



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Social Security Scotland Community Benefit Strategy 2024 - 2027

Dignity,
fairness,
respect.



Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
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Guidance for Community Benefits

Audience	This strategy is aimed at Social Security Scotland internal teams, our suppliers and the intended beneficiaries of the Community Benefits.
Overview	This strategy outlines Social Security Scotland's approach to Community Benefits.
Action Required	Community Benefits within Social Security Scotland contracts will be targeted and delivered in line with this strategy.
Further Information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: e-mail: Procurement@SocialSecurity.gov.scot



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Social Security Scotland is committed to maximising Community Benefits from its procurement activities. This will be achieved through the inclusion of specific clauses within procurement contracts (where relevant and proportionate) known as Community Benefit Clauses.
- 1.2 Community Benefit Clauses are contractual requirements which deliver wider benefits in addition to the core purpose of the contract. These clauses can be used to deliver a range of economic, social or environmental benefits hereinafter referred to as “Community Benefits”. Community Benefits can include initiatives such as targeted recruitment and training, equal opportunities considerations, supply chain initiatives, awareness raising programmes and community engagement activity.
- 1.3 This Community Benefits Strategy has been developed to align with the [Public Service Reform Policy](#), [Social Security Scotland’s Corporate Plan](#), [Social Security Scotland’s Business Plan](#) as well as [Social Security Scotland’s Corporate Procurement Strategy](#).
- 1.4 An innovative approach is required to ensure delivery of community benefits within our contracts. Community benefits will contribute towards improvements in economic, social and environmental issues, supporting the sustainable development of the economy within the regions we operate within across Scotland with a focus on Dundee and Glasgow, where our main offices are based.
- 1.5 This strategy will be reviewed every three years or as required to ensure it continues to evolve with the Social Security Scotland Corporate Procurement Strategy.
- 1.6 What this strategy aims to achieve:
 - A joined up approach to implementation and monitoring of community benefits across Social Security Scotland, ensuring maximum value for money.
 - To help internal stakeholders understand and suggest initiatives that could be delivered by suppliers through their contracts with Social Security Scotland and to help suppliers understand Social Security Scotland’s approach to Community Benefits.
 - Provide a framework which ensures the inclusion of realistic and achievable community benefit contractual clauses in all applicable Social Security Scotland contracts.
 - Ensure compliance within the legislative framework when incorporating community benefits into contracts and the core procurement principles of transparency, proportionality, equality and non-discrimination set out within the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 apply.
 - Through guidance and the application of agreed approaches, deliver real and lasting benefits to our stakeholders and assist the overall aim of Social Security Scotland to support people and communities in Scotland.



- Community Benefits that are aligned with at least one of the Social Security Scotland's Corporate Plan priorities and represent Best Value.
- Community benefits targeting one of more of our priority groups, as defined below.



1.7 Social Security Scotland Priority Groups

Social Security Scotland aims to support the following client groups in Scotland as a priority:

Carers – The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 defines a carer as an individual who provides or intends to provide care for another individual ('the cared-for person')

Disabled people – The Equality Act 2010 sets out when someone is considered to have a disability.

People on Low Incomes – People in receipt of one or more of the low income benefits administered by Social Security Scotland.



2. Relevant Legislation and policy

2.1 The following legislation and policy applies to Community Benefits;

- i. [The Public Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2015](#) – which apply where procurements for Central Government bodies are above the [threshold values](#).¹ Community Benefits can be included and can be used in the selection and award procedures provided that each of the following tests are met:
 - they are not discriminatory and do not disadvantage non-local contractors (Regulation 19).
- ii. [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) (“the Act”) – Sections 24, 25 and 26. Public bodies must also have regard for the Scottish Government [Statutory Guidance](#) and [Scottish Government Community Benefit Guidance](#). For the purposes of the Act, a community benefit is a contractual requirement imposed by a contracting authority:
 - relating to training and recruitment (employability and workforce development), or
 - relating to the availability of sub-contracting opportunities, or
 - which is otherwise intended to improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the authority’s area in a way additional to the main purpose of the contract in which the requirement is included.

2.2 Under the Act and accompanying guidance, consideration of Community Benefit requirements is mandatory for all projects valued at £4 million (excluding VAT) and above, and is encouraged for all regulated procurements below this level.

2.3 Where it is decided not to include Community Benefits and the contract value is equal to or greater than over £4 million (excluding VAT), the contract notice must provide reasons. Where Community Benefits are included in a contract the contract award notice must record what these are expected to be. Contracting authorities with in excess of £5 million (excluding VAT) spend must also report on delivered Community Benefits in their Annual Procurement Report (required by the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014).

2.4 Community Benefits can support [the City Plan for Dundee \(2022-2032\)](#) which sets out the following three strategic priorities:

- Reduce child poverty and inequalities in incomes, education and health

¹ WTO GPA procurement thresholds change every 2 years i.e. the next threshold change will occur on 1 January 2026, to allow for currency fluctuations.



- Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth, including Community Wealth Building (CWB). Further information on Community Wealth Building can be found at Annex 1
- Tackle Climate Change and reach Net Zero emissions by 2045

2.5 Community Benefits can also support [Glasgow City Council's Strategic Plan \(2022-2027\)](#) which sets out the following four strategic priorities:

- Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities
- Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens
- Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow
- Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative, and efficient way for our communities



3. Transparency and Non-Discrimination

- 3.1 The principles of transparency and non-discrimination are critical to ensuring that Community Benefits are legally incorporated within the tendering process. These overriding principles apply to procurement projects.
- 3.2 The aim of achieving Community Benefits as part of the Social Security Scotland's tendering processes must be made clear from the outset and also clearly communicated within the Invitation to Tender and Statement of Requirements. Procurement professionals will issue a Community Benefits statement within the Contract Notice (where applicable) indicating that the contract to be awarded will include provisions to achieve Community Benefits.
- 3.3 Procurement professionals will also ensure that the inclusion of Community Benefits does not directly or indirectly disadvantage or discriminate against tenderers. It is also essential that Community Benefits do not directly or indirectly discriminate against individuals and groups covered under the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.
 - iii. [Scottish Government Procurement Strategy](#). As an Executive Agency of Scottish Government, we are committed to the priorities set out within the Scottish Government Procurement Strategy, which include; responding to the climate emergency, a continued focus on promoting Fair Work practices, supporting small businesses and local supply chains and mainstreaming sustainable procurement.
 - iv. [Social Security Scotland's Corporate Procurement Strategy \(2021-2023\)](#) – this outlines Social Security Scotland's overarching approach to Community Benefits.

4. Community Benefits Commitment

- 4.1 Social Security Scotland is committed to maximising Community Benefits from its procurement activities and all Community Benefits will be considered in line with [Social Security Scotland's Corporate Plan](#) priorities.
- 4.2 In accordance with the [Scottish Government Procurement Policy Manual](#), Community Benefits in public procurement contribute towards achieving the aims of the Sustainable Procurement Duty and should therefore be considered for contracts valued lower than £4 million, wherever relevant and proportionate. Procurement professionals within Social Security Scotland must consider the inclusion of Community Benefits from the outset for all contracts with an estimated aggregate purchase value of £50,000 (excluding VAT).

How will we do this?

- 4.3 We will use a variety of methods including:-



- Stakeholder engagement: We will ensure continuous liaison with key relevant stakeholders through correspondence including local support agencies, voluntary and third sector agencies.
- Market Engagement: We will work collaboratively with colleagues across the public sector to maximise our understanding of the supply landscape including community benefits, and economic development opportunities for the regions we operate within across Scotland, with a focus on Dundee and Glasgow. We will engage with the market using Request For Information (RFI) Notices, Supplier Briefings, and the [Supplier Development Programme](#).
- A Community Benefits Menu will be developed based on key stakeholder engagement, primarily the Social Security Scotland Procurement & Commercial team. This will be refreshed on a regular basis to ensure it provides an emphasis on the key priorities and programmes available.
- Draft standard wording for inclusion in invitation to tender documentation.
- A community benefits question with a minimum weighting of 10% of the quality criteria will be used to evaluate the proposed delivery of community benefits.
- Supporting the Social Security Scotland's Social Impact Pledge
- Monitoring delivery through contract management and promoting community benefit success through our Annual Procurement Report.



Framework Call-offs

- 4.4 Procurement professionals will also aim to obtain Community Benefits for contracts procured through:
- Category A frameworks (National Frameworks or Contracts let by organisations such as the Scottish Government and Crown Commercial Services (CCS)).
 - Category B procurements (Sector specific Frameworks or Contracts let by organisations such as Scotland Excel, NHS National Procurement and Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC)) where the procurement included Community Benefits in the tender process.
 - Procurement professionals will continue to work with framework managers and User Intelligence Groups to incorporate Community Benefits into as many Category A and Category B call-off contracts as possible and seek the ability to secure community benefits at the point of call off for all frameworks.
- 4.5 Procurement professionals will aim as a minimum to:
- Review framework and dynamic purchasing systems buyers guides for details of any Community Benefit commitments.
 - Engage with the framework or dynamic purchasing system manager to discuss what Community Benefits can be expected to be delivered as part of a call-off from the framework/ and dynamic purchasing system.
 - Ensure the Procurement Strategy clearly states what community benefit outcomes will be delivered or evidence where this was not possible (for example, for Low Value Procurements where the total contract value is less than £50,000.00 excluding VAT).
- 4.6 For procurements with a value between £5,000 and £10,000.00 ex VAT (where three quotes are sought) and between £10,000 and £50,000 (ex VAT) (where the Quick Quote process is followed) procurement professionals will where possible, only send invitations to quote / tender to Small to Medium-sized Enterprises based in Dundee and Glasgow, taking delivery location into account.

Regulated Procurements

- 4.7 In line with Social Security Scotland's Corporate Procurement Strategy, the Procurement and Commercial team will consider:
- Community Benefits for contracts between £50,000 and £4 million exc. VAT - Procurement professionals will use a menu to (1) determine what specific Community Benefits would be appropriate or (2) provide several Community Benefit options for suppliers to choose from.
 - Community Benefits for contracts equal to or greater than £4 million exc. VAT - Procurement professionals will specify Community Benefit requirements and will use a menu to support this. The type of Community Benefit required will be described,



with details of how the supplier should deliver the requirement, including specific deliverables and timescales.

- Voluntary Community Benefits – These may be considered in specific circumstances, where it's not possible for them to be specified, for example framework call-offs where the framework does not have specific provision for Community Benefits.



5. Community Benefits – Factors to consider

5.1 Procurement professionals should consider the following factors when deciding what Community Benefit requirements to include:

- Generating employment opportunities for priority groups (5.1.1)
- Vocational Training (5.1.2)
- Up-skilling the existing workforce (5.1.3)
- Making sub-contracting opportunities available to Small to Medium-sized Enterprises, the third sector and Supported Businesses (5.1.4)
- Supply-chain development activity (5.1.5)
- Building capacity in community organisations (5.1.6)
- Educational support initiatives (5.1.7)
- Working with schools, colleges and universities to offer work experience (5.1.8)
- Minimising negative environmental impacts (5.1.9)

Examples of each factor are detailed below.

5.1.1 Generating employment opportunities for priority groups

Suppliers recruit new entrants from priority groups and/or create opportunities for priority groups seeking work-experience as part of delivery of a contract awarded on behalf of Social Security Scotland.

Where possible, recruitment should be:

- targeted in postcodes within the 10% most deprived areas in Scotland (visit <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD> for more information); or
- targeted to encourage applications from our priority groups (carers, disabled people or people on low incomes) by working with the [Employability in Scotland](#) service.

Recruits do not need to work directly on the contract but the recruitment or work placement will be as a direct result of the contract award.

For further information on this approach:

[No One Left Behind](#) is the Scottish Government's approach to transforming employment support in Scotland. It has a crucial role in achieving the Scottish Government's vision for economic transformation and tackling child poverty; and aims to deliver a system that is more tailored and responsive to the needs of people of all ages who want help and support on their journey towards, into and in work - particularly people with health conditions, disabled people and others who are disadvantaged in the labour market.



Find out about [local employability services](#) within Scotland including support available to employers.

[Discover Work Dundee](#), for example, provides support to employers to find new employees and offers advice, guidance and funding to develop their existing workforce.

[Employability in Scotland](#) also provides information on various employability services and recruitment toolkits.

5.1.2 Vocational Training

Vocational training can be offered by suppliers to their new or existing staff as a direct result of a contract awarded on behalf of Social Security Scotland.

Vocational training focuses on the practical skills and knowledge required for particular jobs, trades and occupations. It is important in supporting workplace progression, improving the productivity of businesses and fulfilling individuals' aspirations. Vocational training is often delivered by professionals in the relevant field and can take place on the job or in a college/ other learning institution.

Vocational training in Scotland is approved by the [Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#).

An example of vocational training is [Scottish Vocational Qualifications \(SVQs\)](#). SVQs are work-based qualifications that act as a guarantee that someone can do their job well and to the national standards for their sector. There are over 500 SVQs in a range of different subjects and [further information about SVQs is available for employers](#).

Another example of vocational training is Apprenticeships. There are three types of vocational training apprenticeships; Foundation Apprenticeships, Modern Apprenticeships and Graduate Apprenticeships. Further information about apprenticeships is available for employers from [Apprenticeships.Scot](#)

5.1.3 Up-skilling the existing workforce

Up-skilling can be offered by suppliers to their new or existing staff as a direct result of a contract awarded on behalf of Social Security Scotland.

Upskilling teaches employees new skills that can help to fill skills gaps in the market and support staff retention. Upskilling is also important to employees for development and motivation.



[Skills Development Scotland](#) is Scotland's national skills body that supports people and businesses to develop and apply their skills. There is a range of [support for employers](#) including staff training, funding, recruitment and Apprenticeships.

[Employee training - mygov.scot](#) provides more information on various schemes and guides available for employee training, that can be promoted by employers.

5.1.4 **Making sub-contracting opportunities available to Small to Medium-sized Enterprises, the third sector and Supported Businesses**

Procurement professionals must consider in the procurement strategy how they can best engage the supply market, enabling Small to Medium-sized Enterprises, third sector or Supported Business sectors to become involved in delivery. This could involve sub-contracting or engaging with such sectors in delivery of the contract.

Procurement professionals must also consider the use of lotting and lot limiting so that Small to Medium-sized Enterprises, third sector or Supported Business organisations that might not be able to carry out the full contract can bid for part of it.

When conducting Quick Quotes, consideration must also be given to inviting suppliers with a view to supporting these sectors.

Supporting information:

- [Supplier Development Programme](#) – information on how to subcontract
- [Supported Businesses Dynamic Purchasing System](#) - Scottish Government has a dynamic purchasing system for requirements reserved for Supported Businesses.
- [British Association for Supported Employment \(BASE\)](#) – BASE is the national voice for providers of specialist employment support.
- [Business Gateway Tayside](#) and [Business Gateway Glasgow](#)
- Prime contractors can use the Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) website, including Quick Quote, to advertise available subcontracting opportunities that are part of a public contract. [Advertising subcontracting opportunities on the Public Contracts Scotland \(PCS\) website: SPPN 5/2019.](#)

5.1.5 **Supply-chain development activity**

Procurement professionals will work with supporting organisations that provide assistance to suppliers can support development of the supply chain.



The Supplier Development Programme can support suppliers through the steps of the tender process and also runs events such as Meet the Buyer to connect buyers and suppliers. [Supplier Development Programme | Helping you bid better \(sdpscotland.co.uk\)](https://sdpscotland.co.uk)

Chambers of Commerce provide the support and resources businesses need to succeed through a range of services, including networking opportunities, business resources, training, and advocacy. The Chambers also play a vital role in promoting local businesses, attracting new businesses to an area, and facilitating the growth of existing businesses. Useful links can be found below:-

[Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce.](#)

[Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.](#)

[Scottish Chambers of Commerce](#)

[See also links to organisations at 5.1.4, which may be relevant.](#)

5.1.6 Building capacity in community organisations

Community organisations need resources in order to first find out, and then carry out, the activities that their community wants. This may be access to people, buildings, equipment or funds.

[Scottish Community Development Centre \(SCDC\)](#) is the lead body for community development in Scotland that works towards a vision of an active, inclusive and just Scotland where our communities are strong, equitable and sustainable.

Other organisations that support building capacity in community organisations include:

[Co-operative Development Scotland \(CDS\)](#) is the arm of Scotland's enterprise agencies that supports company growth through employee ownership and cooperative business models.

[Community Enterprise in Scotland \(CEIS\)](#) is a social enterprise support agency that engages with businesses, communities and individuals to build capacity and to address inequality in order to make Scotland a better place to live and work with a more inclusive economy.

[The Circle](#) is a Dundee and Glasgow based community interest company that aims to provide a facility for charities, social enterprises, and socially responsible commercial businesses to access education, training, offices (fixed or co-working), meeting spaces, advice, information and guidance, educational resources, and social and leisure opportunities.



[See also links to organisations at 5.1.4, which may be relevant.](#)

Capacity in community organisations can be built through:

- Community Consultation - giving the local community an opportunity to express an opinion and possibly influence the design and delivery of a project or service in an area.
- Local Sponsorship - private companies are often asked to sponsor organisations local to the area in which they are developing/delivering a service.
- Donations of funds – Donations of funds for trips, equipment, clothing/ uniform, or to support playgroups.

5.1.7 Educational support initiatives

Suppliers can engage in a range of initiatives that support educational institutions to inspire and develop pupils and focus learning on areas where there are skills gaps.

Supporting information:

[STEM ambassadors](#) are volunteers who offer their time, passion, and energy to visit schools, colleges, and youth group organisations to deliver requests from teachers and youth group leaders who want to link STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) subjects to the real world of work.

[The Prince's Trust](#) help those from disadvantaged communities and those facing the greatest adversity by supporting them to build the confidence and skills to live, learn and earn. The courses offered by The Trust help young people aged 11-30 to develop essential life skills, get ready for work and access job opportunities. Support is provided to them to find work because having a job or running a business can lead to a more stable, fulfilling life.

The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, more commonly known as the [Scottish Funding Council \(SFC\)](#) are Scotland's tertiary education and research authority whose purpose is to sustain a world-leading system of tertiary education, research and innovation that enables students to flourish, changes lives for the better, and supports social, economic and environmental wellbeing and prosperity.

An example educational support initiative within Dundee is Abertay University Innovation for Global Growth (IGG) event. It's an annual event where students are connected with industry. Students are given the opportunity to apply knowledge



they've gained at Abertay over the years in a real organisational context. Social Security Scotland was one of the client organisations, among seven others, who took part in 2023.

5.1.8 Working with schools, colleges and universities to offer work experience

Suppliers can engage with local educational institutions to offer work experience, workshops, careers advice or other initiatives that support the curriculum. The following websites can help to identify schools, colleges and universities to engage with:

[Find a school | Parent Zone \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/)

[Colleges in Scotland \(collegesscotland.ac.uk\)](https://collegesscotland.ac.uk/)

[Universities Scotland \(universities-scotland.ac.uk\)](https://universities-scotland.ac.uk/)

5.1.9 Minimising negative environmental impacts

Suppliers can identify and exploit opportunities to minimise their negative impact on the environment and support [Net Zero Scotland](https://www.netzero.scot/), the national target of becoming 'Net Zero' by 2045.

Suppliers can do this through a variety of ways, including but not limited to:

- Using smaller packages to reduce the amount of paper or plastic used
- Buying recycled or eco-friendly materials
- Lowering energy consumption
- Decreasing water usage
- Reducing, reusing, and recycling

Supporting information:

- Net Zero Scotland's [Guide for Businesses](https://www.netzero.scot/guide-for-businesses/)
- [The Sustainable Scotland Network](https://www.sustainable-scotland.network/) supports over 600 members across Scotland's public sector to drive action on climate change, scaling up impact through leadership, policy, and research.
- [Zero Waste Scotland](https://www.zerowaste.scot/) is a not-for-profit environmental organisation funded by the Scottish Government that aims to lead Scotland to use products and resources more responsibly, focusing on where we can have the greatest effect on reducing climate change together through responsible consumption, responsible production and maximising value through waste.



6. Community Benefits Evaluation

- 6.1 Once suitable types of Community Benefits have been identified and included within the Invitation to Tender, Procurement Professionals will include a community benefits question in which tenderers will describe how community benefits will be delivered under the contract.
- 6.2 This community benefits question MUST have a minimum weighting of 10% of the quality criteria and will be scored in line with the [Procurement Journey scoring guidance](#).
- 6.3 Community Benefits proposals offered by successful tenderers will be accepted and included as a contractual requirement in contracts. In some circumstances, the evaluation of Community Benefits proposals may not be appropriate, for example if there is no provision for community benefits through the framework used.
- 6.4 Under a direct award process (and similar routes to market) where there is no tender evaluation, procurement professionals should include community benefits as a mandatory element of the specification.



7. Implementation of Community Benefits

- 7.1 Procurement professionals will ensure that robust arrangements are in place to monitor the delivery of Community Benefits throughout the contract through contract management activity.
- 7.2 Monitoring information will be requested and included in the contract documentation and subsequently contract managed, in order to monitor delivery throughout the contract term, for example:
- a single point of contact within the contracting organisation who will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Community Benefit proposal;
 - a clear statement of the actual outputs/ KPIs to be monitored;
 - the frequency of monitoring information arrangements;
 - the format of monitoring information arrangements;
 - a means of verifying the monitoring information.
- 7.3 The approach to monitoring the Community Benefits requirements should be no less rigorous than that applied to other core elements of the contract. Without robust monitoring arrangements in place, Social Security Scotland will be unable to track progress or check whether the contractor has fulfilled their obligations. Subsequently, Social Security Scotland may be open to legal challenge from bidders that were not awarded the contract if procedures are not in place to monitor the winning contractor's performance on the Community Benefits element of the contract.
- 7.4 Social Security Scotland will look to create effective supporting networks (e.g. points of contact at local schools, colleges, Chambers of Commerce etc.) and instruments to assist in the delivery of community benefit commitments within the procurement process;



8. Monitoring the Delivery of Community Benefits

- 8.1 Social Security Scotland's Procurement and Commercial team will record all Community Benefits information for each contract. This will include details of the secured Community Benefits and the delivered Community Benefits for each contract. Social Security Scotland will strive to make use of reporting tools such as the Public Contracts Scotland portal website to improve functionality to be able to monitor and report on community benefit outcomes in a consistent way.
- 8.2 The impact of Community Benefits will be monitored by recording the number of secured and delivered Community Benefits and narrative around benefits brought to the community.
- 8.3 Progress on delivery of Community Benefits will be reported as part of the Social Security Scotland Annual Procurement Report. This will also include information on the direct impact of delivered Community Benefits.



Annex 1 - Community Wealth Building (CWB)

[Community Wealth Building \(CWB\)](#) is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

It aims to ensure the economic system builds wealth and prosperity for everyone.

Progressive procurement: developing local supply chains of businesses likely to support local employment and keep wealth within communities.

Community Wealth Building acts as a framework for activity across five interlinked pillars and the first pillar (spending) is of particular relevance to procurement and it includes:

Maximising Community Benefits through procurement and commissioning, developing good enterprises, fair work and shorter supply chains.

Examples: Community Wealth Building action plans focusing on delivering actions such as:

- growing local supply chains
- supporting the creation of good fair work opportunities for local people
- promoting the Real Living Wage and wider fair work objectives
- bringing vacant and derelict land into more productive use
- using land as a tool to achieve net zero
- maximising the Community Benefits associated with procurement and developing local supply chains
- supporting local firms to take part in public procurement contracts

For examples of finance pillar activity and guidance on Implementing Community Wealth Building see the [Economic Development Association Scotland: Community Wealth Building Guide](#).