

Our ref: 70000020v3
Enquiries: Dr Ron Chalmers
Telephone: 9426 9250

Ms Mandy Mason
Chief Executive Officer
LEARN
217 Canning Highway
East Fremantle WA 6158

Dear Ms Mason

During your recent meeting with the Minister for Disability Services it was agreed that the Disability Services Commission would provide you with information regarding the prequalification process used to assess the suitability of prospective service provider organisations.

To follow is an overview of the prequalification process that has been used by the Commission for over 15 years to grow and develop the not-for-profit disability services sector.

- Prequalification is the process used by the Commission to ensure that prospective service provider organisations can demonstrate that they are suitable to be contracted by government for the provision of services to the Western Australian community.
- The Commission uses a public and transparent process when calling for expressions of interest from service provider organisations seeking prequalification. This is done annually or on a two year cycle dependent upon the requirement for new service capacity in the sector.
- Prequalification is important to ensure that quality assurance can be met in relation to the delivery of services to people with disability and ensure that the use of public funds is effective, relevant, open and transparent.
- To achieve prequalified status, disability sector organisations must provide services that are evidence based, family centred, provide a comprehensive service, and meet the Disability Service Standards and a range of other qualitative criteria.
- During the pre-qualification process, prospective organisations are assessed for their current financial status and ongoing sustainability, their governance arrangements and membership of their Boards, the service guidelines under which the organisation provides its service and the quality assurance provisions that are in place.

- An assessment is made on these factors and the potential risk that the organisation may pose for people with disability and to government funds.

It is likely that the Disability Services Commission will conduct another prequalification process during the 2012/13 financial year. The precise timing of this process will be dependent upon the Commission's assessment of the need for additional service provider capacity.

I would encourage LEARN to engage in this prequalification process at the appropriate time.

During the meeting with the Minister questions were raised about the capacity of Government, via the Disability Services Commission, to allocate funds to LEARN to address accumulated debt. Unfortunately, it is not possible for funds to be made available for this purpose.

If you have any further questions in relation to these matters please contact me directly on 9426 9250.

Yours sincerely

Dr Ron Chalmers
Director General
Disability Services Commission

17 April 2012