



## **Working with Primes**

### ***A Quick Guide for Potential Subcontractors***

The Department of Work & Pensions has led the way in procuring their major employment services through larger “Prime Contracts”. Many smaller organisations have, nonetheless, been able to grow their businesses by securing partnerships with these Prime Contractors. This is a quick guide for how you can position yourself to join the growing numbers of subcontractors.

**To become a subcontractor, you need to make yourself ATTRACTIVE!**  
**To be attractive, you need to show a Prime how you can help them achieve these goals.**

#### **1. Prime Contractors motivations – it’s not about profit, it’s about WINNING!**

To win, Prime Contractors need to:

- ★ Evidence their understanding of the needs of the target customers
- ★ Show that they understand the particular issues in the locality
- ★ Demonstrate that they know and have engaged with the local stakeholders
- ★ Prove they can achieve or *exceed* the required outcomes.

#### **2. Prime Contractors subcontracting strategies**

Most Primes look for one of four things from subcontractors, which match with their needs.

- ★ Specialism – Working with particular customer groups.
- ★ Geography– Infrastructure in the areas that they need to deliver services.
- ★ Community – Working in the heart of local communities.
- ★ Sectoral – Delivering sector-specific training, including links to relevant employers

And across everything, Primes want Subcontractors who can deliver outcomes – helping people into Sustained Employment for 13 weeks or more.

#### **3. Position yourself as a Subcontractor – Best Foot Forward**

- ★ Meet the need – identify which of the four criteria you fit best.
- ★ Provide the data – How many people have you helped? How many outcomes have you achieved? Where are your sites? What is your relationship with local stakeholders? What other relevant local services do you deliver?
- ★ Provide the context – add to the data with one or two appropriate case studies, names of employers, local interest groups you work with.

#### **4. Avoid the pitfalls**

- ★ Don’t offer to do what the Primes do – most prime contractors are good at helping people back to work. It’s the hard-to-reach customers they need help with.
- ★ Don’t bite off more than you can chew! – Prime Contractors don’t believe it when small organisations promise they can deliver all services to all customer groups –and it damages your credibility for the things you CAN do well.
- ★ Don’t over commit – some Primes have offered large subcontracts to organisations too small to deliver them all, with disastrous consequences. Know your limits.