

## **Seeking References from DWP: A Guide for Suppliers (PPN 7-03)**

Suppliers of goods and services to DWP who feel that they are doing a good job may from time to time ask contract managers or procurement project managers to provide potential customers with performance references in pursuit of new contracts elsewhere. There is no problem in providing such references, and indeed they are actively encouraged if the supplier has performed well against the contract or above expectations, but certain rules of engagement need to be observed, as follows.

1. References must be sought, and provided, in writing.
2. References may only be provided by contract managers and other procurement specialists, consulting contract end-users as required.
3. References must be strictly factual. Staff are entitled to reveal factual information such as:
  - the nature of the goods and/or services supplied;
  - the geographical scope of the contract;
  - the duration of the contract, including optional extensions;
  - the approximate annual contract value, if the supplier is happy for this to be revealed;
  - a summary of the level of performance achieved against key performance indicators.
4. Staff may not, however, suggest that the DWP in any way recommends, or does not recommend, the supplier. Staff are also prohibited from comparing the supplier with their competitors or making any other comment about the relevant supplier marketplace.
5. Requests to provide a quotation for a promotional leaflet or advertisement must be turned down.
6. Electronic copies of all references should be retained on file, to provide continuity in the event of a change of contract manager.