

Durham Constabulary



How to do Business with Durham Constabulary

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About This Guide

- How to do Business with Durham Constabulary has been produced to provide organisations with guidance on how to gain or improve business opportunities within Durham Constabulary. Durham Constabulary is committed to providing high quality services to meet both the current and future needs of the local community.
- This guide has been prepared to inform existing and potential service providers of our vision for the future and to encourage organisations to tender for business where organisations feel they can offer best value. We are very interested in service providers who can offer new and innovative solutions that will help support the aims and vision of Durham Constabulary.
- Effective procurement, based on a principle of value for money, will support Durham Constabulary in achieving its corporate objectives. Durham Constabulary strives to ensure that its activities are undertaken ethically with honesty, equality and integrity.
- Service providers interested in pursuing business opportunities with Durham Constabulary should register (for free) via Blue Light website and may now also register to be informed of wider public sector opportunities via the Governments Contracts Finder website
<https://bluelight.eu-supply.com>
<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>
- Blue Light is used by many Police Forces as their central hub for advertising and processing procurement opportunities and Contracts Finder has details of many new opportunities advertised by the wider public sector
- This document supports the Durham Constabulary Procurement Policy

Why would you do business with Durham Constabulary?

- We spend in excess of £20 million per annum, excluding direct employment costs. Durham also has a capital budget, which varies each year according to the business needs and available funding.
- Durham Constabulary is one of seven Forces belonging to the North East Region and our procurement department works closely with our neighbours (Northumbria Cleveland and Yorkshire & Humber Police) and also central government procurement services.
- We support the local economy and as far as possible place business with service providers in the County Durham and Darlington Force area.
- We offer opportunities for repeat business to those service providers that deliver the goods or service as promised and offer value for money and also can be a gateway to business with other police and public sector organisations.
- We recognise the importance of cash flow to all companies, especially small and medium size enterprises.
- We pay all service providers through the Bankers Automated Clearing Service (BACS)
- We pay service providers on average within 30 days when the products or service is delivered as promised and the right information is received from service providers.
 - We have a clear policy to ensure payment of all invoices in accordance with the terms of the contract. Where no contract terms are specified our policy is to pay within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice which details our official purchase order number, and satisfactory products or services have been receipted
 - If an invoice is disputed for whatever reason and the dispute cannot be resolved, a senior officer within the procurement unit will arbitrate at your request.
 - Please note that invoice disputes can be avoided if the invoice details are accurate including an official purchase order number, the correct quantities and product codes and also that the invoice is correctly addressed and your organisation ensures we are kept updated with any changes of name, address or bank details as soon as possible.
- It is our policy to encourage Small to Medium Enterprises (SME), Ethnic Minority Businesses (EMB) and the Voluntary & Charitable Services (VCS) to bid for Durham Constabulary Contracts either as the main bidder (service dependent) or by working with larger service providers as sub-contractors to such organisations.
 - We recognise the important contribution which they make to the economy.
 - Our aim is to further enhance opportunities for these organisations wherever possible and must be consistent with value for money and the need to treat all companies fairly.
 - Wherever practicable, we aim to have as many SME, EMB and VCS suppliers included in each competition, this is reliant on registration to the Bluelight portal and the capability to supply the requirement.

What do we buy?

We purchase a wide range of products and services, some of which are detailed below:

Agency, Professional Support & Training Services

Occupational Health, Temporary Staff, Staff Support Services, Advertising, Interpreters, Forensics, Audit Services, Financial Services, Health & Safety, Insurance, Training, Legal Services

Facilities

FM Consultancy, Cleaning, Catering, Waste & Recycling, Remedial Works, Boarding & Glazing, Gas, Electric, Water and Fuels, Property Construction, Leases, Rents and Rates

Fleet & Travel

Travel & Accommodation, Vehicle Maintenance and Electrics, Vehicle Data Recorders, Vehicle Recovery, Vehicle Disposals, Vehicles and Ancillaries, Vehicle Hire

Goods

Furniture, Ammunition, Stationery & Printing, Uniform and Equipment, Fire Arms Equipment, Multi-Functional Devices

Health & Well-being

Custodial FME/Nursing & Occupational Health, Custody Support & Management

ICT

Financial Management Services, ICT Hardware, ICT Software and Maintenance, Telecommunications Airwaves & Mobiles

ODPCVC

We also procure community focussed services on behalf of the ODPCVC (Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner)

The preferred method to do business with Durham Constabulary

The national drive is for the supply process to the public sector to become more streamlined and efficient. This saves costs to both the supplier and the customer (ultimately the tax payer). The preferred method is electronic procurement (E-Procurement) and that is the method of conducting business with Durham Constabulary.

The benefits of e-procurement include:

- Minimal business administration costs (procurement tasks),
- A quicker and more efficient payment to service providers,
- A lower cost of inventory management,
- Improved data management and quality of information,
- An efficient tool for advertising and marketing requirements.

Durham Constabulary uses Bluelight, which is a web based electronic quotation and tendering system. Most police forces throughout the country are already using this system and most service providers to the public sector will be familiar with it.

Durham Constabulary encourages all service providers that are keen to do business with Durham Constabulary to register on Bluelight. It is free for service providers to register on this site and view opportunities to quote/tender.

Additionally, by registering on Bluelight, service providers will also be able to see tender/business opportunities with other Police Forces (including Northumbria, Cleveland, Yorks and Humber police forces) and many other Local Authorities. Please see below on how to register with Bluelight.

Bluelight Registration

The Bluelight Pro-Contract e-tendering system is a complete internet based solution, meaning no software resides on either the buyer's or the service provider's computer. It provides buyers and service providers with a secure, cost effective and easy-to-use e-tendering solution for the necessary advertisement of new procurement opportunities, and exchange of quotation and tender documentation efficiently and effectively.

Getting Started

All that is required of service providers to use the system is a computer with a valid email address and Internet access. Once you are internet ready, there are **no** further costs associated with the system, **no** registration fees, **no** subscription charges and **no** software to purchase. To participate in procurement exercises with the member authorities, you must register your company on the Bluelight Pro-Contract e-Tendering System.

How do I register my Company?

- Go to <https://bluelight.eu-supply.com> and click the 'Register Company' link on the left hand side under the Supplier Menu.
- Click on the link: EU Supply - New Supplier Registration
- Then complete your personal contact details, fill in the organisation details, and add your selves to one or more product and service categories and member organisation, so that you will be notified via email when new opportunities are advertised.
- Following approval of your registration you will be sent emails confirming your user name and password. Please ensure that you keep these details secure (if you forget either, there are forgotten user name and password options under the Supplier Menu on the portal home page).

How do I express an interest in a new opportunity?

- If you wish to express an interest in a new procurement opportunity, and obtain further information, go to <https://bluelight.eu-supply.com>
- Select New Opportunities from the Supplier menu, there will be a list of current opportunities highlighted, however, if you can't see the opportunity you are interested in you can enter further detail on the search criteria.

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- Once the required opportunity is located, click on the Tender Title and select the Login and Register Interest.
- Enter your username and password.
- You will receive email confirmation of your expression of interest.
- If you are not already registered on the system, you will need to do so.

Additional Durham Constabulary Procurement documents can be obtained on the Durham Constabulary website. <http://www.durham.police.uk>

Contact Details for Durham Constabulary Procurement Team: Tel No: 0345 6060365

Central Procurement Mail Box: procurement@durham.pnn.police.uk

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What are we looking for from a service provider?

Please note that when engaging with Durham Constabulary to provide products or services, you will be asked to answer questions about your business.

Topics covered may include:

Best Value: Can you demonstrate value for money, taking into account the “whole life costs” of your products or services, from manufacture to disposal and demonstrate continuous improvement throughout the life of the contract?

Capacity & Capability: Do you have the necessary knowledge, technical expertise and resources and can you demonstrate financial stability?

Workforce: Do you invest in training and development to any recognised standard e.g. “Investors in People” or Apprenticeships? Do you support local workforce initiatives e.g. Living Wage, New Deal, Job Share?

Community: Do you provide local employment and contribute to the local economy? What value can you bring to the community of County Durham & Darlington (e.g. do you work with the voluntary sector, provide local community services, promote community well-being)?

Social Value ACT: The Constabulary recognises that it has a duty to the locality that it serves and also a duty under the Public Services (Social Value) Act that all public bodies in England and Wales are required to consider how the services they commission and procure might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their local areas, ideally we are keen to work with service providers where possible who also have a similar ethos.

Why is it important?

When times are tough economically it is more important than ever that we get the most value from our spending. Commissioning and procuring for social value can change the way we think about things so that more taxpayers’ money is being directed towards improving people’s lives, opportunities, and the environment, improving the economic well-being of our local area, which is important to the Constabulary to help tackle social problems in various guises. Thereby helping to join up some of the Constabulary’s strategic aims

A question which potential service providers may be asked by Durham Constabulary when assessing service providers could be:

Does your organisation use local suppliers/service providers where possible?

| |
|---|
| YES/NO (delete as appropriate) |
| If yes please provide examples If no please explain? |

Living Wage: The benefit that the Living Wage can bring to working people is very important and paid work is the most important route to assist people and/or families out of poverty. As a caring employer and commissioner of services the Constabulary, where feasible to do so, is looking to acquire contracts with other organisations who currently pay or are looking to pay the living wage and who acknowledge that it is the right thing to do in order to help lift the working poor out of poverty; and we would now like to see the Living Wage in more of our service contracts

A question your organisation may be asked during an assessment:

Please evidence that your organisation is paying the living wage or is considering doing so?

Further information on the living wage can be found on this link: <http://livingwage.org.uk/contact>

Customer Care: Do you have evidence of a customer care policy that is monitored and reviewed?

E-Procurement: Are your catalogues of products / services / prices available on-line and/or can purchase orders be accepted using electronic methods?

Equality & Diversity

Durham Constabulary Procurement will work with its suppliers and is committed to equal opportunities for all by creating an inclusive working environment. We will look to promote an equality and diverse culture in which both continue to thrive. A culture which values diversity and promotes a social environment which protects the rights and dignity of both supplier's staff and force. We will encourage loyalty and nurture teamwork in order to maximise contribution.

Durham Constabulary Procurement recognises and is committed to supporting equality & diversity via its Procurement. As a public sector commissioner in the region, Durham Constabulary can make a vital contribution to meeting the needs and choices of its community from all backgrounds. We aim to ensure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs of all of our customers, and Durham Constabulary Procurement Team ensures that all current and potential service providers within those communities in which we work have equal access to all opportunities.

Durham Constabulary as part of its ethos is striving to champion equality and diversity not only throughout the organisation, but by working with our external service providers and their staff, and also our other regional partners.

We are proud of the progress we have made to date and are committed to further developing our approach to equality and diversity as we move forward

As part of various procurement exercises Durham Constabulary Procurement will assess potential service providers as part of its pre-contract award supplier appraisal process which requests information surrounding evidence of policies in place relating to discrimination on the grounds of disability, age, gender identity, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief.

This is about recognising that we and our service providers have an important role to protect and safeguard wider society. This includes the strength we can exert to make the difference both as a purchaser and as a service provider of products and services.

This includes:

- ensuring that our values are reflected in our procurement processes and outcomes
- promoting the values of equality and diversity to the widest possible audience
- eliminating discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation and unfair treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic or any other unjustifiable requirement.
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations and positive attitudes

Contractors will be asked if they comply with the Equality Act 2010.

We expect all suppliers to embed and promote awareness of equality and foster good practice. Suppliers will be asked as part of their proposal when tendering for force contracts to evidence inclusivity and pay particular attention to the needs of individuals from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others. Demonstrate commitment to a programme of action to support its equality policy, to monitor its effectiveness when recruiting staff in order to support career progression and development to ensure that all levels of staff have diverse representation and that information is published with regards to progress made.

Code of Ethics: What it means for everyone in the organisation

Durham is already a high performing force in relation to the integrity of its officers and staff and we look to partner with service providers who will support us with this. The code of Ethics reminds people that unprofessional behaviour damages the reputation of the police. The Code of Ethics makes it clear that unprofessional behaviour must not be condoned, tolerated or ignored. It applies to every individual who works in policing, whether a warranted officer, police staff, volunteer or someone contracted to work in a police force and who have a duty to challenge those whose behaviour falls short of the Code of Ethics.

We strive to ensure that all contracted service providers associated with Durham Constabulary is made aware of the Code of Ethics thereby expecting them to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times in line with the principles and standards therein. The Code is publically available for reference at the following internet link:

<https://www.durham.police.uk/About-Us/Transparency-and-Integrity-Programme/Pages/default.aspx>

Health and Safety: Can you demonstrate a successful and consistent health and safety track record (within your organisation, your products and the delivery of services)? Do you supply user and material information on health and safety matters such as health and safety policies and procedures, risk assessments?

Invoice Payments: Are you able to ensure that all invoices contain a purchase order reference number and can you accept payment by BACS?

Management Information: Can you provide regular management information on performance against the contract?

Sustainability: Sustainable procurement is about integrating the principles of sustainability into all policies and public sector projects, thereby ensuring supplies, services and works have a sustainable outcome. Ensuring sustainability in procurement is a major way that we can safeguard the quality of life of our children and our children's children. When procuring, the kind of questions we may ask of service providers are:

- Are "Green" products / services options clearly identifiable in your catalogues?
- Can packaging be eliminated, recycled or reduced and will you take back packaging or waste?
- Are your products and processes energy efficient?
- Are your products designed to ensure their safe distribution, use and disposal and are harmful substances generated by your manufacturing process minimised or eliminated?
- Do you have a green travel / environmental transport and logistic policy?

Vetting Checks: Durham Constabulary will carry out vetting checks for all successful contracting organisations' staff that will be providing services via a contract. It is important that we inform all potential contracting organisations upfront that Durham Constabulary has implemented a policy to charge successful organisations for vetting of their staff.

Vetting Guidelines

Any service provider who is awarded a contract to supply products or services to Durham Constabulary must undergo adequate vetting to an appropriate level for the contract awarded (dependant on the level of security required for the relevant contract). As part of the procurement exercise it will be highlighted at the initial stages that vetting will be a mandatory requirement prior to confirmation of award of contract.

For any queries in relation to force vetting procedures please contact the Force Vetting Unit at vetting@durham.pnn.police.uk

A copy of the Force Vetting Policy can be obtained on request. For further information on vetting requirements within the police community for Non Police Personnel the ACPO National Vetting Policy can be viewed at www.acpo.police.uk

Vetting Levels

NPPV Level 1: This level is applied to personnel who require ad hoc or irregular unsupervised access to external and/or internal police premises where non protectively marked material/information is accessible. Clearance is valid for twelve months and it costs £30 per person vetted.

NPPV Level 2: This level is applied to personnel who require frequent and regular unsupervised access to police premises where protectively marked material/information is accessible and it costs £70 per person. Clearance is valid for three years.

NPPV Level 3: This level is applied to personnel who require long term/frequent and unsupervised access, including remote access to any areas of the organisation where highly sensitive material/information is accessible and it costs £70 per person. Clearance is valid for five years with an annual review.

How do we evaluate a Service Provider?

Start of a Procurement Process

The evaluation process commences on the receipt of quotes or completed tender documentation. The supply of a quote or tender is determined by the value of the intended procurement of products or services. These values are set out in the Police, Crime and Victims Commissioners Governance: Procurement Rules and Procedures document which details the Durham Constabulary procurement thresholds.

- The table below shows the current spend thresholds and what actions are required by the employees of the Constabulary when they engage in procurement exercises.

| Estimated Value over the life of the contract | Quotation / Tender Requirements | Levels of Delegated Authority to accept quotations/tenders |
|---|--|--|
| <p><u>In ALL cases please follow the below guidance when a procurement is required</u></p> <p>Please ensure that a requisition is raised on the Agresso Finance system ASAP prior to any commitment with suppliers.</p> <p>No purchase order / No invoice payment.</p> | | |
| <p>For purchases up to £10,000</p> <p>< £10,000</p> | <p>If there is an existing supplier listed on the Agresso finance system the local stake holder/s is permitted to use any of the listed suppliers and source one quotation direct.</p> <p>Process required:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Supplier quotation (written format) Requisition raised Quotation uploaded to requisition as an attachment Authorisation process begins <p>In the event that there is not an existing supplier still proceed to raise a requisition onto Agresso providing as much detail as possible about the item/service</p> <p>one quotation shall be obtained from a new provider by procurement only, no other quotations obtained direct by non-procurement staff will be entertained</p> <p>For additional guidance refer to explanation of thresholds</p> | <p>Purchase orders and contracts with existing suppliers to be approved locally by Officers with relevant authority in accordance with financial instructions</p> <p>New providers will be sourced and approved by Procurement only and a new supplier account opened on the Agresso system by Finance following the approval of Procurement</p> <p>Authority to proceed to contract will be issued by the Procurement Team</p> |
| <p>For purchases between £10,000 up to £50,000</p> | <p>Three formal written quotations to be obtained by stake holders from existing suppliers, three quotations are requested to ensure VFM</p> <p>Process required:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Three separate supplier quotations (written format) | <p>Purchase orders and contracts with existing suppliers to be approved locally by Officers with relevant authority in accordance with financial instructions</p> |

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| | <p>b. Requisition raised</p> <p>c. Best Value quotation uploaded to requisition as an attachment</p> <p>d. Authorisation process begins</p> <p>In the event that we don't have any existing supplier/s still proceed to raise a requisition onto Agresso providing as much detail as possible about the item/service. Three quotations shall be obtained from new providers by procurement only, no other quotations obtained direct by non-procurement staff will be entertained</p> <p>For additional guidance refer to explanation of thresholds</p> | <p>New providers will be sourced and approved by Procurement only and a new supplier account opened on the Agresso system by Finance following the approval of Procurement</p> <p>Authority to proceed to contract' will be issued by the Procurement Team</p> |
| > £50,000 | <p>All procurement to be managed by the Force Procurement Team.</p> <p>Some of the standard forms used in a higher value procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Stake Holder Risk analysis template * Stake Holder Specification * Procurement Litigation report * Ext Contracts Finder (H/O) * Tender Document (ITT) * Numerous assurance forms * Supplier Questionnaire * Evaluation document * Contract Ts & Cs drafted / agreed * Supplier Comms / Clarification Log * Various Supplier feedback Letters * Contract award authorisation document agreed * Contract agreed /signed * Contracts Finder updated (H/O) and BLPD | <p>On conclusion of the procurement process an 'Authority to proceed to contract' will be issued by the Procurement Team and will be signed by one of the below officers with relevant authority in accordance with Financial Instructions and returned to the Procurement Team.</p> <p>Up to £100,000 (Head of Procurement)</p> <p>£100,000 to £1,000,000 (CFO or ACO)</p> <p>Over £1,000,000 (PCC or CFO)</p> <p>No fewer than 5 competing organisations will be invited to tender– subject to chosen route of procurement or restriction of service providers</p> |

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Tendering Tips

- Depending on the product or services required and the total value of the contract there may be many expressions of interest from potential service providers. It may be necessary as part of a procurement exercise for certain procurement documents to include various suitability criteria which could well be assessed via a pass /fail stage or the questions are given a weighting whereby a score will be allocated. This depends on the chosen route to procurement of the products or services and the overall value of the contract
- This information will be communicated at the point the procurement is advertised via the tender documents which will be made available to registered potential service providers via the E-Procurement portal and contracts finder (if applicable)

Do when Tendering

- Ensure that you thoroughly review the tender documents and clarify any queries with the named procurement officer as early as possible, ensure that you return the fully completed tender documents by the deadline date and time specified. A late tender will not be considered without good reason given by the supplier and accepted by Durham Constabulary.
- Make sure you supply all the information requested in the Invitation to Tender documentation. Check your completed tenders before submitting and adhere to the request to complete the templates provided within the tender documents.
- Respond to any requests for clarifications or further information by the specified date.
- When referring to internal forms you should provide a copy in your submission and clearly specify to which area of the tender the additional information refers to (i.e. section 10 item 4: Health and Safety etc.) Also detail the relevant question number if there is one.
- If you have a more innovative way of supplying the service or products which differs from the tender specification this should be highlighted as an alternative option for consideration. *Alternative options will only be considered and scored accordingly if it is highlighted within the tender documents that Durham Constabulary are willing to accept alternative option bids.* Durham Constabulary must be notified also in advance that your organisation does wish to propose an alternative option bid.

Evaluation of Tenders

- You will be advised when invited to tender what criteria will be used to evaluate bids.
- To ensure consistency all tender submissions are assessed against the same criteria.
- A suitability / technical assessment will be undertaken to assess the performance, knowledge and ability of the contractor in providing the works, products and services.
- References provided will be followed up as evidence of supplier capability.
- Your bid will be successful if your tender submission offers the Force the best value for money option and full adherence to the requirements laid out within the tender documents have been fulfilled.

Debriefing

- Notification letters will be sent out as soon as possible to organisations that have not been successful, these letters will provide an overview of your own bid and the relative advantages of the winning bidders proposal.
- Durham Constabulary aim to ensure within the constraints of confidentiality that organisations who ask for the reasons on why their bid was not successful are given that feedback as soon as possible.
- Our objective is to comment constructively on the strengths and weaknesses of your bid to enable you to better compete for future work.
- The procurement section also encourages comment about any aspects of the tender process that were unclear or which caused disproportionate efforts when completing the submission.

Award of Contract

- A formal acceptance letter or contract document is sent to the successful supplier and mobilisation (contract set up meetings) will then commence.

Contract Management

The performance of all service providers must be monitored and recorded. The information is required for the following purposes:

- To ensure satisfactory performance of the contractor and compliance with the contract. Performance will include ensuring that the deliverable outcomes have been achieved including equality and diversity considerations.
- To assist in the resolution of any disputes arising during the contract.
- To provide lessons learnt which will be used to improve future procurements and feed back into the supplier selection system particularly to the pre-qualification of service providers.
- Durham Constabulary Procurement Services will agree criteria with our internal Contract Managers to ensure effective recording of performance management including;
 - **Delivery performance:** products or services delivered on time, to the right location, complete, without damage and supported by full documentation,
 - **Invoicing:** invoices correctly addressed, priced, correct products and correct quantities, reflecting the correct terms and conditions,
 - **Operational performance:** quality of services, equipment conforms to specification, capture of data relating to breakdowns and faults, standard of after sales service, proactive service from contractors staff and opportunities for efficiency to improve the service,
 - **Savings and price performance:** ability to reduce costs to the force, hold or reduce price during contract period,
 - **After sales support and user satisfaction:** It is expected that Durham Constabulary will conduct regular contract review meetings with Contractor(s) and our main stake holders to discuss performance of the contract over its term. Contractors should be made aware of areas in which the force feel improvement should be made but also the force should feedback to contractors where they have excelled, this promotes an honest working relationship and will enable both teams to work to improve the overall performance.

Appendix 1

Other Useful Information

- **Terms and Conditions:** Durham Constabulary uses its own Terms and Conditions, which can be downloaded from our website <http://www.durham.police.uk> and will be included within all invitation to tender documentation.
- **The Crown Commercial Procurement Service:** is an executive agency of the Cabinet Office. Their overall priority is to provide procurement savings for the UK Public Sector as a whole and specifically to deliver centralised procurement for Central Government. To Visit the website: <http://ccs.gov.uk>
- **Contracts Finder:** Contracts Finder lets you search for information about contracts worth over £10,000 with the government and £25,000 with its sub agencies.
- **Tenders Electronic Daily:** (TED)_is the online version of OJEU, Official Journal of the European Union. It gives direct access to notices of tender activity which may interest you. You can gain access to TED free of charge from the website: <http://www.ted.eur-op.eu.int>
- **Tenders Direct:** is a website that provides access to over 30,000 current government contracts in the UK and Europe. Visit the website: <http://www.tendersdirect.co.uk>
- **Tenders on the Web:** is a website that provides access to current government contracts providing advice on tendering and EU procurement directives. Visit the website: <http://www.tenders.co.uk>
- **Business Link Operators:** provide access to a range of business advice and support for small firms through a national network. Some offer direct access to public sector opportunities tailored to the specific needs of your business. To contact your nearest Business Link Operator visit the web site: <http://www.businesslink.org> or <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/>
- **Government Opportunities**_is published by Business Information Publication (BiP) monthly with weekly updated supplements. For more information visit the website: <http://www.bipcontracts.com>
- **Supply2Gov** is a web portal created to consolidate access to lower-value opportunities from across the whole of the UK public sector. It opens up the market to all types of business including small businesses, start-up companies and social enterprises to search and view open lower-value contract opportunities, typically under £100,000, and promote them to the UK public sector. It offers public sector buyers the opportunity to advertise their lower-value contract opportunities and access and review profiles of pre-qualification information created by the service providers registering on the site. The objectives of the portal include:
 - To be seen by public sector buyers and service providers as the 'first port of call' for those advertising or seeking below-threshold public sector contract opportunities, typically worth under £100,000.
 - To provide an easy-to-use portal uniting buyers and service providers in a single location
 - To open up the lower-value public sector contract opportunities market to as wide a range of businesses as possible.
 - To enable businesses, particularly small ones, to access central and local government's below threshold (sub-OJEU) contract opportunities, typically worth under £100,000.
 - To provide public sector buyers the opportunity to identify a wider range of potential service providers more easily, both locally and nationally. Visit the website: <http://www.supply2.gov.uk>
- **SIMAP** aims to support an effective Single Market by encouraging service providers and contracting entities to adopt best practise and use electronic commerce and information technology to provide all the information needed to deliver value for money in public procurement. Visit the website: <http://www.simap.eu.int>

- **Equality and Human Rights Commission:** The Commission's guide gives local authorities the information they need to be confident of meeting their race equality duty when they carry out procurement, within EU rules, best value and other UK laws and policies. It also offers guidance to private and voluntary sector organisations on the new race equality expectations they will meet when they do business with local authorities. For more information and an electronic copy of the guide please visit the website: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>
- **Bluelight Procurement Database (BLPD):** The Bluelight Procurement Database is an online information hub aimed at improving visibility and access to contract and procurement information for buyers within the Emergency Services in the United Kingdom.

Service providers should note that the BLPD is available to registered users from other authorities organisations for view new contracts. The website address is <http://www.blpd.gov.uk>

- **The North East Chamber of Commerce:** <http://www.necc.co.uk/>