways in which Washstation did not meet requirements, why Washstation were not approached for a quote and why they did not get a quote from them.

Washstation, mostly, are considered to pay higher commission, but they are also perceived to be good in terms of speed of response. They are seen, however, to have less national coverage and are perceived to have a weaker reputation than Circuit.

A variety of strengths are mentioned:

- Generally pay higher commission (although lower for some)
- Speed of response
- Positive service levels
- Student engagement

It was their commitment to customer services and engage with students, quick repair times and their commitment to engage with the students through the year.

(A university or college)

They provide a very similar service (to Circuit), they offer more commission to win the business.

(A company managing student accommodation on behalf of others e.g. on behalf of a university)

A couple of weaknesses are also referred to:

- Weaker national coverage
- Servers based in the US so can't guarantee service levels

Reputation wise Washstation are not as developed. Their exposure and market share is less than Circuit's. It was easy to continue our contract with Circuit.

(A private student accommodation provider)

In terms of reasons why they might not be adopted, respondents give the following factors:

- Cost
- Unable to provide relevant documents required
- Do not provide a service reason to discontinue contracts with Circuit

They didn't have the paperwork, the Health & Safety documents required, they were not able to provide it.

(A university or college)

They had already phoned and given us a price charged to students and that price was too high.

(A university or college)

Two main results of the merger are additionally mentioned, these being the company becoming non-existent as a separate company and it not exceeding Circuit in terms of service or reputation.

They don't exist as a separate company any more.

(A university or college)

Q16di/Q27/Q36 What are the strengths of Washstation?

Q16dii/Q28/Q37 In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of Washstation?

Q24 In what way, or ways did Washstation not meet the requirements?

Q32 Why did you not approach Washstation for a quote?

Q34 Why didn't you get a quote from Washstation?

(Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Base: Respondents who rejected Washstation at some point in the provider selection process(11)

Armstrong

All respondents (n=4) who rejected Armstrong at some point in the provider selection process were asked for their opinions of Armstrong, including Armstrong's strengths and weaknesses, ways in which Armstrong did not meet requirements, why Armstrong were not approached for a quote and why they did not get a quote from them.

Armstrong's service is well noted, and they are seen as an approachable company. Their lack of modern technology and experience, however, are seen to be key drawbacks.

In terms of their strengths, respondents mention three areas where they are strong:

- Positive service attitude
- Approachable
- Good costs

Armstrong had good costs and a willingness to work with us on service.

(A university or college)

Personal service, they were really approachable, a family business, you'd know you were talking to an Armstrong person.

(A university or college)

Weaknesses referred to include:

- Lack of modern technology
- Lack of experience in the HE sector
- Less coverage nationally

They didn't offer any of the modern facility, only coins or tokens. There was no way of checking machine availability online and quite old fashioned machines that the residents complained an awful lot about.

(A university or college)

Reasons why they might not be adopted as a provider include:

- Lack of modern technology
- Lack of experience in the HE sector
- Lack of coverage nationally

We had less confidence in Armstrong's experience in the sector. I was worried about their available resources to support their maintenance commitments.

(A university or college)

They seem less good as a national provider, with less coverage across the country.

(A university or college)

We had Armstrong in place for a very long time, there were no specific issues on the service provision, but what swayed the decision was the added value that Circuit could provide in terms of refurbishment of laundry rooms, over and above what Armstrong offered.

(A university or college)

Q16di/Q27/Q36 What are the strengths of Armstrong

Q16dii/Q28/Q37 In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of Armstrong?

Q24 In what way, or ways did Armstrong not meet the requirements?

Q32 Why did you not approach Armstrong for a quote?

Q34 Why didn't you get a quote from Armstrong?

(Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Base: Respondents who rejected Armstrong at some point in the provider selection process
(4)

Goodman Sparks

The one respondent (n=1) who rejected Goodman Sparks at some point in the provider selection process was asked for his/her opinion of Goodman Sparks, including Goodman Sparks' strengths and weaknesses, ways in which Goodman Sparks did not meet requirements, why Goodman Sparks were not approached for a quote and why he/she did not get a quote from them.

Goodman Sparks' perceived strengths lie in communication and speed of response.

They are a smallish organisation, we can communicate with them and resolve issues quite readily with them, they are straight forward and easy to deal with.

(A private student accommodation provider)

Their lack of modern technology, however, is seen to be a key weakness when compared to other providers.

Other providers have overtaken their business in terms of technology.

(A private student accommodation provider)

Q16di/Q27/Q36 What are the strengths of Goodman Sparks?

Q16dii/Q28/Q37 In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of Goodman Sparks?

Q24 In what way, or ways did Goodman Sparks not meet the requirements?

Q32 Why did you not approach Goodman Sparks for a quote?

Q34 Why didn't you get a quote from Goodman Sparks?

(Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Base: Respondents who rejected Goodman Sparks at some point in the provider selection process (1)

Market and supplier perceptions

When asked if their views of any laundry providers had changed since they last procured laundry services, most (37 of 59 asked) said that they had not. Some (18 of 59 asked), however, noted that there had been a change, mainly around a lack of competition. Some respondents mentioned a decrease in service levels by Circuit.

Our view of Circuit is not very positive, we are stuck with them, there are no other providers or we are not aware of any others that deliver the type of service to the amount of people we deal with.

(A private student accommodation provider)

The JLA/Circuit contract relationship became stale and complacent. This resulted in poor responses and student dissatisfaction. This led to our tender process. Since the new contract we have a lot more engagement from JLA/Circuit.

(A university or college)

Circuit have now completely bought out Washstation and PHS, their service has decreased and we have nowhere else to go, other providers no longer exist.

(A university or college)

A good number additionally refer to the lack of competition in the market more generally.

There are less options available when choosing a laundry provider in the HE sector.

(A private student accommodation provider)

The service of the competitors has gotten worse. They are not technologically advanced enough and are behind the curve.

(A private student accommodation provider)

All three of these providers are now the same company JLA/Circuit, Washstation and Wilson Electrics. This does not affect my current contract, but I worry about the competition being reduced.

(A university or college)

Most respondents have not become aware of any new providers since laundry services were last procured. Of the 59 respondents asked, just 12 said that they had heard of new providers, with the remainder stating that they had not. New providers mentioned include:

- Washstation (4 mentions)
- Hughes (2 mentions)
- JLA/Circuit (1 mention)
- Armstrong (1 mention) Miele Distributor (1 mention)
- 4 were unable to remember specific names

Q44 Since the last time you procured laundry services, have you become aware of any new providers?

Q45 Which providers have you become aware of?

Base: All respondents (59) / all respondents who have become aware of new providers (12)

When asked how satisfied students are with the service provided by the laundry provider, around half say that students are satisfied with the service received from JLA/Circuit, slightly lower than average. Although numbers are small, satisfaction is highest with third party providers (table 23). Student experiences are learned about through a variety of means including student surveys (annually, termly, exit) or via feedback from different channels (directly from students or via the Student Union, helpdesks, committees or a complaints procedure).

Table 23: Student satisfaction

Base: all respondents (59)

Student satisfaction	Number of participants			TOTAL (n=59)
	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	
Very satisfied	4	4	4	12
Fairly satisfied	19	3	3	25
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	0	0	8
Fairly dissatisfied	6	1*	0	7
Very dissatisfied	2	2*	0	4
Don't know	2	0	1	3

* Of the 3 Washstation customers who state that students are dissatisfied with the service provided, 1 states that the quality of service provided has got worse, two state that it hasn't changed.

Q50 How satisfied or dissatisfied are students with the service provided by <PROVIDER>?

8. Barriers to market entry

In terms of considering a supplier who is new to the HE sector, three fifths say they are likely to consider a new supplier, a further fifth are neutral about it, and very few say they are against the idea (table 24). Reasons for considering a supplier new to the HE sector include:

- Potential new services are of interest
- Dissatisfaction with/poor service from current provider
- More open to new opportunities/new providers than requiring HE experience
- Would like to see more competition in this market, whether with or without HE experience

Moreover, while 7 respondents find HE experience 'essential' and 23 find it 'very important', most who are likely to consider a provider new to the HE sector would not limit themselves to requiring HE experience.

Table 24: Likelihood of considering a supplier new to the HE sector

Base: Q46 all respondents (59) / Q47 all respondents likely to consider a provider new to the HE section (39)

Likelihood of considering a supplier new to the HE sector	Number of participants			TOTAL (n=59)
	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	
Very likely	7	4	0	11
Fairly likely	19	5	4	28
Neither likely nor unlikely	10	1	2	13
Fairly unlikely	3	0	2	5
Very unlikely	1	0	0	1
Would not consider	1	0	0	1
Don't know	0	0	0	0

Q46 Next time you choose a provider of laundry services, how likely would you say you are to consider a provider that was new to the Higher Education sector?

Q47. Why do you say that?

Respondents who considered experience with other HE clients to be important or essential were asked why this is so. Responses suggest that experience in this arena can contribute to the perceptions of providers, increasing confidence in a provider's ability. These perceptions include:

- A better understanding of requirements - providers who have experience within the HE sector are seen, through previous experience, to have a better understanding of the specific requirements of HE organisations.

Just because it gives an indication that they are aware of the environment they are operating in.

(A university or college)

- Greater awareness of potential problems - these providers are also seen as having more understanding and experience of potential problems which may occur, reducing the number and amount of time resolving issues.

Because of their experience in the sector, they know the pitfalls of providing machines in student accommodation.

(A private student accommodation provider)

- Providers with experience with HE clients are more credible and reputable - as a result, the perception of these suppliers instils confidence amongst HE organisations, which makes providers with HE seen as more credible and reputable.

Experience with HE clients is a demonstration that they have credibility and are used by those who are familiar to us. It provides confidence in other HE institutions that we work with.

(A private student accommodation provider)

Q21c You said that experience with other HE clients was <ESSENTIAL/IMPORTANT> to you. Why is that? (Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Base: All respondents who considered experience with other HE clients important or essential (49)

Respondents were also asked how likely they would be to consider a supplier not offering variable rental agreements (VRA). Around half say they would not consider or would be unlikely to consider a supplier that did not offer a variable rental agreement, while only a fifth overall say they would be likely to consider such a provider (table 25).

Reasons for considering a supplier not offering a variable rental agreement include:

- Open to seeing what other arrangements/models are available
- Level of service is more important
- Student experience/service is a key factor; not agreement type

Nine respondents on a VRAs find them 'essential' while 20 find them 'very important'.

Table 25: Likelihood of considering supplier not offering a VRA

Base: all respondents (59) / all respondents likely to consider a provider that doesn't offer a VRA (13)

Likelihood of considering supplier not offering variable rental agreement	Number of participants			TOTAL (n=59)
	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3rd Party (n=8)	
Very likely	0	3	0	3
Fairly likely	7	3	0	10
Neither likely nor unlikely	10	0	1	11
Fairly unlikely	8	1	3	12
Very unlikely	7	1	1	9
Would not consider	5	2	3	10
Don't know	4	0	0	4

Q48 Next time you choose a provider of laundry services, how likely would you say you are to consider a provider that doesn't offer a variable rental agreement?

Q49 Why do you say that? (Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Reasons given for stating that a VRA is essential or important include price arrangements and commission, which, along with operational management flexibility, make VRAs inviting.

Variable rental agreements decision making can be:

- Financially driven - Commission is an attractive prospect, especially when it offsets electricity expenditure, and no capital investment is attractive to stakeholders.

It is very important to the building owners that they have no capital expenditure and the right quality and specification of the machines.

(A company managing student accommodation on behalf of others e.g. on behalf of a university)

We have had no cash outlay for the equipment, we just pay for the water and electricity and we get commission back to compensate for those expenses.

(A private student accommodation provider)

- Less operational risk - less responsibility / machines aren't owned and so do not need to be maintained internally; more flexibility offered to vary the agreement according to need; less risk if machines aren't used as frequently.

We did not want the responsibility of owning the machines but we wanted a share of the revenues from the machines. Our maintenance team on site is very stretched and we wouldn't have wanted to add to their burden.

(A university or college)

In some buildings more machines are used more, it is important we can vary the terms of the agreement according to our need.

(A private student accommodation provider)

Q21d You said that a variable rental agreement was <ESSENTIAL/IMPORTANT> to you. Why is that? (Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Base: All respondents who considered the offer of a variable rental agreement important or essential (42)

9. Views on the merger

When asked about whether they were aware of the merger, around three fifths overall are aware of the acquisition, with awareness being greater amongst Washstation respondents. The impact of the merger is viewed by nearly half as being neutral; very few perceive it as having a positive impact (table 26).

Table 26: Awareness and impact of the acquisition

Base: all respondents (59)

Awareness of acquisition		Number of participants				
		JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)		
Yes		21	10	3		34
No		20	0	5		25

Impact of acquisition							TOTAL (n=59)
Good	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	1	Washstation (n=10)	4	3 rd Party (n=8)	0	5
Neutral		17		4		3	24
Bad		9		2		2	13
Don't know		14		0		3	17

Q54 Were you aware that Circuit (JLA) had acquired Washstation?

Q55 Would you expect this merger to have a good, bad or neutral impact on you as a customer?

Respondents who considered the merger to have an impact were asked why this was so. Those asked articulated both positive and negative impacts.

Positive impacts include:

- Better service levels

With 2 companies coming together they would provide a better service as they would have more resources and more experience.

(A university or college)

- Easier management of multiple contracts with a single provider

The merger would be good for us - at the moment we have a mix of providers, some universities have Circuit, we continue with their contracts, we also have Washstation. Following the merger we can meet with one group of providers and discuss all the issues.

(A university or college)

Some negative impacts are also mentioned:

- Lower service levels

When these companies get too big it always goes wrong in the end. As the company gets bigger and offers more machines, they will offer less engineers to service them. Big companies are not customer driven and are more target driven. Ultimately this will affect the level of service received as we get different engineers with a high staff turnover or they may start using sub-contractors as well.

(A university or college)

We were unhappy with the service with Circuit and now there's no incentive to improve service because there is now little or no competition.

(A university or college)

- Less competition

There would be less choice, less competition in the market to drive standards and keep costs down.

(A private student accommodation provider)

Q56 Why do you say that? (Full list of verbatim comments in Appendix)

Base: all respondents considering the merger to have an impact (18)

When asked about any changes to the quality of service provided by their laundry provider in the past year, the majority state that the service has not changed (table 27).

Table 27: Changes to service provision

Base: all respondents (59)

Changes to service provision	Number of participants			TOTAL (n=59)
	JLA/Circuit (n=41)	Washstation (n=10)	3 rd Party (n=8)	
Yes, it improved	2	0	0	2
Yes, it got worse	5	1	0	6
No, it hasn't changed	31	9	8	48
Don't know	3	0	0	3

Q52 Has the quality of service provided by <PROVIDER> changed in the past year?

Amongst those who have noticed a change, however, a few improvements and declines are mentioned.

Improvements include:

- Better engagement from the account manager
- Newer machines meaning less maintenance

A number of declines are also mentioned:

- Lengthy reparation time
- Inflexibility of payment methods (complaints from students)
- Increased number of breakdowns and call-outs
- Reactive, rather than proactive, service
- Confusion since the merger in terms of responsibilities

10. Appendix

Appendix A – Questionnaire

Introduction

Interviewer: Ask for the named contact

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. My name is... I am calling from DJS Research, an independent research company and we are working on behalf of the Competition and Markets Authority, the CMA, a government body. We are carrying out a survey about choosing a laundry provider by higher education institutions and student accommodation providers. Could I speak to someone who is involved in choosing a laundry provider on behalf of your organisation.

IF CHALLENGED ABOUT THE RESEARCH, REFER TO AN EMAIL THE INSTITUTION MAY HAVE RECEIVED REGARDING THE RESEARCH; READ OUT EMAIL ADDRESS(ES) FOR REASSURANCE

When transferred to the right person:

Good morning/ afternoon. My name is ... I am calling from DJS Research, an independent research company and we are working on behalf of the Competition and Markets Authority, the CMA, a government body. We are carrying out a survey about student laundry services on behalf of the CMA. In particular, we would like to discuss the decisions made the last time your organisation appointed a laundry provider.

[JLA/Circuit/Washstation/competitor name] provided the CMA with your details to allow us to carry out this research. Would you be able to spare 20 minutes either now or at a better time to help with this research for the CMA?

IF YES, CONTINUE OR ARRANGE TIME TO CALL BACK

IF CHALLENGED ABOUT THE RESEARCH, REFER TO AN EMAIL THE INSTITUTION MAY HAVE RECEIVED REGARDING THE RESEARCH; READ OUT EMAIL ADDRESS(ES) FOR REASSURANCE

IF NO, THANK & CLOSE

Ideally, we would like you to be able to refer to the documents and related paperwork of the most recent exercise for choosing a student laundry provider. Are you able to access these documents now, or would it be better to call you back once you have had time to find the documents?

IF RESPONDENT HAS ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS NOW, CONTINUE

IF RESPONDENT NEEDS TIME TO LOCATE DOCUMENTS, ARRANGE TIME TO CALL BACK

IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT HAVE ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS AT ALL, CONTINUE WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE DOCUMENTS

Before we start I need to read out a brief legal statement telling you what happens to the information we have.

As I said earlier we have been given your details by the CMA.

DJS and the CMA will use this information only for the purpose of this research. Your details will be transferred and stored securely at all times, and DJS and the CMA will maintain strict confidentiality, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). JLA/Circuit/Washstation will not know who has taken part in the survey. It will not be possible for them to identify individual respondents or their business in any of the survey results that are made public by the CMA.

Are you still ok to go ahead?

All respondents:

CATI – INTERVIEWER READ OUT: *All interviews will be recorded for training and quality purposes.*

Interviewer, if needed: *Provide DJS Research number: 01663 767857; provide MRS number: 0800 9759596*

Continue or make appointment

QUOTAS:

Screening/quota questions

S01

All respondents

Can I check, is your organisation...

1	A university or college		
2	A private student accommodation provider		
3	A company managing student accommodation on behalf of others e.g. on behalf of a university		
80	Other	Specify	
85	Don't know		Close

General info. about managed laundry services

Q01a

All respondents

Which laundry provider(s) does your organisation use to offer laundry services to students?

MultiCode

Do not read out

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	SPECIFY		

Q01b

All JLA/Washstation/Amstrong/Goodman Sparks/Photo-Me respondents (from sample) not mentioning them at Q01A

And do you or have you also used.....

Single

1	JLA/Circuit	ONLY SHOW TO THOSE ON JLA SAMPLE		
2	Washstation	ONLY SHOW TO THOSE ON WASHSTATION SAMPLE		
3	Armstrong	ONLY SHOW TO THOSE ON ARMSTRONG SAMPLE		
4	Goodman Sparks	ONLY SHOW TO THOSE ON GOODMAN SPARKS SAMPLE		
5	Photo-Me	ONLY SHOW TO THOSE ON PHOTO-ME SAMPLE		

1	Yes			
2	No	SCREEN OUT		
3	Don't know	SCREEN OUT		

Q02

All respondents using provider

On how many sites do you use.....

Single; grid

Pull through all mentioned at Q01A/Q01B

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Pull through from Q01A		

1	1			
2	2-5			
3	6-10			
4	11-15			
5	16-20			
6	More than 20 sites			
3	Don't know			

Contract/tender information

Q03A

All respondents

We understand that on or before <INSERT MOST RECENT DATE FROM SAMPLE IN COLUMN F & FOR ANY GIVEN CONTRACT HOLDER LISTED IN COLUMN B> you procured services of <INSERT SUPPLIER FROM SAMPLE>. Our records suggest that this was for the following site(s): <INSERT ALL SITES LISTED IN COLUMN C FOR MOST RECENT DATE IN COLUMN F AND GIVEN CONTRACT HOLDER IN COLUMN B>. Is this correct?

Single

1	Yes	SKIP TO Q6		
2	No	ASK Q3B		
3	Don't know	ASK Q3B		

Q03b

All respondents answering 'no' at Q03A

When was the last time your organisation procured services of a laundry provider?

Single

1	Month	OPEN	BOTH CODES MUST BE FILLED IN	
2	Year	OPEN	BOTH CODES MUST BE FILLED IN	
3	Don't know		CLOSE	

Q04

All respondents answering 'no' at Q03A

Thinking about the **last time** your organisation procured services of a laundry provider, who was appointed?

Single

Do not read out

1	JLA/Circuit		CLOSE - IF appointed earlier than January 2016 at Q03b	
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Specify		

Q05

All respondents answering 'no' at Q03A

And which sites are covered by this contract?

Open; blank text boxes

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

For the remainder of this interview, we would like you to focus on the services provided by <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q04> under the contract that started <INSERT DATE FROM SAMPLE OR Q03B>

Q06

All respondents

And how many of your laundry rooms are covered by this contract?

Single

1	1			
2	2-5			
3	6-10			
4	11-15			
5	16-20			
6	More than 20			

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q07

All respondents

In total, how many washing machines and dryers are in these laundry rooms?

Interviewer: an approximate figure is fine; refers to the laundry rooms under contract

Single

1	Fewer than 10			
2	10-19			
3	20-29			
4	30-39			
5	40 or more			
85	Don't know			

Q08

All respondents

Which payment methods are available to users of these laundry rooms?

Multicode

Read out

1	Cash			
2	Debit or credit card			
3	Mobile payment			
4	Pre-paid/top-up cards			
5	Online payment			
6	Tokens			
80	Other payment method	Specify		
7	No payment is required (free to use)	Exclusive		
85	Don't know			

Q09

All respondents

Which of the following online services, if any, are available to users of these laundry rooms?

Multicode

Read out

1	Checking the availability of machines online			
2	Receiving SMS or email alerts when washing is finished			
3	Online payments			
86	None of the above	Exclusive		
85	Don't know	Exclusive		

Information about the contract

Q10

All respondents

Thinking about the contract with <INSERT FROM PROVIDER FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>, which started <INSERT DATE FROM SAMPLE OR Q03B>, what type of agreement is it?

Single

Read out

1	Fixed rental agreement			
2	Variable rental agreement			
3	Sales agreement			
80	Other	Specify		
85	Don't know			

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: READ OUT THE FOLLOWING IF REQUIRED

Fixed rental agreement is a rental agreement where the managed laundry provider owns the machines and the customer pays a fixed monthly fee.

Variable rental agreement is a rental agreement where the managed laundry provider owns the machines and in which the customer and the provider share the revenues generated by payment made by end users to use the machines (so called commission).

Sales agreement is an agreement covering services and maintenance of the machines only, where the student accommodation provider owns the machines.

Q11a

All respondents with variable rental agreement (Q10/2)

Do you receive a commission from <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q04>?

By commission, we mean payment made by the laundry provider to your organisation as a result of sharing the revenues generated by any payments made by end-users to use the machines.

Single

1	Yes			
2	No			
85	Don't know			

Q11b**All respondents receiving a commission (Q11A/1)**

What level of commission do you receive, expressed as a percentage of the total amount that end-users pay?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q12**All respondents not on variable rental agreement (Q10/1/3/80/85)**

Do you pay a regular fee to <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>?

Single

1	Yes	SPECIFY AMOUNT		
2	No			
85	Don't know			

Q13**All respondents who pay a regular fee (Q12/1)**

What is the fee that you pay to <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>?

Open

INTERVIEWER TO PROBE WHETHER THE FEE IS PER MONTH/YEAR ETC. IF NECESSARY

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Details of last procurement process

We are now going to ask some questions about the decision making/procurement exercise that resulted in the contract with <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4> starting on <INSERT DATE FROM SAMPLE OR Q03B>

Q14

All respondents

Can I check whether you have the paperwork relating to this exercise in front of you?

Single

1	Yes			
2	No			

Q15

All respondents

What was the trigger for this decision making/ procurement exercise?

MULTI

Do not read out

1	Previous contract expired			
2	Approach directly by a laundry provider			
3	Needed student laundry services on a new/additional site			
80	Other	SPECIFY		
85	Don't know			

Q16a

All respondents

Which of these best describes the process that you went through to select a provider? Did you....

SINGLE CODE

Read out

Interviewer: if **only one new provider** was considered, assume the previous supplier was also considered and **code to code 2: consider more than one provider...**

1	Invite providers to tender			
2	Consider more than one provider and get a quote from at least one of them			
3	Extend, rollover or recontract with your existing provider without considering alternatives			
80	None of these	SPECIFY		

85	Don't know	EXCLUSIVE		
----	------------	-----------	--	--

Q16ai

All respondents who extended/rolled over contract with existing provider (Q16A/3)

Why did you extend the contract with your existing provider?

OPEN

Q16b

All respondents stating none of these at Q16A (Q16A/80)

Please can you explain a little more about the approach you took and why you took that approach specifically?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q16c

All respondents stating none of these at Q16A (Q16A/80)

Which providers did you consider?

Multi

Do not read out

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Specify		

Q16di

All respondents stating none of these at Q16A (Q16A/80)

In your opinion, what are the **strengths** of <INSERT FROM Q16C>?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q16dii**All respondents stating none of these at Q16A (Q16A/80)**In your opinion, what are the **weaknesses** of <INSERT FROM Q16C>?*Open*

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

REPEAT Q16DI AND 16DII FOR ALL MENTIONED AT Q16C.

Q17**All respondents who tendered (Q16A/1)**

Did you invite a particular provider or set of providers to tender or was it an open competition

SINGLE

1	Particular provider/set of providers	ASK Q18		
2	Open competition			
80	Something else	SPECIFY		
85	Don't know			

Q18**All respondents who tendered to a specific provider/set of providers (Q17/1)**

Did you use a framework agreement?

SINGLE

1	Yes			
2	No			
85	Don't know			

Q19**All respondents who used a framework agreement (Q18/1)**

Which framework agreement did you use?

SINGLE

1	Commercial laundry equipment ESPO framework			
2	Other framework	SPECIFY		
85	Don't know			

Q20**All respondents who DID NOT use a framework agreement (Q18/2)**

To which providers did you issue the invitation to tender?

SINGLE

Do not read out

1	Open tender			
2	JLA/Circuit			
3	Washstation			
4	Armstrong			
5	Goodman Sparks			
6	Brewer and Bunney			
7	Girbau			
8	Photo-Me			
9	Laundry 365			
10	Wolf Laundry			
11	LPD			
12	Thain Commercial			
13	Hughes			
14	Electrolux Distributor			
15	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	<i>SPECIFY</i>		
85	Don't know/ can't remember			

Contract considerations

Q21a**All respondents**

What were the most important factors when choosing *<INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>* in preference to other providers?

Multi; grid;

Do not read out. Capture first response and code appropriately

1	High quality of maintenance service (incl. speed of repairs)			
2	Number of engineers			
3	Good price (e.g. commission, monthly rental amount, sale price of machine)			
4	High quality/efficiency of the machines			
5	Offers refurbishment of laundry rooms			
6	Offers a variable rental agreement			
7	Previous good experience of the provider			
8	Experience of providing laundry services			

9	Experience with other HE clients specifically			
10	Online services for students			
11	Offers your preferred student payment methods			
12	Good price charged to students (if any)			
80	Other aspect of student experience	SPECIFY		
80	Other	SPECIFY		
85	Don't know	Exclusive		

Q21b

All respondents

I am now going to read out a list of features. For each one I'd like you to tell me how important it was when choosing which provider to appoint. Please use one of the phrases on the following scale to describe your answer ... 'Essential', 'very important', 'fairly important' or 'not important':

Single; grid; randomise

Read out. LIST OF STATEMENTS TO BE ASKED ABOUT IN TURN

Interviewer: Please only use 'Essential' if the provider wouldn't have been appointed without this feature

1	Essential			
2	Very important			
3	Fairly important			
4	Not important			
85	Don't know			

1	High quality of maintenance service (incl. speed of repairs)			
2	Good price (e.g. commission, monthly rental amount, sale price of machine)			
3	High quality/efficiency of the machines			
4	Offers refurbishment of laundry rooms			
5	Offers a variable rental agreement			
6	Experience of providing laundry services	KEEP FIXED BEFORE CODE 7		
7	Experience with other HE clients specifically			
8	Offers your preferred student payment methods			

9	Good price charged to students (if any)			
---	---	--	--	--

Q21c

All respondents who considered experience with other HE clients important or essential (Q21b/1,2 or 3 for code 7 in the Grid)

You said that experience with other HE clients was <PULL TROUGH FROM Q21b> to you. Why is that?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q21d

All respondents who considered the offer of a variable rental agreement important or essential (Q21b/1,2 or 3 for code 5 in the Grid)

You said that a variable rental agreement was <PULL TROUGH FROM Q21b> to you. Why is that?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q22

All respondents who tendered (Q16a/1)

Once you issued the invitation to tender, which providers submitted a bid?

MultiCode

Do not read out

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			

12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	SPECIFY		

Q23

All respondents who tendered (Q16a/1)

Which of these bidders met your requirements? (i.e to which bidders could you have awarded the contract?)

Multi

Pull through all selected at Q22

Do not read out

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Pull through from Q22		

Q24

All respondents who tendered (Q16a/1) and who did not chose the same providers at both Q22 and Q23

In what way, or ways did <PULL THROUGH EACH BIDDER SELECTED AT Q22, BUT NOT SELECETED AT Q23 IN TURN> not meet the requirements?

Open

Pull through all selected at Q22 but NOT selected at Q23; REPEAT FOR ALL

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			

9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Pull through from Q22		

Q25

All respondents who tendered (Q16a/1) and who selected more than 2 providers at Q22

You said that <INSERT ALL MENTIONED AT Q23> all met your requirements and that you appointed <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>. Who came second in the bids evaluation? And third? etc.

Open numeric text boxes next to codes

Do not read out; ENTER 2 for the bid that came second, 3 for the big that came third etc.

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Pull through from Q22		

Q26

All respondents who tendered (Q16a/1)

Do you have the final overall score(s) from your bid evaluations to hand? If so, can you please provide the final scores for each provider?

Open numeric text boxes next to codes; individual d/k options

Pull through all mentioned at Q22

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			

9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Pull through from Q22		
86	No bid evaluations to hand	Exclusive		
85	Don't know	Exclusive		

Q26

All respondents who tendered (Q16a/1) and know the final scores from the bid evaluations at Q25

Can you briefly explain what the maximum achievable score would have been.

Open text box

INTERVIEWER TO PROBE ON "WHAT THE SCORES WERE OUT OF", i.e. IS THE MAXIMUM ACHIEVABLE SCORE 100, or 10 etc.

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q27

All respondents who tendered (Q16a/1) and who selected 2 or more providers at Q22

What were the strengths of <INSERT PROVIDER RANKED 2nd AT Q25>, compared to <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q28

All respondents who tendered (Q16a/1) and who selected 2 or more providers at Q22

What were the weaknesses of <INSERT PROVIDER RANKED 2nd AT Q25>, compared to <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>.

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q29

All respondents who tendered (Q16a/1) and who selected 2 or more providers at Q22

How close did <INSERT PROVIDER RANKED 2nd AT Q25> get to winning the bid?

1	Very close			
2	Close			
3	Not very close			
85	Don't know/can't remember			

REPEAT Q27-Q29 FOR ALL AT Q25

Q30

All respondents who got quotes direct (Q16a/2)

Which providers did you consider getting quotes from?

Multi

Do not read out.

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	SPECIFY		
86	None	Exclusive	Skip to q41	

Q31

All respondents who got quotes direct (Q16a/2)

And which of these providers did you approach?

Multi; Pull through all mentioned at Q30

Do not read out.

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	PULL THROUGH FROM Q30		

Q32

All respondents who got quotes direct (Q16a/2) and who did not chose the same providers at both Q30 and Q31

Why did you not approach <PULL THROUGH EACH PROVIDER SELECTED AT Q30, BUT NOT SELECETED AT Q31 IN TURN>?

Open

Pull through all selected at Q30 but NOT selected at Q31; REPEAT FOR ALL

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			

10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Pull through from Q30		

Q33

All respondents who got quotes direct from more than one provider (Q16a/2)

Which of the providers that you approached did you get quotes from?

Multi; Pull through all mentioned at Q31

Do not read out.

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Pull through from Q30		

Q34

All respondents who got quotes direct (Q16a/2) and who did not select the same providers at both Q31 and Q33

Why didn't you get a quote from <PULL THROUGH EACH PROVIDER SELECTED AT Q31, BUT NOT SELECETED AT Q33 IN TURN>?

Open; ASK FOR EACH

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q35

All respondents who got quotes direct (Q16a/2) and who selected more than 1 provider at Q33

You said that you got quotes from <PULL THROUGH NAMES OF PROVIDERS SELECTED AT Q33>. Which one of these providers would you have chosen if you had not appointed <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>?

IF MORE THAN 2 PROVIDERS SELECTED AT Q33 ... And which one would have been your next best choice? [CONTINUE UNTIL ALL PROVIDERS LISTED AT Q33 ARE RANKED]

Please rank each supplier from 2nd onwards

Open numeric text boxes next to codes; individual d/k options

Don't read out.

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Pull through from Q30		

Q36

All respondents who did not tender (Q16a/2) and who selected 2 or more providers at Q33

What were the strengths of <INSERT PROVIDER RANKED 2nd AT Q35>, compared to the <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q37

All respondents who did not tender (Q16a/2) and who selected 2 or more providers at Q33

What were the weaknesses of <INSERT PROVIDER RANKED 1st AT Q35>, compared to the <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q38

All respondents who did not tender (Q16a/2) and who selected 2 or more providers at Q33

How close did <INSERT PROVIDER RANKED 1st AT Q35> get to winning the bid?

1	Very close			
2	Close			
3	Not very close			
85	Don't know/can't remember			

REPEAT Q36-Q38 FOR ALL MENTIONED AT Q35

Q39

All respondents who got quotes direct (Q16a/2) but only received one quote at Q33

If <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4> had not quoted, who do you think would have been your next best alternative?

Open

1	OPEN			
86	No other alternatives			
85	Don't know			

Q40

All respondents who got quotes direct (Q16a/2)

During the negotiation process, did you use the actual or potential offer from one provider as a bargaining tool to obtain a better offer from another provider?

Single

1	Yes			
2	No			
86	Prefer not to say			
85	Don't know			

Q41

All respondents who used another supplier as a bargaining tool (Q40/1)

Which other provider(s)' offers did you use for this purpose?

Open

86	Prefer not to say			
85	Don't know			

Views on managed laundry providers

Q42

All respondents

Has your view of any of the laundry providers changed since the last time you procured laundry services?

Single

1	Yes			
2	No			
85	Don't know			

Q43

All respondents whose view has changed (q42/1)

In what way has your view changed?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q44

All respondents

Since the last time you procured laundry services, have you become aware of any new providers?

Single

1	Yes			
2	No			
85	Don't know			

Q45

All respondents who have become aware of new providers (q44/1)

Which providers have you become aware of?

Do not read out

1	JLA/Circuit			
2	Washstation			
3	Armstrong			
4	Goodman Sparks			
5	Brewer and Bunney			
6	Girbau			
7	Photo-Me			
8	Laundry 365			
9	Wolf Laundry			
10	LPD			
11	Thain Commercial			
12	Hughes			
13	Electrolux Distributor			
14	Miele Distributor			
80	Other	Specify		,
85	Don't know			

Q46

All respondents

Next time you choose a provider of laundry services, how likely would you say you are to consider a provider that was new to the Higher Education sector?

Single

1	Very likely			
2	Fairly likely			
3	Neither likely nor unlikely			
4	Fairly unlikely			
5	Very unlikely			
86	Would not consider			
85	Don't know			

Q47

All respondents coding very or fairly likely (1/2) at Q46

Why do you say that?

Open

85	Don't know			
----	------------	--	--	--

Q48

All respondents

Next time you choose a provider of laundry services, how likely would you say you are to consider a provider that doesn't offer a variable rental agreement?

Single

1	<i>Very likely</i>			
2	<i>Fairly likely</i>			
3	<i>Neither likely nor unlikely</i>			
4	<i>Fairly unlikely</i>			
5	<i>Very unlikely</i>			
86	<i>Would not consider</i>			
85	<i>Don't know</i>			

Q49

All respondents coding very or fairly likely (1/2) at Q48

Why do you say that?

Open

85	<i>Don't know</i>			
----	-------------------	--	--	--

Views on merger

Q50

All respondents

How satisfied or dissatisfied are students with the service provided by <INSERT FROM PROVIDER FROM SAMPLE OR Q4>?

Single

Read out

1	<i>Very satisfied</i>			
2	<i>Fairly satisfied</i>			
3	<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>			
4	<i>Fairly dissatisfied</i>			
5	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>			
85	<i>Don't know</i>			

Q51

All respondents

In what ways do you learn about student experiences with these services?

Open

85	<i>Don't know</i>			
----	-------------------	--	--	--

Q52

All respondents

Has the quality of service provided by <INSERT FROM SAMPLE OR Q4> changed in the past year?

Single

1	Yes, it improved			
2	Yes, it got worse			
3	No, it hasn't changed			
85	Don't know			

Q53

All respondents coding 1 or 2 at Q52

In what ways has the service <improved/got worse>?

Open

85		Don't know			
----	--	------------	--	--	--

Q54

All respondents

Were you aware that Circuit (JLA) had acquired Washstation?

Interviewer: the date was 18th May 2017. Please only read this out after the answer has been taken

Single

1	Yes			
2	No			

Q55

All respondents

Would you expect this merger to have a good, bad or neutral impact on you as a customer?

Single

1	Good			
2	Neutral	SKIP Q50		
3	Bad			
85	Don't know	SKIP Q50		

Q56

All respondents coding 1 or 3 at Q55

Why do you say that?

Open

Closing questions

Q57

All respondents

Would you be willing to be contacted by the CMA in relation to its merger inquiry?

Single

1	Yes			
2	No			

If respondent had tender documents in front of them when answering the questions.

Q58

All respondents

As part of its inquiry, the CMA is collecting information about recent procurement exercises for student laundry services. To assist the CMA with its inquiry, would you be willing to share the documents relating to the procurement exercise you have just talked about?

INTERVIEWER: Respondents may also ask what we are going to do with tender documents. You can say that they will be used as evidence in the inquiry. We will analyse the information and when reporting it we would anonymise it and/or report aggregated results. It's unlikely that we will want to mention individual customers in anything we make public but if we did want to do that, we would check with them first giving them the opportunity to request redactions.

Single

1	Yes – refer participant to Egle Pazeraite on 020 3738 6514 or by emailing Egle.Pazeraite@cma.gsi.gov.uk .			
2	No			

Thank & Close

Appendix B – Verbatim comments

Q15 What was the trigger for this decision making/ procurement exercise? Interviewer: Do not read out

- we needed to add one more machine
- we were taking over the property so we carried over the existing contracts
- we wanted blocks of machines rather than in individual rooms. Not sure why the exercise took place then
- there was a short mobilisation period, taking over accommodation
- we wanted to give free laundry to the students
- we had various contracts to streamline and to manage, to reduce costs and provide better service and rebate mechanism
- we were testing the market to get best value for money
- We already had them on site, it was to install a cashless vending system,
- poor service from existing supplier, we changed during contract
- Bought a building
- changing machines from coin operated to new prepaid card machines and refurbishment
- procurement said there was viable competition offering innovations
- Complaints from student about some of the machines.
- poor quality service from previous provider, we used them on a rolling basis
- upgrade 2 facilities/sites to more environmentally friendly and end user friendly machines
- Old Equipment, Old fashioned payment systems
- High prices. Cost review.
- We had a vast amount of machines, too much to deal with, they were old and unreliable machines.
- we were bringing all sites in line
- Refurbish machines and all site contracts expires at the same time, to re-negotiate in them in 1 go.
- the laundry services were problematic at the time
- the arrangement was not working and worn out
- Machines are of an age and we had problems with Circuit and wanted to see what else was available and chose Washstation.
- added to existing contract with Circuit
- we wanted new machines and free drying to prevent damp in student rooms
- we had their machines on another site, and we were not happy with Circuit
- the contract was about to expire, we wanted a continuation
- we wanted to change provider, the previous one kept going wrong and the commission was not good either
- Previous supplier gave a very high quote for updating machines.

Q16ai Why did you extend the contract with your existing provider?

- It was the easiest option to take to renew the contract and it saved time.
- they upgraded all the machines, they were coin operated before but now they are linked into the app, so that students can see if the machines are being used
- we were taking over the property, it was easy to continue with the existing contracts
- we only use Circuit, due to our comfort with them and our loyalty to the provider
- Pay commission on time, machines are really good.
- because of the historical relationship, the good service we have received and the pricing structure, I am happy with all that
- we wanted to negotiate fee vend for the students and it worked for both sites, we wanted to avoid the upheaval of removing machines, we use cards with an unlimited supply, it costs the students 1p each time
- There is a lack of other options in the laundry provider marketplace.
- We were in a current contract, which was for 10 years, in order to facilitate a cashless system for which we wouldn't incur any costs, JLA/Circuit would pay for the installation and extended the contract for 8 years.
- We did not like the available alternatives. It was too high risk to run our own laundry service. Other providers do not offer the technical payment solutions that Circuit provide.
- Ease at the time. Lack of alternatives
- we were happy with the service they gave but the machines were breaking down and we decided to replace them with new machines
- Circuit provide a great service and they do nothing wrong. They are proactive and provide reasonable commission. Other providers I have tried have not delivered on service, where Circuit have.
- we received great service and the arrangement with commission worked for us
- we were very happy with the service they provided
- At the time the service was very good. However, the laundry service got very busy. So we looked at Circuits' record in other colleges and it had a very good record.
- I am satisfied with all parts of the service provided by my existing provider Circuit.
- Happy with service, no problems
- we liked the services Armstrong provided, we wanted cash machines rather than card payments

Q16b Please can you explain a little more about the approach you took and why you took that approach specifically?

- we would put forward a proposal from a laundry provider we were familiar with which would be reviewed by the building owner and then if they wanted us to approach other providers we would obtain other proposals
- it was a continuation with someone else's contract, we had taken over the building, it was a new market for us as well, so it was easier to continue with the existing contract

- Standard procurement process, which is so we're clear about what we need and so that they could have the opportunity to make us aware of the added value to the contract, something they thought may be beneficial, not already pointed out.
- We chose the three providers that we thought were the best. We had no guidance from anyone and asked existing providers for an updated proposal as to how they'd manage the sites.
- Only that we saw that they were a provider on the internet, a provider within other colleges and we decided to speak to them to see what they could offer and went with it.
- the tenant was already a customer I think, when the process started

Q21a Contract considerations What were the most important factors when choosing XX provider in preference to other providers? Interviewer:

Do not read out. Capture first response and code appropriately

- Good contract length
- I have previous experience of Circuit's service
- they were already there, in place
- upgrades of machines and laundry facilities
- good service
- service provision and cleaning of the laundry area
- they were the incumbent and we were told doing a good job
- ratio of machines supplied to students in building, length of term and upgrades during term, moving from cash to digital at no cost
- added value provided
- General quality of service to our student residents
- We went with the company we were familiar with and I think students are able to transfer credit from one site to another.
- provider's credit rating
- Continued service from existing provider, Circuit are a big company
- Lack of alternatives and ease
- additional extras
- Student experiences
- Circuit were the incumbent provider
- the customer service promised in the tender submitted
- customer service and environmental credentials
- the app facility
- excellent package for end users, app facilities
- Flexibility in payment options
- we chose Clean Machine, a company that Circuit bought
- communication system, e.g. a ping when the washing is finished, machine repairs and ratio of machines provided
- The entire service was great
- disruption and refurbishment of new laundries
- the reliability of the machines
- Washstation were chosen and taken over by JLA/Circuit who agreed to uphold the Washstation contract.
- their reputation and standard of service
- cost of service
- coin operated machines
- Reviews from other colleges.

Q21c You said that experience with other HE clients was essential/important to you. Why is that?

- they know the demands that the equipment has to meet and what we expect in terms of service, maintenance and repairs.
- It is important, but not essential. It is more important that they can provide the level of service that I want.
- Students are a particular type of clientele. It has to be appreciated that we would not want price increases midway through the academic year. Students can also be harsh on the machines in terms of overloading them and causing breakdowns.
- because of their experience in the sector, they know the pitfalls of providing machines in student accommodation
- at the end of the day the kids are here to attend university and their laundry is the least important part. Students are on site in the first year, if in the later years the laundry providers do not charge extortionate amounts, but the students can use similar facilities off site at similar prices, then it is not going to scare them off from using those services, so a provider with HE experience is very important.
- these are our products, we needed confidence that they provide laundry services to those types of customers
- we want to deal with a party experienced in the higher education sector
- we would know what we are getting, they are a known entity, we could obtain formal references from other HE institutions
- Deal with university most of the time
- We would consider their reputation and quality of service and be looking for a provider with a known track record
- we work with lots of the universities, we have had to follow the pricing of the universities
- We are a higher education establishment and we wanted a provider that could offer a very good service in that market.
- it was a new market for us and it was important they knew what they were doing, as we were new to the market, and we didn't want both us and them to be inexperienced
- I know Circuit and their position in the market, it is a significant presence and that demonstrates that they are more than capable of doing the work
- previous experience and reliability is like a reference
- having experience with other HE clients ensures track record of dealing with students using the machines, which impacts on the reliability of the machines, and their response times in dealing with any issues arising
- Because we deliver services to students, so a provider with HE experience is important
- we would take up references with other HE organisations to make sure that as a provider what they are proposing they could deliver on
- I think because if you get a company already serving a university, they are aware of the problems and internationally they are good with that set up and fairly good at offering things in different languages.
- Experience with HE clients is a demonstration that they have credibility and are used by those who are familiar to us. It provides confidence in other HE institutions that we work with.

- It was the importance of experience, needing to have the experience to know what was required. We were just starting running our own student accommodation service, so e.g. them knowing the number of machines based on number of bedrooms was very important.
- As such a large provider, we do not need to rely on the experience of what others have been through. Experience with other HE clients is NOT important to me.
- It does not matter if the provider has worked in sector as long as have facilities and equipment to maintain a good service level. It is essential that the quality of service is high, as the cost of living our building is high.
- To ensure that provider we are choosing has experience in dealing in the industry and can react fast to problems. Showing students how to use machines is also useful.
- I guess they would understand the market and the demands of the customer.
- we need to provide services to students that are affordable and easy to use and functional and using suppliers with HE experience would help with that
- they know what they can do, they are experienced in this sector
- It is a complex brief of tender. The student laundry provider needs to understand a number of factors including IT configuration, a customer service element to students and our client needs.
- it was a little bit important, just run of the mill, no special importance
- I do not want to feel like an outsider. I want to use a provider that has been used by others. It is important to me that the laundry provider does not reflect poorly on my business.
- the provider was not needed to work across multiple sites, there were other elements which were more important so their HE experience was only fairly important in the consideration
- we work in an unusual sector in terms of client base, we wanted or would have preferred a provider with experience in the HE sector
- I guess I could change that to very important, being a provider in Higher Education, residential accommodation is a fairly unique experience to be a provider. Providing for a student residence is quite a unique experience, there are certain things that you wouldn't necessarily come across in other walks of life.
- We needed someone who understood the [name of location] market, we have short terms and the students work intensively in the day and then everyone wants to go washing at the same time
- Housekeepers in [name of location] have regular meetings and can benchmark providers
- The ability for other people that I know to make a recommendation about a laundry provider is important to me.
- Experience with other HE clients is a good benchmark for me when it comes to choosing a provider. We have [a large number of colleges] and around [half] of them use Circuit. That has a good influence on my decision to choose Circuit.
- Just because it gives an indication that they are aware of the environment they are operating in.
- We provide a unique service, to use a company that has similar experience in this sector is a key factor
- The University sector as a whole is very careful about the providers it selects. Knowing that the provider has experience in providing services to other Universities is a good benchmark when taking a new provider on.
- It is very important in understanding the relationship with a HE provider directly. Even though it may be a totally commercial approach, a university needs to provide a different level of service to students when compared to a private provider.
- with affiliations with other universities students are familiar with the facilities in other universities, and in the consultancy period, we would go to other universities for advice and use their experience
- to have proof that what they said they could provide was provided, we visited other universities and discussed laundry provision with them.
- It's a niche environment, we were looking for experience in that and references from colleagues at other universities.
- They were the leading company in the market, with a good reputation, they would be good to us as they have experience working with students in the HE sector rather than providing services to other users like caravan parks
- We don't want people who don't have experience, but who know the ropes and what to do, it makes life easier for us, we don't want a random guy that maintains a few machines but based on our scale we need someone with history of HE clients.
- they know what students do to laundrettes and know what they are up against
- We want someone to understand the market
- we knew they would provide a good service, they have a good reputation
- I didn't know who else used them.
- they may be a company working in other sectors or other outlets like nursing homes with skills that are transferable to student accommodation
- The students go round and talk to others about their provider so it was important to get it right first time
- The [name of location] College is the site of a unique environment. We rely on reviews from other colleges before we make any decisions.

Q21d You said that a variable rental agreement was essential/important to you. Why is that?

- We have to provide the water and electricity to run the machines and that cost needs to be offset with the commission.
- because of the amount of commission we would be getting
- in some buildings more machines are used more, it is important we can vary the terms of the agreement according to our need. We carried over the terms from others, and they might not be how we would want it, so we would like to make it more suitable for us.
- this is the only agreement we would consider, we don't hold the developments, there is no commission structure that would work for us
- the alternative is a fixed rent deal, but this transfers the operational risk to us
- so we get the commission, they are not free and there is no fixed cost
- it is very important to the building owners, that they have no capital expenditure and the right quality and specification of the machines, the actual commission they get is not that important
- We have had no cash outlay for the equipment, we just pay for the water and electricity and we get commission back to compensate for those expenses.
- It seemed the best option available at the time, with no cost to us of maintaining the machines.
- it is based on usage and we get rewarded and we are responsible for the refurbishment inside
- There were no upfront costs, in developing the property Circuit fitted it out to the required standard and we receive commission
- It provided an opportunity for income generation as well to cover some of the costs of providing the service
- we wanted to offer students free services at point of use
- laundry rooms tie up real estate in the properties we manage, and if there is no revenue they would just take space but it is a service that we need to provide so with a variable rental agreement we have a balance between the cost of providing the service and the revenues we are getting from it.
- we didn't want to have the maintenance of the machines, it is not an area of our expertise and also there are cost implications as well

- At the time it was because we were very new to the accommodation sector and we didn't just want to go with buying ourselves in, in terms of what rental agreement would be to be able to change. We needed to have a laundry provider on site, so they must be doing something right, we were fairly comfortable with them.
- We want to get a significant proportion of the commission paid back to us.
- The variable rental agreement was not a deal breaker, it was one of the options but it was not absolutely paramount to have that sort of agreement. We looked at the package as a whole and not particularly that element of the package.
- The commission adds to our bottom line and we offer a high quality service and need the income to maintain this.
- We've got to be able to negotiate... the income is obviously crucial to the arrangement. You've got to project how much income you're going to receive. You've got to agree a suitable amount to make it work. You've got to cover the cost of the utility and the loss of space. You need income to make it work.
- variable rental agreements offer more flexibility
- it allowed us to loan the machines and we get commission
- From the commercial acumen side it comes into our budget planning for the University.
- we did not want the responsibility of owning the machines but we wanted a share of the revenues from the machines. Our maintenance team on site is very stretched and we wouldn't have wanted to add to their burden
- The commission helps cover our costs as I supply the water and gas for the washing machines and driers. It also ensures that both Circuit's and our interests are aligned as we both lose money if the machines are not working properly.
- we did not want ownership of the machines, they provided great service and we have shared interests in the arrangement working and in the service levels
- We didn't want to own the equipment but being able to drive commercial value with commissions was important
- We want some money back if we can get some.
- It is good having some income to offset the electricity and gas costs of operation.
- Because of the nature of using the space, we lease the space to them, they provide the machines, there has been no outlay by [name of university].
- we were under pressures to get the best deal for the tenants, our commission was secondary to that
- We have no capital invest. We wanted a fully serviced offering by the washing machine supplier without having to invest capital ourselves.
- We have expenses for utilities in the area and the commission gained offsets that expense.
- to ensure that the price the students paid was not too high we negotiated a lower commission rate so the students were not paying too much
- That was the service model we were interested in, we didn't want to own the machines.
- The variable rental agreement is not as important, there are more important factors like quality and costings
- it seems a good business model, I am not going to outlay the vast amount of money for new machinery, I am looking after the charity's money basically
- we needed to make sure we had a good agreement in place, getting a good income from the space
- We had that type of agreement before
- It allows a certain level of flexibility, the providing company has to work harder to get the income, rather than relying on a fixed contract, the services must be good to encourage students to use their services
- It gives me leeway to negotiate next time and we get commission back for our funds
- We did the same with the previous supplier and we wanted to continue with some kind of rebate

Supplier assessment: Q16di/Q16dii/Q24/Q27/Q28/Q32/Q34/Q36/Q37

JLA/Circuit:

- *They had online top ups available. Commission was at the same level of 40 percent.*
- *We used Circuit previously and the cost of getting new machines was too high, we would have had to halve the machines, which we decided was not feasible.*
- *More expensive price for students. They would provide fewer machines.*
- *Lower commission and they were not going to refurbish the laundry rooms. A new provider would offer to bring in new machines and refurbish the facilities.*
- *They were a known entity and in situ, the incumbent provider.*
- *We have worked with them for some time and have never had any problems, they have installed machines in time which work and they fix any problems quickly, their options work well for the students in the buildings we look after.*
- *They are easy to deal with, we can get hold of someone and they do what they say they will do, they are helpful.*
- *I have not come across any in my dealings with them.*
- *They've got a strong market presence. We're based in [name of location], so they should have plenty of engineers, in case of breakdown.*
- *We are not entirely happy with the service, not 100% happy with them. They've expanded too quickly, they have been struggling to deliver machine service, they're not bad but there have been some issues where machines were not repaired quickly enough.*
- *They've got too big. I'd say that while they've got a good service in general, it's not as fast as it used to be, from a call out. They used to have a pivotal alert system which let them know every time the student had a problem. E mails don't appear to be coming through, which started happening not long after we had a change over in the representative that comes to visit us.*
- *There was not much in it, they had nothing better than Armstrong.*
- *Armstrong sent engineers to look at the laundry rooms, they were brilliant in the site visit Circuit's machines were not as good as Armstrong, a lesser quality, and for our in house laundry they didn't want to give us the high spec machines for free. Armstrong offered the high spec machines for our in house laundry.*
- *They've struggled to retain engineers, they subcontract the engineering repair bit to JLA. Circuit laundry provide the machines and the servicing is done by JLA. There seems to be a lack of planned maintenance, they react to issues with machines but don't necessarily plan maintenance work in advance to avoid breakdown.*
- *Reputation, knowledge and quality of service were what we were looking for and they had the added service of being able to use the mobile phone, not have to buy a card and go online. It made the service very accessible to the residents.*

Washstation

- *It was their commitment to customer services and engage with students, quick repair times and their commitment to engage with the students through the year.*
- *They didn't have the paperwork, the Health & Safety documents required, they were not able to provide it.*
- *Reputation wise Washstation are not as developed. Their exposure and market share is less than Circuit's. It was easy to continue our contract with Circuit.*
- *They provide a very similar service (to Circuit), they offer more commission to win the business.*
- *In no area were they better than Circuit.*
- *They had already phoned and given us a price charged to students and that price was too high*
- *They paid a higher royalty, they offered online payment and online availability of machines.*
- *Their coverage nationally is not so strong, so their service and maintenance ability to cover the whole country is not as good.*
- *Commission was slightly lower.*
- *They were a more dynamic company with strong customer service and focus.*
- *They don't exist as a separate company anymore.*
- *The installation timetable, they didn't demonstrate that they could meet the timetable to complete the work.*
- *With Washstation their servers are based in US so they couldn't guarantee the same level of services, if the communication system went down, it might take a few days to sort problems.*

Armstrong

- *Armstrong had good costs and a willingness to work with us on service.*
- *Personal service, they were really approachable, a family business, you'd know you were talking to an Armstrong person.*
- *We had less confidence in Armstrong's experience in the sector. I was worried about their available resources to support their maintenance commitments.*
- *They didn't offer any of the modern facility, only coins or tokens. There was no way of checking machine availability online and quite old fashioned machines that the residents complained an awful lot about*
- *They seem less good as a national provider, with less coverage across the country.*
- *We had Armstrong in place for a very long time, there were no specific issues on the service provision, but what swayed the decision was the added value that Circuit could provide in terms of refurbishment of laundry rooms, over and above what Armstrong offered.*

Goodman Sparks

- *They are a smallish organisation, we can communicate with them and resolve issues quite readily with them, they are straight forward and easy to deal with.*
- *Other providers have overtaken their business in terms of technology.*

Q43 In what way has your view changed?

- *I am aware of another laundry provider would give a better deal and service - known as [name of provider]. As [name of provider] do well for us on other sites.*
- *We were on long contracts and we were not getting the new services that the company provides, we still had the original technology. We wanted to get the best technology, and solutions available. Washstation offered card technology and better services, like SMS messaging and automatic acknowledgements that machines were broken. So our view has changed because we have become aware of the new technology. In terms of the commission we get, we would rather forego the commission we get to make the costs to the students cheaper.*
- *Our view of Circuit is not very positive, we are stuck with them, there are no other providers or we are not aware of any others that deliver the type of service to the amount of people we deal with.*
- *There are less options available when choosing a laundry provider in the HE sector.*
- *The contract lengths they want you to sign are very long and the speed of which repairs are done has changed for the worst.*
- *The service of the competitors has gotten worse. They are not technologically advanced enough and are behind the curve.*
- *my impression of Circuit has improved, there is better interaction between the two companies*
- *The JLA/Circuit contract relationship became stale and complacent. This resulted in poor responses and student dissatisfaction. This led to our tender process. Since the new contract we have a lot more engagement from JLA/Circuit.*
- *Our view of Circuit has changed, it was very difficult installing the new payment system, an absolute nightmare to get the prepaid cards working, the problems were somewhat on our side, but somewhat on their side, the students find it hard to use, less so now, we have installed booster boxes where the mobile apps wouldn't work.*
- *Washstation are not as good as I had hoped. The quality of the machines provided are not as good as I had hoped.*
- *we have been disappointed in the service delivered by Circuit, there has been a poor level of customer service and difficulties with installations at new sites*
- *Washstation is now Circuit.*
- *With Circuit customer service has not been as good as we hoped it would be, it has been variable depending on the area manager and we have had 3 area managers from [date].*
- *All three of these providers are now the same company JLA/Circuit, Washstation and Wilson Electrics. This does not affect my current contract, but I worry about the competition being reduced.*
- *My view has changed about Circuit themselves, I don't think they are as good as I thought they would be.*
- *Circuit have now completely bought out Washstation and PHS, their service has decreased and we have nowhere else to go, other providers no longer exist.*
- *we are now looking for competition in what others provide in the maintenance agreement, the turnaround time to get parts, as this can be slow*
- *The view on payment methods - student bodies don't like using cards as they lose money at the end e.g. on a 5 pound card, whatever isn't used can't be claimed back and there are admin fees to pay which means the student loses money*
- *there is more technology with other providers*

Q47 Why do you say that?

- It would be based on price and suitability of contract like any other provider.
- I think that there are other providers that are offering more than Circuit in terms of the type of service and being able to respond to repairs.
- it is fairly likely, we are open to any suggestions
- Nice to see what's coming on the market, and see what other services they provide.
- for any new services that might be good it would be definitely worth talking to them
- We would open it out to any company expressing an interest.
- now that we know what we are doing it is fairly likely that we would consider a provider without HE experience as someone else not in the market can still do a good job
- it depends on the tender, there might be a provider with something new and different, I am not sure what can be new in the laundry market but there might be something that comes along
- fairly likely - we will balance everything against upheaval, the fact that the provider has or has no HE experience is not highly relevant
- there is no one else operating on that scale
- we would be open to anyone wishing to tender, we would go to market and would consider anyone who responded
- Sometimes when companies become bigger they become a little bit complacent.
- The quality of service has been poor across board poor from our current provider. Choice across the board is limited on HE laundry providers. The specification of our washing machines are incorrect. The washing machines are bigger than the driers. So a full washing load can not be fitted into the driers to dry in one go.
- We would want to make sure that we were getting the best deal possible, if a new provider could offer that.
- very likely - there is not much choice at the moment, we would source alternatives if we had more time, to only have 1 or 2 suppliers is not much of a choice
- There are communication challenges with our current provider. They are slow to respond on requests for information. I think it is important to re-tender and I would not rule anyone out of that.
- I like more opportunities and to give people a chance. To make it an open competition.
- Well, I think that... Circuit's performance is a bit mixed and they... I think that when you're negotiating a contract with them... it depends on the position you're in if you've got leverage over them for example when they procured the museum and we need to refurbish some old machines then I'd consider using them, but I think having one supplier is not always beneficial. It's more work for the operator.... I think the problem with Circuit is that they're too big. I've used them for [number] years and their service is intermittent. Sometimes it's good, sometimes not. It would depend on their business model and how they delivered their service. If they worked in the laundry industry and they had a compelling business case, I would consider them. It would be a tough call – a lot of these contracts are 6/7 years and you've got to get it right to sign yourself up for that long. You'd amend the contract, you'd have a break clause to not sign yourself in for that long if they were new to the market.
- there is no one else to consider so we would look to providers without HR experience
- It frustrates us that there are not more suppliers offering this type of provision in the marketplace. There is an element of anti-competitiveness. There are fewer providers available than we would like.
- fairly likely, I can not see why the provider needs to be different to any other provider of services to the high street or to prisons for example
- I would always consider a new provider and what they had to offer.
- With Washstation not operating anymore we will be needing a new list of suppliers not necessarily with experience in the HR sector
- our choice of providers will be limited
- We would consider anyone who was able to provide the service, if that's the business they are in, we'd give them due consideration.
- I would look at them. In the renegotiations we would contact other providers so we can benchmark them against other providers, this gives us stronger negotiating powers in our talks with the company we are with
- My impression is Circuit/JLA/Washstation will pretty much have a monopoly, but I will need to look outside of these providers. I won't have the ability to get recommendations for these other providers though.
- We now have a different management structure in place, they are willing to consider other options.
- It is an uncomfortable place to have just one provider, we might try new and innovative services, we would not be against trying new providers offering alternative services
- we would be willing to look at a varied amount of companies, those with the experience and those without the experience
- we would consider different options at the time, to see what was on offer
- not rev to education sector - washing machine has a vending facility - services to remain operational is key
- My experience with Circuit has not been entirely positive, so I would look at some new providers, it would be an attractive proposition.
- it is fairly likely as we would like to see some competition in the market, Washstation do not operate in [name of location], to offer a more efficient service to students, to improve the level of service for students, from those experienced in the HE sector.
- fairly likely, at the end of the day we are a business with overheads, if someone can offer the same or better services at a lower price we would consider them
- fairly likely, I like to benchmark new contracts with similar providers, in the future it would depend on [name of provider] having the same management structure and service but I wouldn't be opposed in considering providers without HE experience
- my view is that if you are happy with the company providing the service you would not want to move but I would look at other companies to compare cost
- to see if they could give a fair price for the first contract
- we would be looking out for as wide a range of providers as possible

Q49 Why do you say that?

- This type of variable contract is not important to me.
- I think that it is ok that they do not offer the variable agreement, but then I would expect another type of arrangement in place to offset our running costs of the laundrettes.
- We would open it to anyone and see what is available, there may be a new arrangement available other than a variable rental agreement
- The commission revenue itself is not important to me. It is quite a low number. The level of service provided is much more important to me and I would be eager to look at a better model.
- It would depend ultimately on the financial agreement, but I would hear that out.
- fairly likely, we would look at all options to give the best deal. An alternative deal might be better for us.

- The university itself does not look at financial gain. It looks at the student experience and which provider can offer the best experience at the best possible price.
- Earning an income from commission is not a concern for me.
- We would explore our options against different providers, we would be open to every option
- We don't look for variable rental agreements, they pay us.
- We would still consider them, to get a mix up and get experience of other providers
- fairly likely, it is what we already know but we would be open to other options as well
- as long as they met the needs of students we would be interested, if they provided a first class service with no capital outlay from the University. Our main consideration is in enhancing student services, the level of commission to us is not important

Q51 In what ways do you learn about student experiences with these services?

- learner voice feedback student parliaments
- Maintenance and breakdown reporting provides the information we need.
- We do not monitor student satisfaction with laundry services.
- annual survey, we deliver the survey to the residents, in the rooms
- A satisfaction survey at the end of each academic year. It was an online survey, but the survey is going to be changing due to GDPR and we will be looking at the questions asked in the survey generally.
- we do not really learn about their experiences
- we manage the halls and we get direct feedback from the students
- annual customer service surveys on arrival and departure, mainly on departure as new arrivals wouldn't have much experience of the laundry providers students come into the office saying that the machines are not working reports from Washstation stating commissions and machine breakdowns
- Through the training from the company
- we have regular feedback from students, the local building teams may get building feedback, I don't get any negative feedback, if there are some issues then I am unaware of them.
- we do student surveys every year and also we have regular meetings about the machines with providers about breakdowns. The students feedback to the villages and the villages feedback to us so we can iron out any issues there and then to keep the students very satisfied
- We have surveys of students, for the Circuit customers we know if there are problems with the facilities and we have had no negative feedback.
- there is a helpdesk on site for students and we get feedback from the university housing team
- 2 surveys annually assessing student satisfaction general student feedback over the year
- annual student satisfaction survey for hall services provision including the laundry service through hall managers if there are any complaints, they get a general feeling about how things are working
- we operate a system where I have weekly meetings with student reps and at those weekly meetings among other things we discuss the washing machines, the meetings are for operational matters of the college
- the students complain if there is any issue, we get feedback verbally and by email we get feedback from the staff as well Feedback is on an ongoing basis throughout the year
- we have surveys of all students, 2 main surveys a year and sporadic engagements as well focus groups and SMS surveys there is a kiosk in reception to give feedback also other feedback boxes
- we get feedback from the reception desk if there is a problem, we also send out surveys throughout the year, once a term so 3 times a year so we get comments from that as well
- Usually by personal e mail from them. National student surveys asking questions related to all the services, in the end, where we get feedback.
- Feedback from internal surveys completed by students. First hand reports of machine breakdowns from students. The auditing of our maintenance systems.
- A student satisfaction survey.
- We undertake student satisfaction surveys.
- from social media, Student union and emails, they come and tell us directly, they tell the University directly, speaking to the team managers of the halls
- We survey our residents on all elements of our business.
- We have lots of student surveys done. Our main survey is before Christmas. It also looks at laundry services.
- Through annual surveys. General feedback from students. If they're really unhappy they can post on Facebook or directly.
- we have very few complaints from the students we have course reps meetings we have a maintenance desk where students could complain but we have had very few complaints
- student surveys quarterly
- We capture anecdotal feedback. Performance of equipment reports and annual student surveys.
- from feedback from the customer service desk, also from new students and not so new students at the start of the year verbally or by email
- Direct feedback from students through surveys and feedback to our staff that attend the laundry room.
- We survey our students/residents.
- there has been a lack of maintenance tickets we get student feedback from an online questionnaire on departure, at the end of the student's academic tenancy
- customer surveys every 2 years and general complaint levels
- We run surveys on arrival, mid term and on exit and run an online student report system for issues anywhere in the student service.
- annual student satisfaction survey committee, we have a house committee with student representation which discusses domestic issues we have an open door policy students contact me directly with their dissatisfaction The complaints they have are the quality of the wash provided by the machines and the number of the machines and the time taken to fix any breakdowns but the students expectations are not realistic, as students work 6 days and then everyone likes to wash on the same day, so if one machine breaks down there is a disproportionate effect.
- we get emails from students and breakdown reports from them. The machines we are updating are at the end of their shelf life. The students are very happy with the new machines but we get reports from students about the older machines. We get reports from the porters' lodge, students leave messages with the porters.
- I receive feedback from the students union.

- We don't generally ask for feedback, there are committees, which I don't have details of. We have a maintenance system we operate, the students are not needing to contact us, they deal direct with Circuit. We get e mails from Circuit to say a student has phoned and reported a problem and then a further e mail from JLA from the engineer to say how they resolved the issue.
- We have a complaints and compliments process in place for feedback that way, it is an ongoing process, students also use twitter and other social media platforms for feedback and our helpdesk monitors the comments.
- We survey all students living in university accommodation twice a year. Some of our staff live in with the students so they get feedback by word of mouth that way
- The student union and student groups provide the feedback. We also survey them.
- We learn about this through our social media and satisfaction surveys.
- we have a student survey for feedback students communicate directly to us in email and in person on social media there is lots of feedback as well
- customer surveys annually also students complain if the services are not right
- Services are learned via the student union leader who emails students to put points across
- they don't complain
- Annual student survey, team experience meetings for the student community, throughout the year.
- we have just done a year end survey, including students' experience of laundry services from different providers. We have focus groups for international phd students about their residential experiences including laundry services from private providers There is a comment box in the office for general comments including laundry services There are resident assistants meeting with students and taking feedback from them
- the students complain to us in person and over emails
- on a day to day basis, we get emails and feedback from students and from the university
- I have weekly meetings with the Junior Common Room and Middle Common Room and the laundry services are part of the agenda if there are problems with machines students report them to the porters' lodge 24/7 and these get reported to me Cleaning staff clean launderettes once a day and report any problems
- We do an annual survey
- I don't get any complaints, but if something goes wrong they will get in touch, they can contact me directly
- I am next to the laundry room, the service and machines' reliability is good and the cost is good, We ask students as part of an annual survey, they would like the services for free but they can get a large load for a good price.
- we do questionnaires with new [name of university] students, a survey looking at accommodation and teaching, and exit questionnaires, speaking to students leaving after their exams asking about laundry and other accommodation issues
- we have had no complaints there is a service desk to email us if there are any issues or problems the JCR would tell me in our regular meetings
- Direct feedback via e mails to maintenance or to me.

Q53 In what ways has the service improved/got worse?

- Circuit's response to breakdowns is taking longer. The replacement of machines is something they do not do and the machines are ageing with rust on them. The machines are still viable to be repaired rather than replaced according to Circuit. Circuit have an App called laundry view and the bill for that is funded by us and is not a joint venture between us and Circuit. We provide the Wi-Fi for example. I inherited this in our contract and Circuit are making cost savings at our expense as a result.
- There is now less maintenance as they have put in new machines.
- Since the merger with Washstation there is a confusion over which business is doing what. We have had no contact from them and the contract end dates are very soon and we have had to initiate the contact with them ourselves.
- The speed at which machines are repaired has slowed. I have complaints from students regarding malfunctioning machines and high vend prices. The inflexibility of payment methods has led to poor feedback from students.
- Breakdown of machines and the time it takes to have repairs done.
- customer service and response to new installations has been poor
- we have a new account manager a lot more engaged with us as a client. they are considering installing additional machines to meet extra demand
- There are more machines down or doors locking up, and the number of callouts has gone up

Q56 Why do you say that?

- When these companies get too big it always goes wrong in the end. As the company gets bigger and offers more machines, they will offer less engineers to service them. Big companies are not customer driven and are more target driven. Ultimately this will affect the level of service received as we get different engineers with a high staff turnover or they may start using sub-contractors as well.
- the merger would be good for us - at the moment we have a mix of providers, some universities have Circuit, we continue with their contracts, we also have Washstation. Following the merger we can meet with one group of providers and discuss all the issues.
- Because of the technology that Washstation are bringing into the market, we have ongoing contracts with both providers and we would expect that the best technology would be offered to us.
- there would be less choice, less competition in the market to drive standards and keep costs down
- It has reduced in competition in the HE laundry provider sector.
- If there is only one provider we will not have a choice. There will be no alternatives.
- there are no other companies, Circuit can reduce commission and there is no one else to compete with the service.
- The merger is absorbing the competition.
- I think JLA/Circuit's machines and infrastructure is better than Washstation's.
- our experience so far is that the machines are kept up to the required level of service, we have the same contacts there and everyone there is pushing to make it work, we have seen benefits already and the transition has been quite seamless.
- bad effect- choice appears to me more limited and competition will be weak, we won't get the good service we require
- Because Washstation, when independent, were extremely responsive to the customer and Circuit, probably less so because they're bigger.
- JLA/Circuit were not offering same quality of service that Washstation were offering. We signed a contract with Washstation and did not know of the buy out at that time.
- With 2 companies coming together they would provide a better service as they would have more resources and more experience
- We were unhappy with the service with Circuit and now there's no incentive to improve service because there is now little or no competition.

- it would be good to have some competition, the merger would result in less competition, Circuit is the only show in town, the choice would be between them or less professional providers that don't have experience in the HE market.
- detrimental, the providers are getting too big and this will affect service agreements, they will cut down staff to make their investments better so call out times will increase.
- bad effect, there would be less competition



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