



**CabinetOffice**

# Guidance on the joint statement on access to skills, trade unions and advice in government contracting

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# 1. Scope

**1.1** The Joint Statement applies to contracts let by central Government departments and their executive agencies that can only be performed in the UK. It will not apply to contracts that are capable of being performed in other countries.

**1.2** The Joint Statement does not apply to non-departmental public bodies or other public service organisations (such as police authorities and schools) that are not constitutionally part of a parent Government department. This policy only applies to direct contractors although Government Departments may wish to encourage its application across the whole supply chain.

## What is an executive agency?

Executive agencies are part of a parent department and are created to enable executive functions within Government to be carried out by a well-defined business unit with a clear focus on delivering specified outputs within a framework of accountability to Ministers. They are generally headed by Chief Executives.

For example, Jobcentre Plus is an executive agency and part of the Department for Work and Pensions.

## What is a non-departmental public body?

A non-departmental public body (which may have a national or regional remit) has a role in the processes of national government, but is not a government department, or part of one, and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arm's length from ministers. There are different types, executive, advisory and tribunal.

For example, the Arts Council of England, the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive are executive NDPB's.

Examples of advisory NDPB's include the Committee on Standards in Public Life and the Low Pay Commission.

**1.3** The scope of the Joint Statement is limited as set out above. It is the Government's aspiration to extend the Joint Statement beyond central Government Departments to other parts of public services. This is subject to evaluation of its impact in central Government (as set out in section 4 of the Joint Statement), and further discussion on the detail of any possible implementation.

**1.4** In addition, it should be noted that the specific information on access to skills, trade unions and advice, provided in Annex D of the Joint Statement, only applies to contracts being performed in the UK.

## 2. Guidance on access to skills

### 2.1 What is the objective of this section of the Joint Statement?

The primary objective of this section of the Joint Statement is to ensure that employees working on contracted Government services are recruited, retained and motivated to deliver high quality services by being given access to basic training and skills, whoever their employer. Thus workers in traditionally low-skilled occupations will be given the opportunity to develop their skills and contribute to achievement of Government skills targets.

### 2.2 What are the key messages of this section of the Joint Statement?

The Joint Statement seeks to encourage further development of service providers' employees' skills towards a first full Level 2 qualification – funded by *Train to Gain* – because this will bring benefits both for contract delivery and the wider goals set out in the Skills Pledge, which we strongly encourage employers to sign.

The Joint Statement also assumes that basic skills will be relevant to the performance of most Government contracts for services or works to a reasonable standard of quality and efficiency.

### 2.3 How does the Joint Statement link to existing Government policy on skills?

As part of the Government response to the 2006 Leitch Review of Skills, it was found that although 1.7 million adults had gained literacy and numeracy qualifications through the Skills for Life programme, in 2005 15% of the adult population still lacked basic literacy (Level 1: equivalent to GCSE English at grade D-G) and 21% basic numeracy (a level below GCSE Maths grade D-G). Almost a third of the population (31%) lacked a Level 2 qualification (equivalent to five good GCSE passes).

The Government has a target to ensure 95% of adults have basic literacy and numeracy skills by 2020, and 90% of adults have at least a Level 2 qualification. The response to the Leitch Review also aspires to 89% basic literacy and 81% basic numeracy by 2011. Investment in employer-focused training funds is being substantially increased, but individuals and employers are expected to take greater responsibility for improving their own skill sets and qualifications.

Government Departments may find it helpful to consult the OGC website ([www.ogc.gov.uk](http://www.ogc.gov.uk)) for the latest guidance on social issues in procurement to give context when implementing the Joint Statement.

### 2.4 How will Government support this section of the Joint Statement in its policy making role?

This section of the Joint Statement on skills is part of a much wider package of measures designed to develop and improve the skills of the UK workforce. The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills has the lead policy responsibility in this area. The response to the Leitch Review of Skills can be found at <http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/worldclassskills.pdf>

### 2.5 What is expected of individual Government Departments (“contracting authorities”)?

Government Departments are expected to recognise the importance of basic skills to service delivery by:

- a) using the formal procurement process, to identify on a contract by contract basis the basic skills which will be needed for successful contract delivery, taking into account whole life cost, quality of service, value for money and EU procurement rules;
- b) including in government contracts, contract conditions requiring government contractors to

provide access to basic skills training, in accordance with the public procurement framework; and

- c) monitoring contract performance, to ensure that employees delivering the services have the necessary basic skills to provide the quality and efficient services specified.

## **2.6 Will skills apply to all Government contracts?**

The Joint Statement assumes that basic skills will be relevant to the performance of most Government contracts for services or works to a reasonable standard of quality and efficiency. Government Departments will need to decide at what stage of the procurement process skills should be included, whether as being necessary to do the job, or related to performance of the contract or both. Within these assumptions, in deciding at what stage to factor in basic skills or access to basic skills, contracting authorities will need to consider the nature of the contract at hand. This should be done in accordance with EU procurement rules.

If basic skills are necessary to do the job, questions can be built into pre-qualification material for selection. Alternatively, or in addition, access to basic skills training may be related to performance of the contract and can be set as contract conditions. There is flexibility on contracting authorities to decide case by case which contracts merit which approach.

These provisions are not intended to apply retrospectively although Government Departments should take every opportunity to further the skills agenda.

## **2.7 How and when should skills requirements be included in the specification?**

Within the assumptions, contracting authorities will identify contract by contract the basic skills that are needed in order to do the job – to deliver the service. Their relevance to the contract will need to be made evident. Particular skills for example may be important for staff dealing directly with the public. Where it is

decided certain basic skills are directly relevant to the contract and to the operator's ability to do the job these can be included in the specification and considered at selection stage.

In addition to the specification requirements it may also be appropriate to provide for access to training in contract conditions, for example to ensure those skills are maintained and monitored. Contract performance conditions apply after the contract has been awarded and form part of the ongoing relationship between the contracting Government department and the service provider. The details of the contract performance conditions will need to be made clear when advertising or publicising the requirements for the contract and any special contract conditions must be included in the contract notice. Contracting Government departments can then use ongoing contract relationship management to support and monitor implementation.

Contracting authorities are also encouraged to send out alongside their procurement documentation material communicating the culture within the authority in its relations with its contractors (making clear that tenderers will not be assessed on this material). This can help downstream: successful contractors will not then be surprised over contract management and later encouragement to sign the Skills Pledge. It is important however for contracting authorities to make clear this additional material or cultural preference is not something on which operators will be assessed in the procurement stages of the process.

## **2.8 What will happen when skills are not included in the specification?**

The Joint Statement underlines the importance Government and industry attaches to skills as relevant to the quality of services delivered under Government contracts. The procurement process itself is just one part of the picture. As the Joint Statement makes clear, it is important for contracting authorities to work closely with suppliers to monitor performance, raise awareness of the availability of *Train to Gain* and the funding it gives, to facilitate access to training (for example permitting access to work, sharing in-house

expertise) and to encourage and support voluntary further basic skills development.

### **2.9 How should contracting authorities promote the Skills Pledge?**

Outside the formal procurement process; for example, through relationship management, contracting authorities should also encourage suppliers to sign up to the Skills Pledge. The current expectation is they should do so in relation to successful operators. This helps to reinforce the Government's skills agenda and it is particularly important for employers to commit to encourage and support their own employees. This is not part of the procurement process itself and contracting authorities would need to be transparent about this. In general contracting authorities will want to encourage suppliers to commit to the Skills pledge after award of the contract, but equally they may want to alert potential operators to the authority's overall attitude. If they do so, suitable wording may be:

*"We are very committed to improving the quality of services delivered under our contracts and want to see improvement in the skills of those working on these. This is an ideal shared by industry stakeholders and we encourage you to sign up to the Skills Pledge. This is not a condition to working with us now or in the future, nor part of the contract. It is however a commitment on your part actively to encourage and support your staff to gain skills and we are committed to working with you to this end. We very much hope you will want to show your commitment in this way; we will discuss the Pledge further if you are successful and look forward to working with you."*

If contracting authorities refer to or are asked about the Skills Pledge at an earlier stage, they should be clear it is not something on which either tenderers or tenders are assessed.

### **2.10 What are service providers required to do?**

Service providers will continue to bid for Government contracts in the usual way. Where requirements are made in the specification, they will need to show how they can meet those requirements.

Service providers should endeavour to ensure their employees are aware of the Joint Statement and the opportunities and information available to them within it, as set out in section 3.7. This is important because individual employees can more readily access the basic skills training or advice and support if they are aware of the opportunities that are available to them.

Service providers are encouraged, on a voluntary basis, to sign the Skills Pledge and consider the benefits of developing the skills of their employees by accessing funding through *Train to Gain*.

### **2.11 What will Trade Unions do?**

Trade unions and Union Learning Representatives will help implement the Joint Statement, in partnership with Government organisations and their service providers. This could include promoting basic skills issues with current and potential service providers, encouraging them to make a commitment to the Skills Pledge, assisting them in engaging with a *Train to Gain* Skills Broker, and encouraging employee take-up and application of training opportunities. This includes encouraging employees to develop their employability, both on the job and in their own time, as appropriate.

### **2.12 What will be the impact on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)?**

The purpose of the Joint Statement is to improve the quality of services delivered under government contracts and SMEs may already have the relevant skills or if not, should be encouraged to acquire them when applying for contracts. Contracting authorities should keep in mind the need to avoid placing unnecessary burdens on potential suppliers when deciding on the approach suited to a particular contract. If basic skills are relevant to the subject of the contract, then these need to be outlined at the specification stage and bids assessed accordingly.

### **2.13 What will be the effect on people who currently have skills gaps?**

The overall aim of this section of the Joint Statement is to drive up relevant basic skills. It will not always be appropriate to set a level of basic skill as core to doing the job. The assumption is however that basic skills operate at some stage in the process and it is open to target access to skills as performance conditions. This will both help employees with skills to maintain them and others to acquire and maintain them where related to performance of the contract. Overall this reduces the numbers in the workforce without skills and opens up opportunities to operators to win contracts in future.

## 3. Guidance on access to trade unions

NB: The specific information on access to skills, trade unions and advice, provided in Annex D of the Joint Statement, only applies to contracts being performed in the UK.

### 3.1 What is the objective of this section of the Joint Statement?

The primary objective of this section of the Joint Statement is to ensure that employees working on contracted Government services are provided with basic information about trade unions and can access trade unions in an appropriate way, should they wish to do so and whoever their employer.

It is not the intention of the Joint Statement to provide trade unions with new entitlements to access the workplaces of service providers to meet and recruit employees, especially where the trade union is not recognised for collective bargaining purposes. In some cases, however, employers may voluntarily wish to provide greater access to their workplaces for trade unions, and the Joint Statement should not be read as discouraging employers from so doing.

### 3.2 What are the key principles of this section of the Joint Statement?

Employee involvement and staff buy-in are key ingredients of successful public service delivery and high standards of service.

The Joint Statement will help to ensure fair treatment by ensuring that all employees can access information, advice and support from trusted sources at work, and understand their rights in relation to trade union membership. The Joint Statement may be particularly relevant for those contracted employees whose basic skills are limited, or where the employee has little knowledge of their rights, or where to go for advice.

Trade unions are one source of independent help and information available to individuals in the workplace. Advice is also available through sources such as employee representatives, HR departments and line managers, as well as outside the workplace via independent sources such as the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) (see section 4 of this guidance).

### 3.3 How does the Joint Statement link to existing Government policy on trade unions?

This policy supports the Government's statement on *Success at Work: Protecting Vulnerable Workers, Supporting Good Employers*, which recognises that employee involvement and consultation are key to building good workplaces, and the importance of trade unions, where present, in facilitating this engagement.

### 3.4 How does the Joint Statement relate to current trade union law?

The Joint Statement is designed to complement good employment practice. It is non statutory and does not introduce new, or supersede existing, legal entitlements in relation to trade unions.

It follows that the legislative framework is not affected by this Joint Statement. Legal provisions, including those relating to trade union recognition, rights of trade union officials and individual rights regarding trade union membership remain the same.

General information about these rights is set out in **Annex D** in the Joint Statement. Further up-to-date guidance on these issues is available via the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform ([www.berr.gov.uk/employment/index.html](http://www.berr.gov.uk/employment/index.html)), or through the Acas ([www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)).

### 3.5 How will Government support this section of the Joint Statement in its policy making role?

Policy responsibility for trade union law rests with BERR. BERR will continue to provide accessible and up-to-date guidance on trade union law to help ensure that employers and employees are aware of the legal framework.

### 3.6 What is expected of individual Government Departments?

The Joint Statement recognises that it is important that service providers and commissioners engage with employees in order to achieve staff buy-in and high standards of service.

All Government Departments should actively support employee involvement as a key ingredient of public service delivery and should work in partnership with trade unions, public, private and third sector organisations to ensure rights in relation to trade union membership are properly and consistently applied in the functioning of their Departments and the services they provide.

To support the aims of this section, the Joint Statement states that Government organisations commissioning and monitoring contracts for services will encourage service providers to communicate the information to their employees (i.e. employees of the service provider) in a timely and appropriate manner.

### 3.7 How should contracting Government organisations ensure that service providers promote the Joint Statement, adhere to its principles and pass on the provided information in Annex D to their employees?

To encourage and ensure these objectives are fulfilled, action should be taken within the procurement process as set out below.

Provided that any contract conditions relate to the performance of the contract and do not discriminate either directly or indirectly against any potential

tenderer, contract performance conditions should be used to ensure service providers:

- advise employees of the opportunities to access basic skills training that are available to them under the Joint Statement; and
- pass on the information provided in **Annex D** to their employees.

Any special contract conditions must be included in the contract notice.

Generating awareness amongst employees is a key step and will help enable the employees of service providers to access basic skills training, advice and other support at work.

The details of the contract performance conditions will need to be made clear when advertising or publicising the requirements for the contract.

Contract performance conditions apply after the contract has been awarded and form part of the ongoing relationship between the contracting Government department and the service provider.

By embedding the requirement to adhere to the Joint Statement in contract performance conditions, a service provider will have to demonstrate that they have respected the principles of the Joint Statement in the performance of the contract, and communicated the information in **Annex D** to the employees working on the contract, in the most effective way. Contracting Government departments can then use ongoing contract relationship management to support and monitor implementation.

Successful relationship management will be key to successfully implementing such contract conditions and is often a more effective approach to embedding real change. Contracting authorities should engage as early as possible with the prospective supply base to emphasise the importance placed on issues such as access to information and advice. Equally, once the contract has been awarded, early discussions will help to foster a mature relationship with the chosen

supplier/s meaning that such conditions can be monitored and reviewed throughout the life of the contract. Where contract conditions cannot be used because access to skills, unions or advice is judged not to relate to the performance of the contract, a voluntary arrangement can be used instead. A voluntary arrangement can also be used for suppliers' wider workforces.

The Joint Statement does not intend to dictate how service providers communicate the specified information in **Annex D** to their employees, nor does it force a service provider to recognise a trade union for collective bargaining purposes where there is no current recognition agreement.

The objective for both service providers and contracting Government departments is that the communication of **Annex D** should be done in a way that fits with the service provider's current business processes, so as to avoid unnecessary new burdens for the service provider. How the service provider achieves the objective is at their discretion. For example, the service provider may choose to communicate the information in **Annex D** as part of employee induction, display the information on notice boards or integrate the annex into their employee handbook. The information in **Annex D** is also provided as a separate employee handout that the service provider may wish to use.

When sending out information to service providers or potential service providers the contracting authority may also wish to explain Government's support for employee involvement and good employment practices. Suggested wording to articulate the Government's support is provided below:

*"Government recognises that employee involvement and staff buy-in are key ingredients of successful public service delivery, and is committed to ensuring that people get the support and help they need to progress and succeed at work. As an employer and signatory of the Joint Statement, our Department will promote fair treatment by helping to ensure that all employees can access information, advice and support from trusted sources at work."*

### 3.8 What are service providers required to do?

Service providers contracted to provide services to Government organisations are required like all employers to treat employees fairly and to comply with the law regarding rights to trade union membership.

The Joint Statement sets out that service providers should actively communicate with their employees and, where appropriate, seek to build good relations with trade unions. In particular, service providers may be required by the contracting Government organisation to:

- advise employees of the opportunities available for them to access basic skills; and
- communicate the information on skills, trade unions and advice in **Annex D** of the Joint Statement. This should be done in ways that fit with the business processes of the service provider, and minimises additional burdens.

Consulting, involving and communicating with employees is a key ingredient of successful, high-quality public service delivery. Service providers should use a range of direct and indirect methods to communicate with employees, including through trade unions and other employee representatives as appropriate to their organisation, but always in a way that fits and is relevant to their business processes (see 3.7 above). The role of Government contracting organisations in encouraging and seeking to ensure this is explained in paragraph 3.7 above.

### 3.9 What happens when a service providers' workplace fully or partially recognises trade unions, including for collective bargaining purposes, or where there is no trade union recognition?

The Joint Statement is designed to complement good employment practice and should be read in conjunction with the current legislative framework on employment relations. The Joint Statement is non-statutory and does not introduce new, or supersede existing, legal entitlements in relation to trade unions.

The Joint Statement will help to ensure fair treatment by ensuring that all employees can access information and understand their rights in relation to trade unions, which they might not have otherwise been aware of. The Joint Statement may be particularly relevant for those contracted employees whose basic skills are limited, or where the employee has little knowledge of their rights, or where to go for advice.

The Joint Statement does not consider the issue of recognising trade unions for collective bargaining purposes. If a service provider's organisation has full or partial recognition, or has none, this will not change as a direct result of the Joint Statement being introduced and applied.

Trade unions can act as positive partners helping to support the business provider and the service they deliver. In some situations service providers will deal with trade unions and there will be established practices and procedures for individual employees to access the relevant union. Many service providers recognise trade unions, frequently through a TUPE transfer where a service has been contracted out, and there will be procedures in place for individual employees to access the relevant union. In other situations, that will not be the case. This Statement is particularly relevant to good practice where there is no such union recognition – focusing on ensuring that employees can access trade unions should they wish to do so, and understand their rights in relation to trade unions, which they may not have otherwise been aware of.

### **3.10 What is the status of the information on trade unions provided in Annex D?**

The information on trade unions provided in **Annex D** is intended to give employees an understanding of what trade unions are and what sorts of rights an employee can expect. The information is not an authoritative interpretation of the law. This can only be given by the courts.

### **3.11 What will trade unions do?**

The Joint Statement recognises that trade unions can play a valuable role in the workplace, for example, as an established source of help and information to their members, and in representing their members' views.

Trade unions will work with employers, Government and employees to contribute to improving public service delivery and will promote learning opportunities for all employees.

Where present, union learning representatives will help to promote the learning agenda by addressing workplace issues, such as encouraging take-up of training opportunities amongst employees.

It will be a matter for service providers, their employees and trade unions to consider and agree how trade unions operate within their workforce contracted to deliver services for Government organisations.

## 4. Guidance on access to advice

NB: The specific information on access to skills, trade unions and advice, provided in Annex D of the Joint Statement, only applies to contracts being performed in the UK.

### 4.1 What is the objective of this section of the Joint Statement?

The primary objective of this section of the Joint Statement is to ensure that employees working on contracted Government services can access useful advice about their working lives and rights at work, whoever their employer.

### 4.2 What are the key principles of this section of the Joint Statement?

It is important for everyone at work to be given access to advice and information about their job, or to know where to go for further help. This section of the Joint Statement outlines practical steps that contracting organisations and service providers can take to help employees working on Government contracts to access useful advice about their working lives and rights at work.

The Joint Statement will help to ensure fair treatment by ensuring that all employees can access information, advice and support from trusted sources at work. The Joint Statement may be particularly relevant for those contracted employees working on government contracts for services whose basic skills are limited, or where the employee has little knowledge of their rights, or where to go for advice.

A great deal of information about company policies and employment rights and how these apply to employees will be outlined in the company or staff handbook. The Joint Statement is designed to complement, rather than duplicate, this.

If employees want to speak to someone about their job, or any aspect of their working life, it is important to speak to someone who is informed, and receive accurate and relevant advice. Advice for employees is available through sources such as union and employee representatives, HR departments and line managers, and outside the workplace via trade unions and other sources such as Acas. The emphasis of the Joint Statement is on enabling and signposting access to advice, rather than providing personal or prescriptive advice.

### 4.3 How does the Joint Statement link to existing Government policy on advice for employees at work?

This policy supports the Government's statement on *Success at Work: Protecting Vulnerable Workers, Supporting Good Employers*, which sets out a high-level commitment to ensuring that people get the support and help they need to progress and succeed at work.

### 4.4 How will Government support this section of the Joint Statement in its policy making role?

As well as individual Government departments contracting directly with service providers, there is a central role for Government in providing information and enabling people to understand their rights at work and to access advice through impartial, free resources such as [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) and the Acas helpline.

The lead policy responsibility for this lies with BERR, as the Department responsible for employment relations and the Government's strategy on *Success at Work: Protecting Vulnerable Workers, Supporting Good Employers*.

#### **4.5 What is expected of individual Government Departments?**

To support the aims outlined in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 above, the Joint Statement states that Government organisations commissioning and monitoring contracts for services will assist service providers by providing them with the information at **Annex D** about sources of advice for appropriate use with their employees.

Contracting organisations should encourage service providers to communicate this information to their employees in a timely and appropriate manner that fits with the service provider's business processes.

#### **4.6 How should contracting Government organisations ensure that service providers promote the Joint Statement, adhere to its principles and pass on the provided information in Annex D to their employees?**

Paragraph 3.7 sets out the actions that Government departments should take, using both contract performance conditions and ongoing contract relationship management.

#### **4.7 What are service providers required to do?**

The Joint Statement recognises that a great deal of information about company policies and employment rights and how these apply to employees will be outlined in the company or staff handbook. **Annex D** of the Joint Statement lists a range of sources which complement, rather than duplicate, this.

The Joint Statement states that service providers should take active steps to enable employees to access advice about their working lives and rights at work, including through their own line management and HR organisations and trade unions, where they are recognised. The emphasis should be on enabling and signposting access to advice, rather than providing personal or prescriptive advice.

In particular, provided that any contract conditions relate to the performance of the contract and do not

discriminate either directly or indirectly against any potential tenderer, service providers are required by the contracting Government organisation to:

- advise employees of the opportunities available for them to access basic skills; and
- communicate the information on skills, trade unions and advice as set out in **Annex D** of the Joint Statement to their employees. This should be done in ways that fit with the business processes of the service provider, and minimises additional burdens (see 3.7 above).

The role of Government contracting organisations in encouraging and seeking to ensure these actions is explained in paragraph 3.7 above.

#### **4.8 What will trade unions do?**

The Joint Statement recognises that trade unions can play a valuable role in the workplace, for example, as an established source of help and information to their members, and in representing their members' views.

Trade unions will continue to work in partnership with service providers and Government to ensure their members have access to basic advice and information, as set out in **Annex D**.

It will be a matter for service providers, their employees and trade unions to consider and agree how trade unions operate within their workforce contracted to deliver services for Government organisations.

## 5. Compliance routes

**5.1** The contracting Government Department will be responsible for ensuring that the Joint Statement is properly regarded by its service providers.

**5.2** Any complaints about how the Joint Statement is being implemented by service providers should, in the first instance, be raised directly with the contracting Government department.

**5.3** The contracting Government department will first seek an explanation from the service provider:

- If the service provider's response satisfies the contracting Government department that the Joint Statement is being well regarded and followed, the contracting Government department will inform the complainant of this.
- If the response does not satisfy the contracting Government department, the service provider will be asked to take immediate action to remedy this.

**5.4** Each contracting Government department will publish details for employees or trade unions to seek advice in cases where they consider that the contracting Government department has failed to meet its responsibilities as set out above.

**5.5** If the complainant is not satisfied with the response or actions taken by the contracting Government department, they may register a complaint via the Office of Government Commerce Feedback Service. The Feedback Service is to identify poor practice in contracting authorities, not by service providers. Issues regarding particular service providers would need to be addressed through the usual contract management route.

**OGC Feedback Service** provides a clear, structured and direct route for suppliers or other stakeholders, e.g. trade unions, to raise concerns about public procurement practice when attempts at resolving issues with a contracting authority have failed.

The Service helps OGC identify areas of poor procurement practice so it can work with the contracting authority to put them right, and help ensure similar cases do not arise in future.

[http://www.ogc.gov.uk/procurement\\_policy\\_and\\_practice\\_ogc\\_supplier\\_feedback\\_service.asp](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/procurement_policy_and_practice_ogc_supplier_feedback_service.asp)

**5.7** Ultimately, if a satisfactory resolution has not been obtained via the routes set out above, the complainant has the right to make a case in writing to the contracting Government department's Secretary of State.

## 6. Other supporting actions

**6.1** OGC will support the enforcement of the Joint Statement by issuing a Procurement Policy Note (PPN) to all Government procurement staff. This will provide information about the content and objectives of the Joint Statement to relevant procurement officials working in central Government.

**Procurement Policy Notes (PPNs)** are issued to public sector organisations by OGC, to provide guidance on, or request information about, areas of public procurement policy.

PPNs are sent to public sector heads of procurement and industry representatives, who are asked to cascade these to purchasers across the public sector, as appropriate.

[http://www.ogc.gov.uk/procurement\\_policy\\_and\\_application\\_of\\_eu\\_rules\\_procurement\\_policy\\_notes.asp](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/procurement_policy_and_application_of_eu_rules_procurement_policy_notes.asp)

**6.2** OGC will also produce a short policy statement to be incorporated in its Procurement Policy and Standards Framework (PPSF). This Framework provides public procurers with access to current procurement policy, rules and supporting guidance. The PPSF can be accessed via: [http://www.ogc.gov.uk/procurement\\_-\\_the\\_bigger\\_picture\\_policy\\_and\\_standards\\_framework.asp](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/procurement_-_the_bigger_picture_policy_and_standards_framework.asp)

## 7. Monitoring and review

**7.1** The implementation of the Joint Statement will be reviewed within six months of its implementation; this review will be carried out through the Public Services Forum. This means that trade unions, private and third sectors and Government will be able to feed into the review. Following the initial review, monitoring will take place annually.

**7.2** The review process will identify the impacts of the Joint Statement in a number of areas. This will include checking that no unintended consequences or unexpected costs have resulted from implementation. Impacts in a number of areas have been identified as being of particular interest:

- The procurement process;
- Small businesses; and
- Skills.

**7.3** Progress in engaging employers to sign the Skills Pledge will be reviewed. Access to basic skills impacts will be analysed by comparing data obtained by government procurement specialists with that collected by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, and the Learning and Skills Council along with intelligence gathered by *Train to Gain* brokers about companies using *Train to Gain*.



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