



Scottish Ambulance Service connects to



THE SCOTTISH Ambulance Service is one of the latest authorities to embrace the European Commission's recommendations that public bodies publish a Buyer Profile site.

The Buyer Profile site will hold details on how to do business with the Service as well as hosting a real-time contracts feed powered by BiP Solutions' market-leading Project service. The new site will allow suppliers immediate and unrestricted access to future, current and past contracts as well as giving advice on how a supplier can do business with the service.

The purpose of a Buyer Profile is to provide details about a contracting authority's procurement practice and intentions, so that potential suppliers will be better informed about the purchaser and better able to judge whether they want to bid for a particular tender opportunity.

Suppliers are able to visit the Scottish Ambulance Service's portal and access procurement information, including contract opportunities, as well as further information on the authority's procurement strategy, practices, policies and key contacts.

The portal was developed by BiP Solutions using its aXcess service, which, alongside compliance with the EC's requirements for publishing a Buyer Profile, also provides real-time contract information.

The Scottish Ambulance Service procurement portal can be found at www.scottishambulance.g2b.info

Other portals developed by BiP include those for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (<http://www.procurementportal.odpm.gov.uk/>) and the Department for Transport (<http://dft.g2b.info/>).

To learn how your organisation can enjoy the benefits of an aXcess Buyer Profile and revolutionise your procurement processes, contact the Delta helpdesk on **0845 270 7090**.

Sir Digby Jones joins the N3PD celebrations



ONE OF the biggest names in public and private commerce, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) Sir Digby Jones (pictured), has been confirmed as one of the keynote speakers for the third annual National Public Procurement Practitioners Day (N3PD).

To be held on 6 June 2006, the event will host an impressive line-up of industry heavyweights, with Sir Digby joining European

Commissioner Charlie McCreevy, Head of the EU Internal Market and Services.

Drawing on his experience as head of the UK's most influential organisation championing the interests of industry, Sir Digby's speech will prove to be one of the highlights of N3PD.

Sir Digby said: "Public procurement is a tremendously important area for government, businesses large and small and taxpayers alike. Good procurement can be such an aid to productivity improvement. It is fitting that those who help build and sustain beneficial relationships between the public and private sectors are recognised for their achievements, and I am looking forward to speaking to them at N3PD."

N3PD has fast become one of the biggest fixtures in the public sector purchaser's events calendar, incorporating the *Government Opportunities (GO) Excellence in Public Procurement Awards*, which celebrate the successes of those working within procurement and the part they have played in delivering effective public services.

N3PD 2006 is due to be held at the Institution of Civil Engineers at One Great George Street, London.

Visit www.n3pd.com for updates.

New OJEU forms launched



THE OFFICE for Official Publications of the European Communities (OPOCE), which publishes the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), has now launched the new OJEU forms.

These new forms correspond to the application of the new EU Consolidated Directives (2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC)

which must be implemented into UK law by 31 January 2006. All contract notices submitted to OPOCE for publication in the OJEU after 21 October 2005 must be in accordance with the new format. As of November, if OPOCE receives contract notices on the old forms, they will be automatically formatted into the new layout.

New fields include:

- Type of contracting authority and main activity
- URL of Buyer Profile
- Information on Framework Agreements
- Procedures for appeals
- Award criteria weightings

BiP Solutions' Project service takes all the pain out of complying with the new forms. It facilitates the creation and management of all contract announcements in line with the new forms. Over 500 public sector bodies are currently benefiting from the service. To find out how your organisation can benefit, call the Delta helpdesk on **0845 270 7090** or email sales@delta-ets.com



supports EU compliance

THE NEW EU Consolidated Procurement Directives have caused concern within the buyer and supplier communities over compliance with the new rules.

However, help is at hand. BiP Solutions' Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS) leads the way in the provision of training and support for those preparing themselves for change.

The PASS consultancy service has recently been booked to provide in-house training for organisations such as Postcomm, GNER, Greater Manchester Collaborative Procurement Hub, Land Registry and University of Bradford. Training topics include understanding the new OJEU proformas, mediation and new purchasing systems under the new EU Directives, to name but a few.

If you have a need for training on any procurement-related topic the PASS service can tailor a training event or seminar to any requirements and for every level of purchasing expertise.

For more information call the PASS consultancy team on **0845 270 7055**, or email pass@bipsolutions.com

OGC chief calls for clearer deals

THE POTENTIAL for savings from collaborative contracts should be made more transparent for purchasers to secure the best deals, Chief Executive of the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) John Oughton has urged.

Addressing the 35th Annual Health Care Supplies Association Conference and Exhibition, Mr Oughton suggested that there are too many organisations undertaking similar collaborative contracts.

He said: "There are an awful lot of people who are on the same journey. If you start to map out these organisations you realise just how crowded this procurement scene is. There are lots of players. The next question is to ask how sensible that looks."

Mr Oughton has also suggested that there be fewer collaborations and that organisations provide more evidence on the performance of their collaborative contracts so that purchasers can secure the best deals.

"One of the challenges for all of us in the public sector engaged in this activity is to be clear and up front on the data on which we can then base the decision. If we don't we will continue to have a scene which is extremely crowded," he said.

Mr Oughton also highlighted that the OGC is negotiating a number of national contracts in areas such as fleet management, printing and temporary labour, which will be available in spring of next year.

Also addressing the Conference, Professor Christine Harland, Chair of the Health Care Supplies Association, urged the delegates to look beyond the health sector for collaborative opportunities and to move into more 'evidenced-based purchasing'.

Duncan Eaton, Chief Executive of the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency, stressed that the changing role of the NHS from a direct provider to a commissioner of healthcare services will create a "different picture of how purchasing and supply will need to support that".

The event, organised by BiP Solutions, was held on 3 and 4 November at the Britannia International Hotel in London.

For further information on how BiP can provide your organisation with a winning event, contact the Events team on **0845 270 7095** or email events@bipsolutions.com

New Yearbook for SOPO



THE BIBLE of the local government procurement community, the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO) Yearbook, is set to become even better in 2006.

The SOPO Yearbook 2006, an essential reference guide for the public and private sectors, will host contributions from such illustrious figures as

local government procurement champion and Chief Executive of Norfolk County Council Tim Byles and East of England Centre of Excellence Regional Director Steve Holland.

SOPO is the single largest representative body for procurement officers in local government in the UK. Its Yearbook contains over 2200 invaluable contact details for members, with names, telephone numbers and email addresses included.

To order your copy of the 2006 Yearbook visit www.sopo.org/yearbook, or call the BiP sales team on **0141 332 8247**.



Give it a GO

ARE YOU ever frustrated by the public procurement process or have you discovered a way to improve efficiency? Have you ever developed best practice, or undertaken cutting-edge research that you would like to share with your peers? If so, *Government Opportunities (GO)* wants to hear from you!

GO magazine is always on the look-out for news, analysis and commentary from the people who are at the forefront of delivering effective procurement for the public sector.

As the premier publication in the UK dedicated to the demanding discipline of public procurement, *GO* is the place to find and contribute to the best in government business intelligence.

Readers of *NPS* – BiP Solutions' procurement bulletin – can also be part of *GO*'s success and the collegial spirit of sharing best practice by contributing features and stories to the publication. Proposed feature ideas should be sent to bip@govopps.co.uk with the words 'proposed feature' in the subject field of your email.

Green purchasing power



ENVIRONMENT MINISTER Elliot Morley has urged purchasers in the public sector to better use their buying power to maximise environmental, economic and social benefits to the public.

Britain's local authorities and other public bodies spend £125 billion a year on goods and services. The Government wants them to change the way they do business to make purchasing more sustainable.

At the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' 'Leading by Example' conference, held on 19 October, Mr Morley told the audience of public sector and procurement professionals that they had the power to help develop new products, services and markets.

The industry-led task force has been asked to draw up a challenging action plan and targets for the whole public sector. Mr Morley said: "There is no better way for government and the

public sector to set a good example than through the way we spend taxpayers' money on buildings, goods and services. Every penny we spend on the public's behalf should deliver long-term benefits – economic, environmental and social."

The Minister added that the public sector must be prepared to change patterns of consumption and production and supply and demand if it is to make an impact. He also said he wanted to see changes in private sector practice as a result of the Government's initiative.

BiP Solutions will be running its 'Delivering Social, Environmental and Sustainable Procurement' roadshow for purchasers across the UK in 2006.

The special one-day events will help all public procurement professionals understand how organisations can take into account social, environmental and sustainability considerations and still deliver value for money while remaining compliant with the EC Public Procurement Directives.

The events are to be held in London on 15 March and 7 June 2006, Glasgow on 9 May 2006, and Manchester on 17 May 2006.

For further information or to book your place contact the Events team by calling **0845 270 7095** or emailing events@bipsolutions.com

Freedom of Information needs Project

A *NEWS of the World* investigation has claimed that Scotland's systems for managing requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) are a 'shambles'.

The newspaper contacted councils, police authorities, health boards and the Scottish Executive to ask how much taxpayers' money is spent on security and how they decided who won these lucrative contracts.

They emailed 16 questions to 30 of Scotland's 32 councils. Some authorities, however, claimed it would cost at least £600 to address the request – the one opt-out they can use.

Incredibly, one authority alleged the bill for finding the answers would run to £2645. Another took 110 days to respond, despite the Act only giving public bodies 20 working days to come up with the answers. In contrast, another authority was able to put together a comprehensive 107-page file.

Responding to such requests need not be so difficult, however. By using Project, BiP Solutions' contract notice creation and management system, authorities could have collated the information requested at the push of a button.

Project records all contract notices and identifies the procedure used for letting each contract. It also allows users to include other information that does not require to be published, but that can be asked for under FOIA, such as prices.

If you want to take the pain out of answering FOIA questions relating to contract announcements, isn't it time you got Project?

To find out how your organisation can enjoy the benefits of Project, contact the Delta helpdesk on **0845 270 7050** or email helpdesk@delta-ets.com

PASS the guides

FOR PURCHASERS who feel lost when it comes to new public procurement legislation or changes in buying policy, BiP's Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS) provides a guide.

PASS regularly publishes guides on all aspects of the changing public procurement regime in the UK and EU.

The latest guides are on:

- Expert Contractual Dispute Mediation Services
- Public Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC: Definitions and Articles
- EC Public Procurement related Infringement Cases
- Use of Select and Supplier Accreditation Services/Low-value Contract Advertising/the Alcatel Judgment
- Business Case for e-Tendering
- Contract Notice Proformas for the Official Journal of the European Union in compliance with Directive 2004/18/EC and Directive 2004/17/EC
- European Commission requirements for conducting public procurement using electronic means under the new Public Procurement Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC
- Developing Green and Social Procurement Strategies

PASS guides can help purchasers in the public sector stay compliant with EU buying rules and can be used in parallel with PASS in-house training courses.

For a FREE copy of a PASS guide, or further information on in-house training, simply email your request to pass@bipsolutions.com

Wales launches apprentice buyers scheme

FOUR NORTH Wales students are the first to take part in a brand new apprenticeship scheme set up to produce tomorrow's stars of public procurement.

The year-long scheme is the only one of its kind in Wales and will train students to become procurement professionals. Focusing on skills such as financial management, purchasing and tendering and communication, the scheme has been set up in response to a national shortage of procurement professionals.

Set up by Kay Smith, director of NHS North Wales Supplies Consortium, with help from NHS procurement officer Kathryn Sawyers, the programme also allows students to study for an NVQ level 2 in procurement.

Paul Skellon, leader of Value Wales (Procurement), which has backed the scheme with £25,000 of funding, said: "Young people are making their career decisions in Years 12 and 13, and it's possible that a lot won't have heard of procurement, which means we're missing out on many of them. This apprenticeship scheme is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the procurement profession and nurture talent for the future."

Apprentice Caryl Evans from Anglesey said: "I was going to go into administration work, but I found out about this and it looked like something I'd like to do, although my careers adviser had to describe a lot about it to me."

A recent national survey revealed that salaries in the procurement profession continue to exceed those of human resources, marketing and sales and are now catching up with those of IT and finance. If the scheme is successful it could be rolled out across Wales.

NPS EVENTS GUIDE

Conferences, exhibitions and seminars aimed at procurement professionals.

NOVEMBER 2005-APRIL 2006

HOW TO LET COMPLIANT PUBLIC CONTRACTS

17 Nov	Leeds	28 Feb	Manchester
21 Feb	London	5 Apr	London

22 NOVEMBER 2005

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS WHEN TENDERING

London Bonnington Bloomsbury

22 NOVEMBER 2005

SELLING TO THE NHS

London Bonnington Bloomsbury

NOVEMBER 2005-MAY 2006

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW OJEU CONTRACT NOTICE PROFORMAS FOR EU DIRECTIVE 2004/18

22 Nov	London	3 Mar	Manchester
28 Nov	Leeds	30 Mar	Glasgow
1 Dec	Glasgow	13 Apr	London
16 Feb	Bristol	24 May	London

NOVEMBER 2005-MAY 2006

THE CHANGING FACE OF PUBLIC TENDERING

23 Nov	London	6 Apr	London
30 Nov	Leeds	18 May	Birmingham
1 Mar	Manchester		

NOVEMBER 2005-JUNE 2006

AN INTRODUCTION TO NEW PURCHASING TECHNIQUES

24 Nov	London	2 May	Manchester
15 Feb	London	21 Jun	London

NOVEMBER 2005-JUNE 2006

SELLING TO PUBLIC SECTOR CONSORTIA

14 Feb	London	20 Jun	London
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30 NOVEMBER 2005

EFFECTIVE CONTRACT DISPUTE MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

Cophthorne Tara Hotel, London

30 NOVEMBER 2005

IMPLEMENTING THE NEW EC PROCUREMENT DIRECTIVE PROCEDURES

Marriott Hotel, Glasgow

DECEMBER 2005-JUNE 2006

HOW TO WIN TENDERS

6 Dec	London	10 May	London
8 Mar	Birmingham	15 Jun	Heathrow
23 Mar	Heathrow		

DECEMBER 2005-JUNE 2006

PREPARING PERFECT TENDERS

7 Dec	London	25 May	Leeds
9 Mar	London	21 Jun	Bristol
28 Mar	Birmingham	22 Jun	London
11 May	Glasgow	28 Jun	Manchester

DECEMBER 2005-MARCH 2006

SOPO - SELLING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

8 Dec	London	1 Jun	Venue TBC
7 Mar	Bristol		

DECEMBER 2005-JUNE 2006

LESSONS LEARNT - PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACTING & FOIA

8 Dec	London	29 Mar	Birmingham
23 Feb	London	6 Jun	Manchester

28 FEBRUARY 2006

HELPING SMEs

Thistle Lancaster Gate, London

MARCH-JUNE 2006

DELIVERING SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

9 Mar	London	17 May	Manchester
9 May	Glasgow	7 Jun	London

To book visit www.bipsolutions.com/events or for further information on advertising your event, contact our

Events Team at BiP on 0845 270 7095 or email events@bipsolutions.com

Easy sustainability guidance



THE OFFICE of Government Commerce (OGC) has made it easier for purchasers to access sustainable procurement guidance by launching a single point of access on its website.

Now OGC guidance on different aspects of sustainability, including equality, innovation and sustainable construction, has been brought together for the first time. Work has been going on in these areas for some time, but the new format should help

purchasers to access all the guidance they need quickly and easily.

There are also links to the UK Government sustainable development strategy, which defines the UK public sector's commitment to sustainable procurement, and to the Sustainable Procurement Taskforce, which is drawing up an action plan to bring about a step-change in sustainable public procurement in the UK.

The OGC sustainability guidance can be found at www.ogc.gov.uk

November Top Tip: Developing an SME friendly Charter

BY ADOPTING a 'buy local' policy without following EU competition rules, you don't help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in your area, but rather:

- Risk EU action
- Distort the market
- Restrict the ability of good SMEs to grow
- Reduce the chances of achieving Best Value
- Hit the pocket of your citizens
- Ingrain inefficiency

Helping SMEs is good for communities and society. SMEs bring the benefit of greater competition, can drive down costs through having lower administrative overheads and management costs than larger firms, deliver innovation and be more willing to tailor a product or service to meet specific customer needs, often delivering better quality and a more personal level of service.

By investing in an SME-friendly Charter (a statement of commitment) and adopting an SME low-value procurement strategy, your organisation can not only deliver value for money, but also improve the effectiveness of your procurement in delivering the wider goals of sustainability and social improvement.

IN DECEMBER'S ...



GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- In December's *Government Opportunities* Dr Gordon Murray from the Improvement & Development Agency for local government (IDeA) explains how councils can unlock better value from the £78 billion local government estate.
- Tony Comer, Property Officer for Hertfordshire County Council, explains how the award of the UK's most prestigious architecture prize to the Scottish Parliament underlines the distinction between good design and good procurement.
- Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), argues that the Government's plan to reverse two decades of neglect on school meals will take careful implementation.

(Writers and contents subject to change)

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