



New SDP Supplier Set for Public Sector Success

In response to restrictions from COVID-19, this sole trader registered with the Supplier Development Programme and attended several SDP training webinars from April to June 2020, including participating in the Meet the Buyer 2020: Live Virtual Event.

Kate Hookham t/a Do Learn

Kate Hookham is a sole trader based in Dunblane that is interested in public sector contracts with all 32 local authorities in Scotland. Kate is an education consultant who teaches and facilitates learning outdoors in nature in early years settings and schools, through delivering training, coaching and project work.



Kate Hookham had experience in supporting her previous employer to gather evidence and submit tenders, as well as in delivering programmes and projects commissioned by public sector buyers through Public Contracts Scotland. Since venturing out by starting her own business in mid-March 2020, Kate's plans were put on hold with the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. She decided to use lock down to upskill herself on public sector tendering and began attending free webinars with the Supplier Development Programme in April 2020.

Kate said: "I knew from previous experience that public sector contracts could be part of my business' future. I saw lock down and the pause on educational activities as an opportunity to understand Scotland's tender system better, including registration on PCS and how to submit a quality tender, so I registered with SDP Scotland."

Kate is adapting her business model in response to COVID-19 to embrace new technology, though it is at odds with her preferred personalised approach. She commented: "We are all seeking other means to communicate and interact, given the situation we find ourselves in with COVID-19 and social distancing. My industry, education, by its very nature is people focused. My preference is face-to-face contact with staff on their site. However, I am now looking at other means to support young people and the wider community. I have learnt how to create webinars, online courses and now I am even using Twitter. I do enjoy the methods I am discovering, as all have an important role to play in connecting people."

SDP's Meet the Buyer 2020: Live Virtual Event offered another "first" for Kate. She said: "I first heard about Meet the Buyer when I attended SDP's webinar on 'Using PCS and Other Portals' in April. Once I understood how Twitter operated and after a couple of mistakes, I enjoyed the approach. It allowed me to multi-task and drop in and out of conversations but still keep abreast of what was going on. It also allowed me to meet some buyers remotely, ask direct questions, and understand how local authority procurement operates. I will continue to use Twitter to interact with others and maintain awareness of current issues and evolving practice."

Kate recommends the Supplier Development Programme. She said: "SDP's webinar training helped me to improve my supplier profile and understand tendering processes, and I now feel ready to be invited to Quick Quote and tender with local authorities I 'met' through the Meet the Buyer 2020: Live Virtual Event in the future as well as the rest of the public sector."

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