

Government Tendering - The Way In - Part 3 : Guidance 20

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The Treasury Solicitor

The Treasury Solicitor's Department provides litigation and advisory legal services to other Government departments. It purchases the usual range of office equipment and stationery, as well as IT equipment for use in its business. Quotes are obtained for small purchases, and formal tender procedures are applied to larger procurements.

The way in

For office equipment suppliers should contact:

Office Services Branch, The Treasury Solicitor's Department, Queen Anne's Chambers,

28 Broadway, London SW1H 9JS. Tel: 020 7210 3082.

For computer equipment suppliers should contact:

Information System Procurement, The Treasury Solicitor's Department, Queen Anne's Chambers, 28 Broadway, London SW1H 9JS.

Northern Ireland

The Government Purchasing Agency is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel. It provides a professional procurement service for Northern Ireland Departments and for an increasing number of public sector organisations. Its core business is to establish, on behalf of customers, effective contracts for the procurement of goods and services and to provide advice and support to enable them to achieve value for money improvements in procurement.

The way in

The Agency produces a simple guide for suppliers called "Selling to the Public Sector in Northern Ireland", detailing both purchasing areas and contact details. Copies are available from the following address:

Government Purchasing Agency, Rosepark House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3NR. Tel: 028 9052 6546. Fax: 028 9052 6440. Website: www.gpa-ni.gov.uk

The Scottish Executive

The Scottish Executive consists of 6 main Departments plus the support functions of Corporate Services, Finance and the Executive Secretariat as well as a number of Agencies and associated departments.

A wide range of goods and services are purchased, including those normally required by most large organisations, such as stationery, printing, advertising, cleaning, catering, furniture, equipment, IT, telecommunications, maintenance, consultancy, training etc. Given the very wide-ranging role and responsibilities of the Executive, it also has a large number of specialised requirements, such as laboratory equipment, research services, uniforms etc.

The way in

Those interested in selling to the Executive are encouraged to visit its procurement Website: www.scotland.gov.uk/procurement/form.asp

This site contains guidance for those wishing to sell to the executive; details of goods and services procured and a business enquiry facility to enable companies to record their details for potential purchasers.

National Assembly for Wales

To facilitate its administrative functions, the National Assembly procures a wide range of goods and services valued at more than £20 million per annum.

The way in

Enquiries about the National Assembly for Wales's purchasing practices and those relating to central goods and services should be directed to:

Mr Mark Elias, National Assembly for Wales, Procurement Unit, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ. Tel: 02920 823885.

Companies who wish to be considered for inclusion in the tendering process for other goods and services should write to the appropriate address below:

Roads

Mr T J Britton, National Assembly for Wales, Contracts Section, Roads Administration Division, 1 Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ.

Agriculture

National Assembly for Wales, Senior Executive Officer, Crown Buildings, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ.

National Health Service

NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency

The NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Health, established on 1 April 2000. The Agency was formed as a result of recommendations contained in the Cabinet Office Review of NHS Procurement - a review that also led to the formation of the NHS Logistics Authority. These two new organisations replace the special health authority NHS Supplies.

Purchasing role

The NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency negotiates contracts and purchasing arrangements that can be accessed by the whole of the health service in England.

These contracts are organised in two ways:

- o trusts can buy goods and services directly from suppliers under "call off" contracts. The current total value of these contracts is £12.8 billion. Goods are bought by NHS Logistics and stored in its network of 12 warehouses across the country. NHS Logistics then sells these goods on to NHS organisations, having broken bulk deliveries from suppliers into the quantities that they require. These sales currently total £0.5 billion a year.

Part of the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency's role in ensuring that the NHS in England continues to receive the best value for money possible is a commitment to manage the supplier base effectively so that the market place remains dynamic and buoyant. This may involve introducing competition to certain markets, identifying new products and suppliers, monitoring quality, ensuring continuity of supply and negotiating the best possible terms.

Helping small businesses

A significant number of small or medium sized enterprises (SMEs) already supply their goods and services to the NHS via NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency contracts. However, as part of the Agency's efforts to encourage competition - and ensure that the market place is accessible to all suppliers - it is committed to providing specific help and support to SMEs and new businesses. To ensure that enquiries from

small businesses are dealt with promptly the Agency has appointed a small business co-ordinator:

Andrea Dexter, NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency, Premier House, 60 Caversham Road, Reading RG1 7EB. Tel: 0118 980 8841.

Fax: 0118 980 8653. Email: andrea.dexter@doh.gsi.gov.uk

The Agency also produces a regularly updated booklet aimed at helping suppliers to understand how the organisation operates and providing details of key contacts within the organisation.

Copies of this booklet are available from:

Annie Anley, NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency, Premier House, 60 Caversham Road, Reading RG1 7EB. Tel: 0118 980 8610.

Fax: 0118 980 8653. Email: ann.anley@doh.gsi.gov.uk

The Agency also has a Website which can be viewed at www.pasa.doh.gov.uk

Scottish Healthcare Supplies

Introduction

The supplies function in the National Health Service in Scotland (NHSiS) is organised on two levels:

- o National - Scottish Healthcare Supplies.
- o Local - 28 Trusts along with 15 Health Boards.

The four UK health agencies are standalone entities, but liaison does take place in relation to strategic issues of mutual interest.

Scotland from 1 July 1999 has also had its own Parliament with devolved responsibility for health matters.

Organisation of Scottish Healthcare Supplies (National)

The Common Services Agency (CSA) of which Scottish Healthcare Supplies (SHS) is part was formed in 1974 to provide "common services" across the NHSiS.

SHS has three branches:

- o Contracting Services Branch (CSB)
- o Equipping and Technical Branch (ETB)
- o Business Services Group (BSG) (provides back up in IT, quality, finance, human resources and office services)

CSB

The main contracting areas are:

- o Hotel Services
 - o Energy Services
 - o Works Services
 - o Office Services
 - o Transport Services
 - o Pharmaceutical Products
 - o Medical Consumables
 - o Surgical Products and Materials
 - o Services for Disabled People
 - o ETB Contracting - IT hardware and software along with other medical equipment
- For further information contact the Assistance Director John Cowie. Tel: 0131 551 8118.

ETB

The main activity areas are:

- o Equipping health premises - major hospitals, clinics, health centres - both new and refurbishments
- o Providing design and engineering services related to medical and scientific equipment
- o Conducting investigations into hazards and defects in medical, scientific or allied equipment (within the NHSiS or externally as required by the Crown Office for Fatal Accident Inquiries)
- o Testing and certifying sterilisers and providing "Authorised Engineer" services
- o Managing the installation of Oxygen Concentrators in patient homes and the reimbursement of patient operating costs
- o Other services such as Energy Bureau and Environmental Monitoring

For further information contact the Assistant Director Miles Moorhouse. Tel: 0131 551 8278.

Organisation of Trusts (Local)

Supplies arrangements at Trust level fall into two broad categories. Some Trusts have chosen to have their own dedicated supplies organisations but others share a supplies service with neighbouring Trusts. Whatever the arrangements the objective is for local and central procurement to complement each other.

The 28 Trusts currently utilise four models to "deliver the goods":

- 1 Trust store on site.
- 2 Third-party off-site store.
- 3 Wholesaler direct deliveries (for specific products).
- 4 A mix of 1 and 3.

Experience across Scotland to date shows that model one is widely utilised, in some cases serving the needs of several Trusts. We ensure that all our National Contracts make provision for the above models, to facilitate any method of delivery for customers.

SMEs

We are always willing to discuss our business needs and establish better ways of serving our customers in Scotland so please get in touch.

The way in

S P Atherton, Director, Scottish Healthcare Supplies, Trinity Park House, South Trinity Road, Edinburgh EH5 3SH. Tel: 0131 551 8178. Fax: 0131 559 3918.

Welsh Health Supplies

Welsh Health Supplies (WHS) has the remit to negotiate contracts for the NHS in Wales that maximise the purchasing power of its constituent Trusts. These contracts are "call off" arrangements and any purchasing is done direct by each Trust in Wales. The main commodity purchasing areas are foodstuffs and provisions, textiles and uniforms, medical and surgical products, drugs, energy and utilities, IT systems and services, radiological equipment and building, engineering and electrical equipment. In addition, WHS holds detailed lists of NHS Trust contacts in Wales which may be of interest to Suppliers as additional sources of potential business.

The way in

Companies interested in supplying the WHS should access the Website at:
www.whs.wales.nhs.uk

Within the site, suppliers can access our Contract Programme and they can also apply for inclusion on Selected Lists of Tenderers via our Supplier Application Form process available online.

Alternatively, they should write formally enclosing as much detail as possible to:
The Director, Welsh Health Supplies, PO Box 183, Bevan House, Lambourne Crescent, Llanishen, Cardiff CF4 5GT. Tel: 01222 315500. Fax: 01222 315452.

Higher Education Institutions

The institutions which make up the higher education and research communities within the UK spend in excess of £4 billion annually on goods and services. Their purchasing areas are many and varied and include audio-visual services, biochemicals, vehicles, janitorial services, gases, energy, catering supplies and services, office supplies and stationery, health and safety equipment, capital projects and equipment, building materials and services, computing consumables and services, legal services, maintenance services, telecommunications, laboratory supplies and insurance.

In 1996 the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP), the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP), the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals (COSHEP), together with the three higher education funding councils, reviewed their respective activities in promoting good procurement practices in higher education institutions. They concluded that their activities in the field of purchasing should be brought together into one joint strategy under the control of a steering group - the Joint Procurement Policy and Strategy Group (JPPSG).

The way in

JPPSG publishes a directory of purchasing contacts throughout UK higher education. The directory (costing £25) is available from:

JPPSG, University of Glasgow, George Service House, University Gardens, Glasgow G12 8QH. Telephone: 0141 330 3151.

Fax: 0141 330 3189. Website: www.jppsg.ac.uk

Local Authorities

Local Authorities buy a wide range of goods and services. They make their own decisions on the way they invite tenders and award their procurement contracts, subject to the law and financial propriety, and in accordance with their own standing orders which are made under Section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972.

In awarding contracts, Authorities must comply with the European Public Procurement Rules and also with UK legislation which includes the Best Value legislation laid down by Part I of the Local Government Act 1999.

Under Best Value, which came into force on 1 April 2000, Local Authorities are required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvements to all local services, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. All services have to be fundamentally reviewed over a 5-year period, usually starting with the poorest performers. Performance Indicators and targets for improvement will be set and published in Annual Best Value Performance Plans. These will be inspected by external auditors and the Secretary of State has powers to intervene in situations where Authorities fail to remedy clear performance failure.

Further information on Best Value can be obtained from the DETR Website at www.local-regions.detr.gov.uk/

Authorities must also have regard to Part II of the Local Government Act 1988 which prohibits them from having regard to "non-commercial considerations" when awarding contracts.

The Government published in April 2000 a consultation paper entitled "Best Value and Procurement: Handling of Workforce Matters in Contracting" setting out its proposals to amend Part II of the Local Government Act 1988 to allow for proper consideration of workforce matters in contracting where relevant to the achievement of Best Value and also in circumstances where the requirements of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 are to be applied. They will not, however, relax the restriction on those matters that can be said to be truly "non-commercial".

The purchasing organisation within Authorities varies from one to another but there are four basic approaches you may encounter:

- o Authorities which allow each potential unit to buy for itself.
- o Authorities where the unit which buys the most acts for the others.
- o Authorities where a central purchasing facility provides for all units.
- o Large consortia which are concerned solely with purchasing and distribution for their member Authorities. There are others which buy particular product ranges.

The way in

There are various types of local authority body. Look up your council in the telephone directory or Yellow Pages and contact them for details of their methods and requirements.

The Municipal Yearbook (and Public Services Directory) has a section which lists the major consortia and gives contact points in councils throughout the country. Copies are available from:

Book Sales Department, Newman Books, 32 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SS. Tel: 020 8973 6400.

General queries on local authority tendering issues can be addressed to the Local Government Competition and Quality Division of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. They can be contacted at:
Local Government Competition and Quality Division, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 5th Floor, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU. Tel: 020 7944 4145.

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