# Are You a New Supplier?

If you are a new supplier, or have never bid for a public sector contract before, it can be daunting.  You are probably wondering - where do I start?

The Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) website, provided by the Scottish Government, is where all public sector buying organisations must advertise regulated procurements. Regulated procurements are all contracts valued at £50,000 or above excluding VAT for goods and services but excluding utilities and concession contracts.

Quickfire Guide

Quickfire Guide

### Public Contracts Scotland (PCS)

## Who can use PCS?

Anyone can use PCS to browse for current contract opportunities and award notices. You do not need to register on PCS to do this.

### As a supplier you can:

- register on PCS to receive e-mail alerts when new contract opportunities are advertised
- set up a Supplier Finder Profile which allows buyers to invite you to a Quick Quote
- register your interest in and bid for an opportunity

### Buyers use PCS to:

- advertise future opportunities by using a Prior Information Notice
- invite specific suppliers to submit quotations for low value goods and services which are also low risk through the online 'Quick Quote' system

- automatically post UK wide contract notices via the Find a Tender Service (FTS) for those contracts over threshold
- post below-threshold contract notices
- publish Contract Award Notices
- publish their Contract Registers which detail all of their organisations current contracts from regulated procurements (£50,000 or over for goods and services)
- reserve suitable contracts for supported businesses.

Main Contractors on public sector contracts can use PCS to advertise their sub-contracting opportunities.

# Hints and Tips to get the most out of PCS:

1. Set up your account with an email address which is checked regularly instead of using individual email addresses. Set up an internal process for checking alert emails to make sure you do not miss an opportunity if, for example, someone is off on leave.
2. Update your account, Alert Profile and Supplier Finder Profile categories regularly so you do not miss out when new opportunities are advertised and the opportunity.

## Register for an account on PCS

Take 15 minutes now to register for a Supplier account and set up your profiles.

Video Guide

Video Guide

## Set up your Alert Profile on PCS

Alert Profiles are a free feature on PCS which you can use to find relevant opportunities being advertised by the public sector.

When setting up your Alert Profile you will select categories, key words and CPV codes relating to the areas you are interested in bidding for contacts under.

Once you set up your Alert Profile you will receive emails letting you know about opportunities that buyers have added to PCS when they have used these categories, key words and or CPV codes.

View the step-by-step guide on how to set up your alert profile.

Video Guide

Video Guide

### Set up your Supplier Finder profile on PCS

Supplier Finder is a free feature you can use to promote yourself to buyer and setting up your Supplier Finder profile only takes a few minutes.

Once set up your Supplier Finder profile make your goods and services searchable for buyers. When a buyer is looking for suppliers for a low value quote which is also low risk, they will use the supplier finder directory to search for suppliers. If you provide the goods or services they are searching for they may select you for a Quick Quote.

View the step-by-step guide on how to set up your Supplier Finder profile.

Further PCS information and support including User Guides and Frequently Asked Questions, can be found in on the PCS Help & Support section.

## What Happens Next?

### Quick Quotes

Buyers may use Quick Quote on PCS to obtain competitive quotes for low value purchases which are also low risk from suppliers who are registered on the website. Only suppliers selected to quote by the buyer can access the details of the contract opportunity and submit a quote. More information on this process is covered in the quotation section of the Supplier Journey.

Please note that suppliers do not need to register separately in order to receive quick quotes.

### Contracts

For higher value contracts (regulated procurements of £50,000 or more excluding VAT for goods and services) buyers will publish Contract Notices on PCS which give information about the planned tendering process. Registered PCS suppliers will receive emails when Contract Notices matching the commodity codes (known as CPV codes) in their profile are advertised.

Through PCS you can then:

- download the Contract Notice and other procurement documents. For example, the invitation to tender
- register your interest in the opportunity
- use the online post-box to raise questions with the buyer, (if the buyer is using PCS to manage their bids)
- bid for the contract, uploading your bid documents (if the buyer is using PCS to manage their bids).

More information on the tendering process is covered in the Tenders section of the Supplier Journey.

Quickfire Guide

Quickfire Guide

### PCS-Tender

Buyers will state in their Contract Notice whether bidders have to respond to the tender via the Public Contracts Scotland or PCS-Tender, and will include instructions on how to access the tender documents and respond to the opportunity.

## Learn More About Your Market

Being registered on PCS is not a guarantee of business. You will still need to undertake marketing and networking activities to grow your organisation.
Find out more about the opportunities that are out there by understanding your market, your competitors and public sector buyers.  Please refer to Understand the Market for more information.

# Guidance on Public Procurement for SMEs and Third Sector Suppliers

The Scottish Government's Procurement and Commercial Policy & Strategy Division has created Guidance on Public Procurement for SME's and Third Sector Suppliers (this can be accessed at the bottom of this page).

This document includes the sources of support available for SME's and Third Sector to help bid for and win public sector contracts.

If you have any questions on this document please contact: procurementbestpractice@gov.scot

## Get Some Training and Support

There are several organisations who provide training, advice and support for free on bidding for public sector contracts. Further details can be found in Support Available.

**Guidance on Public Procurement for SMEs and Third Sector Suppliers.docxDownload Document**

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