

Here when you need us:

DBE Services
 Diocesan offices
 Clayton House
 Walker Office Park
 Blackburn
 BB1 2QE

All enquiries:
 Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
 TPM office Tel: 01254 958850

Fax number for job requests
 Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
 TPM Fax Tel: 01254 695975

Email address for attention
 Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
info@dbeservices.co.uk

EMERGENCIES outside office
 hours and Bank Holidays only
 Tel: 01254 958858

Visit our website at:
www.tpm4.com

Have a look at the
 Butterflies from Brook Bond
 in 1963 at:
<https://tpm4.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Butterflies-Album-as-added-to-Web1.pdf>



Peter Anne Nicole Tracey Sharman Sarah - The DBE Team

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What are we going to stop doing?

I hope you had a good break and have been able to find time for yourself and your family and friends. Over many years I have got very cross with those who simply focus on the long holidays they perceive those who work in schools get, ignoring the huge pressures and commitments working in education brings.

This summer has been remarkable for many things, not just the weather. I have not seen as many butterflies since I was a boy and was collecting the Brooke Bond or PG Tips cards which came with packets of tea. In case you have no idea to what I am referring we have put pictures of the type of album that most school children collected in the 1960s on our website.

Over time there were series on many different subjects from prehistoric animals to ships and planes. The cigarette manufacturers had included cards from the mid-1870s until the second world war. Tea companies began issuing them in the mid-1950s but they were discontinued in the late 1990s. This was more than a marketing gimmick. It was, as the albums stated, "offered in the interests of education". Education was not seen, as it sometimes is today, as simply the responsibility of the school. It pervaded everything and was a universal responsibility.

When Edward Lorenz began to introduce to the world the idea of chaos theory he spoke of how the single flap of a butterfly's wings on one side of the world could have a dramatic effect thousands of miles away.

I have often felt, perhaps cynically, that many of the changes/initiatives we have had in education over the years are examples of chaos theory. The life cycle of the butterfly does however have a lot to teach us about coping with the ever-increasing pressures placed on schools.

To become a beautiful butterfly the caterpillar must first 'die' or, to be more precise, go through a process of metamorphosis. If we are going to do the best for the young people in our care, we cannot continue doing more and more of the same. We have to be brave enough to give things up, change and differentiate wherever we can.

I would like to challenge you to spend time in staff meetings, governing body meetings and subcommittees and any groups in which you plan and develop the year, to have as the first item of the agenda "What do we not need to do/what are we going to give up?" Ask yourselves what could be done more efficiently either internally or by others. This is just as important as curriculum development or planning the nativity play. Challenge your colleagues to come up with ideas. Let us know and we will provide a page on our website, so you can see what others are coming up with (we will of course publish them anonymously).

I hope you have a good term and if there is anything we can do you only have to ask.

With every best wish
 Peter

New Staff ???

We need your contact details

A new school year often brings new members of staff to your team.

In May this year schools were asked to complete a GDPR form, with up to date contact details for your school. We would like to thank schools for returning these to us.

In some cases, the result of this exercise was that we could only record less contact information than we had previously, e.g. some mobile numbers for site supervisors had to be removed from our contact lists.

Of course, this is entirely your choice but, in some instances, it has had a negative effect. E.g. we have not always been able to contact schools who had requested works to be completed during school holidays. Consequently, the works have had to wait until the new term.

If there are staff changes in your school this term, e.g. new head teacher, bursar, or site supervisor, please would you complete a new GDPR form, and return it to us at info@dbeservices.co.uk

The form can be found on our website, TPM4.com under Member Schools Information.

Please remember that the more information you can provide us with, the more able we are to assist you.

We will never share your information with third parties and we will only provide contractors with the contact information they need to undertake the work you have requested.



The above photograph is rather tongue-in-cheek, as you will no doubt appreciate but there is a serious point to be made in this article, which covers how to proceed if you are not satisfied with a contractor's work.

All contractors that work for DBE Services have provided us with the information we need to satisfy our requirements, so that you can be confident in their professionalism and ability to undertake the work requested.

We will send a contractor to your school at your request and give them our DBER Job number, against which they will invoice. The contractor should then arrange to attend, directly with the school, who should allow them enough time to complete the work.

In the great majority of cases, work is completed to full satisfaction, an invoice is presented to the school through our TPM portal and this should be paid promptly.

However, should you have reason to believe that the work has not been undertaken with due diligence, or there has been some act or omission by the contractor that you wish to bring to our attention, it is important that you let us know within 48 hours of job completion.

“Let us know within 48 hours of job completion”

We do understand that an equipment fault may not manifest itself immediately and we will deal with all fault reports separately. However, in general, for any disputed act or omission by a contractor, we cannot reasonably pursue a complaint that is not reported to us within 48 hours and without any supporting evidence.

The responsibility for confirming that work has been undertaken, as requested, always remains with the school and we will contact the school office wherever possible to ensure that the contractor has attended as you requested.

The Contractor did WHAT???

How to proceed if work does not go to plan!

If works are undertaken during school holidays, we always recommend that a member of staff e.g. Site Supervisor, is present to sign the contractor in and out and to sign their work sheet when work has been completed.

We would not recommend allowing contractors to access school when there is no one available to check them in. However, any such arrangements made by the school e.g. during school holidays, are purely between the school and the contractor.

We cannot follow up any complaints that result from contractors being admitted to school when no staff are on site.

We will, of course, look seriously into any report of dissatisfaction but we do require quick reporting and reasonable evidence to do this effectively for you.



For your records...

We still get a number of items of correspondence from schools, including cheques, sent to old addresses. Please note our address is:

DBE Services, Clayton House, Walker Business Park, Blackburn BB1 2QE

When should we ask for a quote and when is an estimate required?

Quotes following a Service

If, during a service visit, a contractor identifies work that needs doing, unless this is for minor replacements such as batteries or lamps etc., we expect them to provide a quote, together with some information about the urgency or otherwise of the quoted work.

Quotes

Whilst governors are able, below certain levels of expenditure, to adopt their own policy on whether a quote is needed, we are more stringent than any Local Authority policy.

It can be very difficult to compare quotes on a like for like basis, so we always recommend that for any work over £2000, a detailed specification is produced by school, or their building consultant, and more than one quote is obtained.

If we receive a quote, which we consider to be too high or too low, we will ask for a second quote.

However, when we feel the quote is reasonable and in line with others we have seen for similar work we will only obtain one quote.

Similarly, we will not normally obtain quotes for things we know are low cost items.

Reactive call-outs are initially authorised to a maximum of £400 net, after which we ask contractors to provide a quote so that we can advise school of the total cost before they continue.

We cannot ask for quotes as urgent. If you have an urgent need of attention, a call-out should always be requested in the first instance.

Estimates

Quotes are not the vehicle to simply establish costs for work you think you might wish to do when you have the financial resources. To find out what a job might cost you may just need an estimate.

You may need estimates for several jobs to allow you to prioritise them. This is often a desk-top exercise to give an accurate indication of potential costs. To proceed with the estimate, we will normally get a formal quote.

We have been analysing the number of quotes we do for individual schools against the number accepted.

The number of acceptances is less than 25% but the most frustrating statistic is that for over half the quotes we obtain, schools never let us know if they wish to proceed or not.

Consequently, we now have several contractors who will no longer provide quotes to certain schools.

There could be a million reasons why you do not wish to proceed but please let us know, so that we can inform our contractors and delete the quotes from our systems.

The simplest measures are often the most effective!

There are many simple measures that could help schools to save money! Here are just a few...

- ☆ Clearly label all plugs that must not be unplugged or switched off. E.G. freezers, fridges and boilers etc.
- ☆ Loose posters and Christmas decorations over radiators are notorious for setting off security alarms in the early hours when the heating fires up... heat rises!!
- ☆ Before requesting a contractor, first make sure that the equipment has not been switched off inadvertently.
- ☆ Staff should know where your school stopcock is. Isolating a leak quickly can save ££££'s in damage and emergency call -out fees.
- ☆ If your oil-fired boiler is not working, physically check that you have oil in the tank - not just the oil gauge as it could be faulty.

This Month's Tips:

LOLER (but not the showgirl...with yellow feathers in her hair and a dress cut down to there!)

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment regulations 1998 (LOLER), requires that a thorough examination and inspection of lifting equipment (e.g. workplace passenger and goods lifts, stairlifts and bath hoists, to name a few - please check the regulations) must be undertaken before first use, after assembly and before use at each location and then regularly whilst in service, at least every 6 months- for lifting people, or every 12 months for other lifting equipment. This is different to routine maintenance and you must keep records of all thorough examinations and inspections.

If you have lifting equipment in school covered by these regulations, please check who is the 'competent person' undertaking these inspections for you and that you have all the relevant records. If in any doubt, please contact us for further assistance: nicole@dbeservices.co.uk



Help us to help you!

If you need a contractor, we are here to help but we do rely on you to provide us with as much accurate detail as possible. This is essential so that we can send the right contractor for the job, in the best possible timescale.

You will ultimately be responsible for paying the invoice/s and we cannot be held responsible for sending what school may consider to be the 'wrong' contractor, when we have acted on your best information.

For example, if reporting a roof leak - we need to know if it is actually from the roof (i.e. does it happen during heavy rain?) or could there be water pipes in the roof space which have burst or may be leaking? We can of course, identify the leak by process of elimination if you request this, starting with a roofing contractor but you may then also need a plumber if the leak is found to be from internal pipework.

Information we need from you, when you request a contractor:

- ✓ Full description of the problem.
- ✓ Specific location of the problem.
- ✓ If water leak - is it hot or cold water (different plumber types apply).
- ✓ Access times - Please ensure that contractors are allowed enough time to complete the job.

Using our 'out of hours' service

We all dread discovering a buildings emergency outside normal office hours but you can be sure that there is help on hand if the worst happens at school. However, there are just a few points you should be aware of when contacting our 'out of office' service provider and we recommend that all staff, including your site supervisor, are made aware of these, so that you do not incur unexpected charges.

If you have a problem with your boiler or your security/fire alarm systems, please be aware that our 'out of hours' service cannot assist you but you will be charged an administrative fee if you ring them to be advised of this. Furthermore, this administrative charge increases if you make a call of this nature after 10pm and before 8am. This is non-negotiable, so we strongly advise that all school staff are made aware of this.

For boiler or alarm emergencies, out of hours, you must ring the number on your equipment panel or, consult the emergency contact list that can be found at <https://tpm4.com/emergency-contact-details/>

The DBE Services office opens at 8am. If you discover an emergency between 5pm and 8am or on bank holidays, we would ask you to consider if the severity of the issue would allow you to wait until our office is next open (8.00am week days), when we can give it priority treatment at normal day-time rates. If not, the 'out of hours' service should be used as appropriate. Telephone **01254 958858** for further instructions.

The following list defines what our 'out of hours' provider considers to be an

EMERGENCY:

- Water leak causing damage to the property.
- No electrics to the property but there has not been a power cut.
- Board up following a break in/security issues - broken glass etc.
- Drainage issue causing blockage to an only toilet or all toilets in the property (but please consider if this would wait until our office re-opens)
- Access to the property - locksmith.
- Making a property safe - door not locking, roller shutter not working.
- Fire and Flood Damage - clean up (Uplifts may be required immediately & someone must be available to give authority for uplifts e.g. for the deployment of aqua vacs etc).

Emergencies requiring attendance 'out of hours' will require authority up to the value of £250 + VAT, to accept the call. However, the majority of calls come in at less than this amount.

An engineer will be appointed but it may not always be possible to provide an estimated time of arrival. However, if assistance cannot be provided, you will be notified within 30 minutes of making the call.

The role of the engineer will be to try, as far as possible, to carry out a first fix or, should this not be possible, to make safe. Further works should be discussed with DBE Services during normal working hours.

If you cannot get the assistance you need in an emergency, as described above, you may contact Peter on 07970 923141 for further advice.

Don't forget ... Contractors must book in with school before attending. If they have not booked in you do not have to allow them on site if it is not convenient. However, if they have booked in and they are subsequently turned away, you will be charged an abortive call-out fee. Please make sure all your staff are aware of this.