

BiP Solutions Market Update

27 March 2020

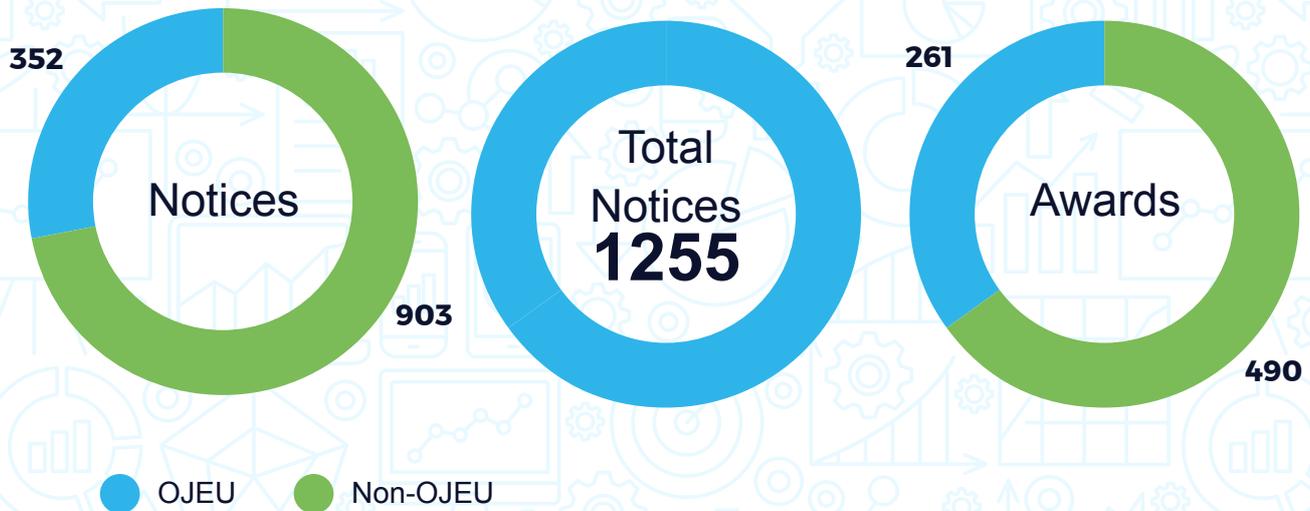
This weekly update provides our customers and stakeholders within the public sector supply chain with an update on key statistics and news relating to public procurement.*

Further information on how BiP Solutions' can help you access this market can be found at www.bipsolutions.com

Buyers and Suppliers seeking further information and guidance on public procurement, and particularly with regards to COVID-19, should go to www.passprocurement.co.uk/covid-19

* All data taken from BiP's Tracker and DCI Business Intelligence services, covering the period 16th to 22nd March. All details correct at time of publication.

Overview of Notices published w/c 16th March



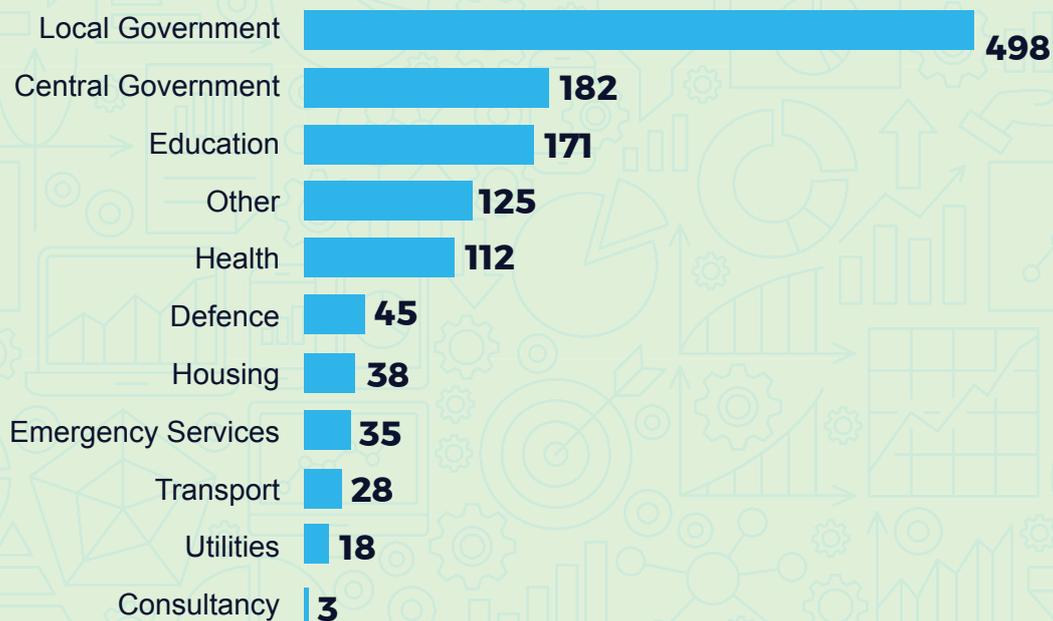
The **1255 contract notices** published in the week commencing 16 March suggest that, despite the increasing anxiety around and impact of COVID-19, business continued much as normal for public sector procurement. The most valuable notice issued during this week, one of two worth **£1 billion** or more, was worth **£27.6 billion**. The fact that notices such as this continue to be issued suggests that public procurement was committed to business as usual during this week. This is confirmed by the fact that contract notices were issued for a further **£5.069 billion** of competitive work with identified values this week, and there were **670 contract notices (53.38%)** of the total) for which no value was provided, meaning that the total value of the contract notices issued must be considerably higher.

This volume and value of procurement activity, much of it for delivery in a few weeks or months time, demonstrates to suppliers that the market remains active, despite – and in some cases because of – COVID-19.

Sector Focus

The following section considers the breakdown by buyer type and takes a closer look at both Local and Central Government.

Breakdown by Buyer Type



Local Government

Again as normal, local government was the busiest sector. Its **498 notices** accounted for **39.69%** of the total. Of these, **384 (77.1%)** were non-OJEU notices, again reflecting the typical spending pattern of local government where many contracts are small-scale and are awarded to local suppliers, often SMEs. The ongoing scale of local authority procurement can be seen from the total value of the contract notices issued by the sector - **£1,135,029,388**. This figure is the more remarkable since **267 local authority contract notices (53.61%)** do not give a contract value, meaning that the total must be considerably higher.

Central Government

Central government issued the second highest volume of contract notices in the week beginning 16 March. Its **182 notices accounted for 14.5%** of the total. Of these, **73 (40.1%)** were non-OJEU notices. This is typical of central government procurement, which, despite its image of only undertaking large-scale, high-value procurement, is also responsible for a considerable volume of lower-value contracts. During this week, the total value of the contract notices issued by central government was **£1,827,942,030**. However, this is likely to be a considerable underestimate since **100 of the 182 central government contract notices (54.94%)** did not state a contract value.

Frameworks update

There were **52** new OJEU Framework Notices published during the week (16th to 22nd March). Below details the top five frameworks by value.

Top 5 Frameworks Published by Value

Title	Awarding Authority	Value
Ireland-Dublin: SEAI Energy Poverty Programmes Framework	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland	£220,000,000
United Kingdom-London: Supply of Fruit and Vegetables under the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme	NHS Supply Chain: Food is operated by Foodbuy Europe Ltd, as agent, for and on behalf of Supply Chain Coordination Ltd ('SCCL')	£108,000,000
United Kingdom-Lincoln: 2225 Select List Framework for Highway Works 2020	Lincolnshire County Council	£60,000,000
United Kingdom-Clitheroe: The Supply of Electricity and Gas	Saint Augustine's Roman Catholic High School	£40,000,000
United Kingdom-Birmingham: Highways England Stopped Vehicle Detection	Highways England	£32,000,000

COVID-19 notices

During the week 16-22 March, 29 published contract notices specifically referenced the COVID-19 pandemic, making up just 2.31% of the notices published during the week. This suggests that currently emergency procurement in response to the pandemic is not occurring at any scale and it appears to have been business as usual for public sector procurement. This is confirmed by the fact that, of the 29 COVID-19-related notices published during the week, 12 (41.37%) are extending deadlines on existing opportunities in response to the pandemic, while one contract opportunity has been postponed.

Several other notices announce changes in how existing procurements will be carried out. For instance, contractors interested in bidding for refurbishment works to a care home in Widnes are informed by Halton Borough Council that they are absolutely forbidden to visit the site due to COVID-19.

Only a few contract notices were issued during this week in direct response to the COVID-19 crisis. As the pandemic continues, it is likely that the public sector will publish more COVID-19-related notices as it responds to the swiftly changing situation. However, some of these requirements may be procured without competition if appropriate, perhaps citing Regulation 32 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which permits this in cases of great urgency. Suppliers need to be aware of this and track developments. Housing Association Torus Liverpool were obviously thinking ahead to staff needing to work from home when they issued a contract notice for a minimum of 50 laptops on Thursday 19 March. Their sense of urgency is clear – the deadline for bids was Monday 23 March.

Finding care home and specialist accommodation so that those medically fit to be discharged from hospital could move elsewhere before the rise in demand for hospital beds began was clearly a priority in Northamptonshire during this week. LGSS, NCC and Milton Keynes Council issued a contract notice which read:

“In the current context of the urgent need for a global response to tackle the coronavirus outbreak, the Awarding Authority is looking to the capital estates market to explore where options may exist to provide a temporary increase to its care home/ specialist accommodation capacity. The Awarding Authority are working with the health service to ensure as many medically fit people in hospital are discharged promptly to free up as much hospital capacity as we can to ensure beds are available for those that need them most.”

Meanwhile the pressing need to find out more about COVID-19 and public attitudes to it can be seen in two contracts issued this week. The Scottish Government sent a contract to OJEU on 16 March with a closing date of 19 March seeking to increase the sample of Scots participating in an existing international survey of attitudes to coronavirus. The very tight turnaround on this OJEU notice shows how urgent government feels understanding public attitudes to the virus to be, particularly since attitudes underpin behaviour.

The second contract notice, issued by NHS National Institute for Health Research, offers travel and subsistence funding to “appropriately qualified public health professionals, clinicians and academics who wish to offer science and technical advice to support the immediate response to COVID-19 in low and middle-income countries.”

This contract reminds us that COVID-19 is a global pandemic and our public sector, as well as tackling the crisis in the UK, is actively supporting those who seek to mitigate its effects in other parts of the world.

