

# Draft guidance: avoiding bias

## How to buy Digital Marketplace services fairly

How to avoid bias when buying services

When you buy services through the Digital Marketplace, you have to be fair, open and transparent. You can only award contracts to suppliers who meet your needs. To find the most appropriate supplier for your project, you need to:

- write clear requirements
- set the criteria that you're going to evaluate suppliers against
- publish your requirements and criteria so suppliers can decide whether to apply for the work
- only evaluate suppliers on the evidence they provide

There are many types of bias you must avoid when you buy services.

### Types of bias

You can't make a decision on suppliers based on:

- experience, eg if you or a colleague has worked with a supplier before
- familiarity, eg if you've heard a supplier's name before
- recommendation, eg if someone tells you a particular supplier is good or bad
- solution, eg a desire to buy a specific product
- availability, eg if you know before you publish your requirements that a particular supplier is free from a certain date
- recent awareness, eg whether you worked with a supplier recently
- similarity, eg whether they talk and behave in the same way as you

### Evaluating suppliers against specific criteria

When you evaluate Digital Outcomes and Specialists suppliers, you must use the marking scheme that you published with your requirements. This outlines how you will score suppliers and what they have to do to achieve each score. It leaves no room for unintended bias.

At least 3 members of your organisation must score suppliers. You can take context into account, eg if they did a good job in an easy situation or a bad job in a hard situation, but you can't:

- agree an average score as a group rather than allocating individual scores against specific criteria
- ignore the marking scheme or apply any bias

Use the scoring template when marking suppliers.

You must keep a record of every stage of the buying process, including scoring suppliers.