



Social Security  
Scotland

Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

# Corporate procurement strategy

**2024 - 2027**

Dignity,  
fairness,  
respect.

## Glossary

**Annual Procurement Report** – A report which any public organisation in Scotland with an estimated regulated spend of £5 million or more must publish each year to explain how its procurement activity has been in line with its published procurement strategy.

**Awarded** - When suppliers are awarded a place on an agreement. This does not guarantee them work, but it does mean they have passed the relevant checks needed to provide products and services on the agreement.

**Bid** - A bid is a supplier's response to a Request for Proposal (RfP). A bid includes the supplier's full submission including price and responses to quality questions. It may include other information such as, availability, delivery schedule, detailed product/service specification, capability and examples of previous experience that help the supplier to meet the requirements outlined in the RfP. Can also be referred to as a tender or an offer.

**British Association of Supported Employment** – This organisation supports, promotes and develops the principles of supported employment.

**Business Plan** – The Social Security Scotland Business Plan focuses on what we will achieve in the next 12 months. This includes actions and activities that support the themes within our new three-year Corporate Plan which sets out our longer-term vision of our organisation's future growth.

**Buyer** - Another term used for user, customer or contracting authority.

**Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)** - CLES is the national organisation for local economies - developing progressive economics for people, planet and place.

**Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS)** - The largest procurement professional body in the world, they represent procurement and supply professionals throughout their career. CIPS promotes procurement best practices and the interests of all procurement professionals to the wider business community and governments.

**Climate Literacy** – Understanding what is important for individuals and communities to know and understand about the Earth's climate, the effects of climate change, and approaches to adapt in order to deal with or reduce these effects.

**Collaborative Frameworks** – Contracts that are available for the whole of the Scottish public sector.

**Community Benefits** – Requirements in a contract which relate to training, recruitment and availability of opportunities to subcontract, or which are intended to improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of the local area in a way that is different to the main purpose of the contract.

**Community Wealth Building** – Is an approach to economic development as a key practical means by which we can achieve Scottish Government's wellbeing economy objectives outlined in the [National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#).

**Competition** - A competitive bidding process where the buyer receives and evaluates bids from companies before choosing them to be a supplier.

**Contract** - A legally enforceable agreement between 2 or more competent parties (usually supplier and buyer). It will define the goods and services that will be provided.

**Contractor** - An individual or organisation providing goods, services or works according to the terms agreed in a contract.

**Corporate Plan** – Explains our strategic goals over the next three years with our highest priority being an excellent service for our clients driven by our principles of dignity, fairness and respect.

**Devolved Powers** – Powers where responsibility has passed to the Scottish Government.

**Delegated Purchasing Officer** – A member of staff who has delegated authority to purchase on behalf of Social Security Scotland.

**Discover Work Dundee** - The Discover Work Partnership is Dundee's Local Employability Partnership. It is a multi-agency approach to the development of shared objectives, the alignment of efforts and the commitment of resources relating to employability.

**Dynamic Purchasing Systems** - A Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) is an electronic system that is used to purchase goods and services that are commonly used by the buyer and easy to find on the market. It's similar to a framework but has the functionality to add new suppliers at any time and is 100% electronic.

**Employability in Scotland** - The Scottish Employability Plan outlines the steps to deliver more effective and integrated employability support across Scotland. It aims to create a straightforward and person-centred system of support. The plan recognises the importance of local partnerships and involves Scotland's 32 local authorities as key partners in designing and delivering employability services.

**Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System** - A software system that helps organisations automate and manage core business processes for optimal performance, including HR, supply chain, finance and more.

**Executive Agency** – Although part of the Scottish Government, Executive Agencies generally have a strong focus on the management and direct delivery of public services which do not require day-to-day Ministerial oversight. In some cases, they may also have responsibility for a distinct area of government policy. They are staffed by civil servants, including the Chief Executive who is directly accountable to Ministers. They are not statutory bodies but operate to a Framework Document approved by Ministers, which may be reviewed, amended or revoked at any time. They can normally be set up by administrative action without the need for legislation.

**Fair Work First** - A policy for driving high quality and fair work across the labour market in Scotland. It is designed to encourage and support employers to adopt fair work practices within their organisation, focusing on the fair work first criteria.

**Find A Tender** – A website for the UK's public and utilities sectors to advertise the higher-value contracts.

**Framework Agreement** - A commercial agreement is a compliant way to buy products or services from suppliers who have applied to be on the agreement and have been vetted to show they can supply the products and services listed. A commercial agreement is often referred to as a framework agreement.

**Forward Plan** – A type of tactical planning that helps identify, schedule and prioritise actions to achieve a specific objective over a defined period.

**Good Food Nation** - A Good Food Nation, where people from every walk of life take pride and pleasure in, and benefit from, the food they produce, buy, cook, serve, and eat each day.

**Government's Collaborative Frameworks** - Is about achieving value for money for the Scottish public sector through partnership working between buying organisations and suppliers.

**Inclusive Communication** – An approach to communication that means as many people as possible can take part, and people receive information and can express themselves in ways that they find easiest.

**Just Transition** – Scottish Government describes Just Transition as how we get to a net zero and climate resilient economy, in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice.

**Living Wage** - The Scottish Living Wage is an independently calculated rate based on the cost of living. It is voluntarily paid by employers in Scotland and aims to ensure that workers receive fair compensation.

**Lotting** – This is where a contract is divided into different sections (lots) to allow smaller suppliers to bid for parts of the contract even if they are not able to provide all of it.

**Lot-limiting** – This is where the number of lots that can be awarded to one tenderer is limited.

**Meet the Buyer Event** – Meet the Buyer events are an opportunity for suppliers to introduce themselves to public sector buyers and contractors to learn about new projects, contracts, framework opportunities and supply chain opportunities. For buyers, these events enable them to increase their pool of potential suppliers and widen their supply chains. Overall, Meet the Buyer events offer suppliers a great chance to network and find out about future opportunities.

**Multi-Channel Contact Centre** – This is the software platform that we use to communicate with our clients.

**National Performance Framework** - A wellbeing framework that sets out an overall vision for Scotland. The framework aims to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increased wellbeing and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The National Performance Framework builds on the wider Scottish approach to reform – aligning the whole public sector around a common set of outcomes, supporting partnership working, collaboration and emphasising prevention.

**National Procurement Development Framework Tool** - This free-to-use online tool contains Scotland's national procurement competency framework and can be used to self-assess your skills, identify training needs and support career planning.

**Net Zero Strategy for Social Security Scotland** – As detailed in Social Security Scotland's Business Plan, the Net Zero strategy is being developed to make a contribution towards the Scottish Government's target of Scotland becoming a net zero county by 2045.

**New Deal for Business** - The New Deal for Business was announced by the former First Minister in April 2023 to help business and trade to thrive and maximise the opportunity of the green economy, with fairness at its heart. A New Deal for Business Group was established to provide a forum for government and business leaders to explore how best to support businesses and communities and to actively work together to achieve common goals, aligning Scottish Government policy with business.

**No One Left Behind** - No One Left Behind is an approach which ensures employment support is person centred, tailored and responsive to the needs of local labour markets and individuals of all ages who are looking for help to find and remain in work.

**Place Project** - The Place Project is responsible for putting into practice our vision to be at the heart of local communities across Scotland. It is responsible for making sure the appropriate infrastructure is in place to help us provide our services to service users and to provide a safe and secure working environment for our staff.

**Prime Contractors** - The main contractor responsible for delivering a project.

**Prior Information Notice** - This is a notice we publish on Public Contracts Scotland, setting out our intention to buy goods or services.

**Procurement Competency Framework** - This sets out the skills and competency levels of public-sector staff involved in the procurement process.

**Procurement Commercial Improvement Programme (PCIP)** - PCIP assessments occur approximately every three years for each public procurement sector in Scotland. The PCIP assessment process is not an audit but provides a means of measuring and reporting on the procurement and commercial capability of organisations. This is done through the provision of evidence based around a series of set questions.

**Procurement Journey** - Guidance for public-sector buyers who buy goods, services, care and support.

**Procurement People of Tomorrow Pledge** - A public sector led programme to address the skills gap in procurement and highlight the challenges in attracting, recruiting and retaining talent.

**Programme for Government** - Is a document that lays out all of the things the Government hopes to achieve over its time in power. It includes policies for areas such as healthcare, the economy, transport, climate change, housing, immigration, education, and more.

**Public Contracts Scotland** - The Scottish Government's national portal where suppliers can access public contract opportunities across Scotland.

**Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland** - Outlines the Scottish Government's plans for procurement. It provides a clear way forward for all public sector bodies to align with and delivery against.

**Public Sector Equality Duty** - The public sector equality duty is a duty on public authorities to consider how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

**Regulated Procurement** - Buying goods, services or work where the total value over the term of the contract is more than £50,000 for goods and services or more than £2 million for work.



**Scotland's National Outcomes** - The Scottish Government's broad policy aims.

**Scottish Government Directorate Programme** - This is responsible for making sure responsibility for benefits transfers safely and securely from the Department for Work and Pensions to us, under the Scotland Act 2016.

**Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation** - A measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones). The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is the Scottish Government's standard approach to identify areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland (those with different types of deprivation). It can help improve understanding about the outcomes and circumstances of people living in the most deprived areas in Scotland. It can also allow the Scottish Government to target policies and funding to help reduce or take account of areas of multiple deprivation. [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020)

**Scottish Model of Procurement** - This aims to promote the power of public spending to provide genuine public value that goes beyond simply looking at the cost and quality of goods and services we buy. Although led by the Scottish Government, the [Scottish Model of Procurement](#) is owned by all of the Scottish public sector.

**Scottish Procurement Policy Notes** - These give public bodies advice on their procurement policies.

**Scottish Public Finance Manual** - The Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM) is issued by Scottish Ministers to provide guidance on the proper handling and reporting of public funds.

**Small to Medium-sized Enterprises** - The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of businesses which employ fewer than 250 people and which have a turnover of less than 50 million euro a year or a yearly balance sheet total of less than 43 million euro.

**Social Enterprise** - A social enterprise is defined as a business with specific social objectives that serve its primary purpose. Social enterprises seek to maximise profits while maximising benefits to society and the environment, and the profits are principally used to fund social programs.

**Social Impact** - The positive contribution that public bodies and other public-sector organisations can make to the local communities in which they operate.

**Social Impact Pledge** - This asks public-sector organisations across Scotland to commit to increasing their social impact by making a public commitment to change three aspects of their current operations or policies. These should be three things that they are not doing currently and haven't done before. [Social Impact Pledge — Communities Channel Scotland \(communityscot.org.uk\)](https://communityscot.org.uk)

**Social Security Programme** - The Scottish Government's Social Security Programme develops and implements the capability required by Social Security Scotland to deliver 16.5 million payments per year, worth £6 billion by 2024/25 to an estimated two million people. This is the largest delivery programme and transfer of powers under devolution.

**Social Security Scotland Digital and Technology Strategy** - Sets out our plan to develop digital services that will support the benefits being transferred from the UK Department for Work and Pensions and the new Social Security Scotland benefits.

**Specification** - How a Procurement Officer details what is required for the procurement of the goods or services being purchased.

**Stakeholder(s)** - Any individual or social group who possesses an interest, a legal obligation, moral right or other concern, in the decisions or outcomes of an organisation.

**Supplier** - An entity, either a company or individual, that provides goods, materials, or services to a buyer or organisation.

**Supplier Development Programme** - This programme provides Scottish-based small to medium-sized enterprises with free support in all aspects of tendering.

**Supply Chain** - All activities, resources, products etc. involved in creating and moving a product or service from the supplier to the procurer.

**Supported Business** - A business whose main aim is to integrate disabled or disadvantaged people socially and professionally. At least 30% of a supported business's employees must be disabled or disadvantaged.

**Sustainable Development** - Development that meets the needs of the current population without making it more difficult for future generations to meet their own needs.

**Sustainable Procurement Duty** - The duty we have under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 to make sure that, before we buy anything, we think about how we can improve the environmental and economic well-being of the local area and reduce inequality.

**Sustainable Procurement Tools** - Tools designed to help public sector organisations identify and address how they can optimise the economic, social and environmental outcomes of their procurement activity.

**Third-sector Organisations** - Charities, voluntary and community organisations, social enterprises and co-operatives.

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## Foreword by Head of Procurement

Social Security Scotland has experienced a significant amount of growth and change since our first Corporate Procurement Strategy was published in 2021. We are now an established public service, providing vital support to the people who receive our benefits.

This strategy sets out our vision for how we will sustainably buy the goods and services we need to support our organisation and provide a Scottish social security system that we all want to see and can be proud of – a rights-based service that is in line with our principles of dignity, fairness and respect.

Although we are now an established service, we will have a continued need to buy a wide range of different goods and services and we therefore expect our Procurement spend to increase during the period of this Strategy.

We will continue to work with supported businesses wherever possible, as the economic and societal benefits have been evident in relation to the provision of furniture and signage within our offices. We will continue to work with key partners – for example, the British Association of Supported Employment and the Supplier Development Programme – to understand and provide further opportunities for supported businesses, social enterprises and local suppliers to bid for and win contracts.

Over the past 3 years, we have experienced the cost of living spiral, high levels of inflation, continuing concern for levels of child poverty and the climate emergency. With these challenges all driving significant pressures on the economy, society and public finances, the role of procurement has become ever more significant. We have built the capability and capacity of our procurement team to ensure that our procurement activity is in line with public procurement laws and the Social Security Scotland framework document. This sets out the principles we must keep to in our work and includes a commitment to be open and transparent, and consult others. We must now move beyond the early aspirations for our organisation and focus our resources, skills and efforts on the wider challenges we face.

The priorities set out in this strategy are aligned with our [Corporate Plan 2024-2027](#) and our local and national priorities and objectives, and the [Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland](#) which outlines the bold and ambitious plans Scottish Government has for Public Procurement. Our priorities also align with the public service reform programme and we will continue to work closely with other public sector organisations, and utilise Scottish and wider UK collaborative frameworks and shared service arrangements, to help achieve our wider strategic aims.

Providing a social security system for Scotland not only gives us an opportunity to provide an important service to the people who will receive our benefits, it also gives us an opportunity to increase our economic impact. Our approach to procurement (the process of buying goods, services and works) is one way that we can make sure we can have a positive effect on the Scottish economy.

Good procurement also plays a key role in supporting wider policy objectives to build a more prosperous and fairer Scotland. This includes promoting jobs and growth through fair work initiatives, encouraging innovation, boosting training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities, and supporting the Just Transition approach to the climate emergency. We will follow best practice guidance and policy to deliver on these objectives. We will also contribute to inclusive economic growth by adopting a Community Wealth Building approach

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in relation to our procurement and contract management activity at our main locations in Dundee, where we are an anchor institution, and in Glasgow where our other main office is based.

We have developed this strategy after consulting our stakeholders (people with an interest in our organisation) and our staff. We have had valuable input from Scottish Government (Social Security Directorate, Procurement Policy Team, and Community Wealth Building Policy Team), British Association of Supported Employment and Dundee City Council, who are all essential partners in helping us to develop and pay benefits to the people of Scotland.

**Natalie McCrindle**

Head of Procurement & Commercial  
Social Security Scotland

## Our background

We are an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government. We were established in September 2018.

Our head office is in Dundee and we have a second main site in Glasgow. We also have colleagues based across the country who support clients in our local communities.

We have responsibility for delivering devolved social security benefits in Scotland. We deliver benefits for people on low incomes, disabled people, carers, young people entering the workplace and help eligible people to heat their homes.



As an executive agency, we are accountable to the Scottish Ministers, and the Scottish Ministers are accountable to the Scottish Parliament for delivering the devolved powers relating to social security in the Scotland Act 2016. The Director General for Communities is our Portfolio Accountable Officer within the Scottish Government.

The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 allowed the Scottish Government to establish a new social security system that meets the needs of Scottish people and which has dignity, fairness and respect at the heart of everything we do. We will continue to work closely with our colleagues in the Scottish Government Directorate, who are responsible for setting social security policy.

In the financial year beginning 1 April 2024, we expect that our spending on goods and services will be higher than the £5 million (excluding VAT) threshold stated in section 15 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. This means we must publish a procurement strategy setting out how we intend to make sure that the goods and services we buy provide value for money and help to deliver **Scotland's National Outcomes** and contribute to public service reform.

We have developed this strategy to make sure we meet our obligations under the above act. Annex A sets out the steps we will take to comply with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

## Our Procurement Team

Our Procurement and Commercial team is part of our Finance and Corporate Services Division. The Head of Procurement and Commercial reports to the Deputy Director of Finance and Corporate Services, who is part of our Executive Team.

As well as having responsibility for our procurement and commercial activity, the Finance and Corporate Services division is responsible for Finance, Debt Recovery, Fraud, and Error Resolution.

The division provides financial advice and support, ensuring the organisation delivers value for money to the taxpayer, operates within our budgets and manages annual expenditure and financial forecasting. The division also carries out Fraud and Error decision making, interventions, payment resolution and recoveries. Our Procurement and Commercial team have a business partnering model for working with key stakeholders in the 6 divisions of our organisation, with regular planned engagement to fully understand our pipeline of work and where we can add best value.

## Our procurement vision and strategy context

We work as one team and our organisation's core values are dignity, fairness and respect. This extends to each other as well as to the people and communities we serve.

### Our procurement vision is to:

- Be a successful, collaborative and supportive team.
- Achieve procurement best practice and commercial excellence throughout our organisation, making sure that our services, in line with the public service reform

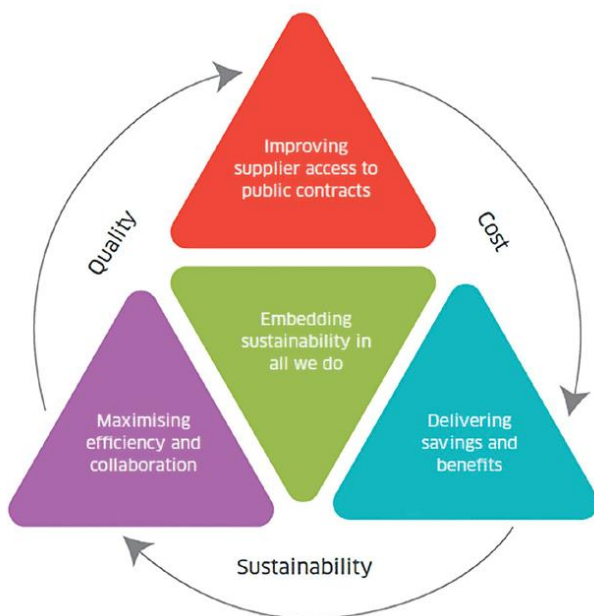
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programme, always deliver best value for money and have service users and the people of Scotland at the heart of what we do.

- Be recognised as having leading commercial, procurement and commissioning practices and skills which deliver outstanding outcomes.
- Develop strategies for all of our procurement activity aligned to the Scottish Model of Procurement. This model is owned by all of the Scottish public sector, which spends more than £16 billion a year on goods, services and work.

Our procurement vision is also aligned with the vision of the Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland “Putting public procurement at the heart of a sustainable economy to maximise value for the people of Scotland” as well as the Scottish Model of Procurement.



The overarching aim of the Scottish Model of Procurement is to promote the power of public spending to deliver genuine public value that goes beyond simply looking at the cost and quality of goods and services and makes sure that spend on goods and services can bring the most benefit to society.

This strategy outlines how we will use the power of procurement to deliver sustainable and inclusive economic growth and influence outcomes that are open and connected to the communities we serve, and are good for businesses, their employees, communities and society.

The Scottish Model of Procurement sets out principals that we adhere to:

- Embedding sustainability in all we do.
- Improving supplier access to public contracts.
- Maximising efficiency and collaboration.
- Delivering savings and benefits.

Our procurement vision aligns with the public service reform programme, and Scottish Government's Programme for Government announced by the First Minister in September

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2024, which sets out the actions the Scottish Government will take in the coming year and beyond. The Scottish Government's four main priorities are:

- eradicating child poverty
- growing our economy
- tackling the climate emergency
- improving public services

This strategy also supports the four pillars of the **New Deal for Business** which are:-

- shared awareness of the economic and business environment
- developing the best environment to do business
- enhanced partnership working
- contribution to a wellbeing economy

The promotion of community wealth building will help develop the local and national economy. Accessibility of procurement opportunities will assist the wider market whilst aiding the development of SME's, Third Sector Organisations and Supported Businesses.

## Our strategic aims, objectives and key priorities

Our Corporate Plan 2024-2027, published in 2024, sets out who we are, what we do and how we will do it.

Our Strategic Corporate Goals are:-

1. **Operational delivery** - Fulfil our Charter commitments with kindness and ensure we deliver the right benefits to everyone who is eligible for them. This includes delivering Scottish Child Payment, which contributes to eradicating child poverty in Scotland.
2. **Investing in our technology** - Maintain our IT systems to a high standard ensuring robust cyber security and build additional essential functions as technology improves.
3. **Launch of new social security benefits** - Prepare for the launch of Carer's Additional Person Payment, Pension Age Disability Payment and Pension Age Winter Heating Payment.
4. **Business Plan priorities** - Deliver our performance priorities to show improvements to the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of our service.
5. **Preparing for the future** - Transfer all of the functions needed to deliver benefits from the Scottish Government's Social Security Programme to Social Security Scotland as the Programme comes to a planned end in 2026.

Our procurement priorities are aligned to our organisational goals of operational delivery, investing in our technology, the launch of new social security benefits, delivering business plan priorities, and preparing for the future. This supports the goal to deliver the full programme of devolved benefits to the right people at the right time. We expand on this below.

## **Operational Delivery to the People of Scotland**

We will continue to work closely with our colleagues in Social Security Scotland to play our role in maintaining operational delivery of our benefits to the people of Scotland. This will include early engagement to determine their requirements ensuring that there is sufficient time to put in place robust contracts that meet their needs and offer value for money.

Through Business Partnering we will review current and future customer requirements to help plan procurement exercises and help manage resources to effectively meet demands.

We will carry out market engagement with our suppliers as early as possible using a variety of methods including Prior Information Notices (PINs), supplier information days, and Requests For Information (RFIs). This will assist with the development of our requirements ensuring that they are aligned with existing market trends and initiatives and allow greater supplier engagement which should result in the submission of more technically sound proposals from suppliers.

We will ensure that our contracts have suitable and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are monitored and reviewed through regular Contract Management meetings. This will help to ensure that we receive the contracted level of service and mitigate against deficiencies in contractor performance. Where issues are identified, the contractors will be requested to submit an Action / Remedial Plan detailing how they will resolve the issues within a specified timeframe.

We will work with other public sector organisations to share information, knowledge and lessons learned so we can jointly learn from experiences and develop service requirements and improve contracts.

We will carry out Post Project Reviews, where appropriate, to take advantage of any lessons learned and identify areas that require improvement / development.

## **Investing in our technology**

Working closely with our Chief Digital Office colleagues we will help ensure that the safety and security of our clients data and our systems is maintained.

We will support the Social Security Scotland Digital and Technology Strategy and ensure that our contracts are designed to effectively manage continuous improvements and support investment in future technology to reach digital maturity.

Our new Cloud based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system will help to ensure that Social Security Scotland is supported by a modern, best practice purchasing and financial system, strengthening our end to end financial controls, automating our currently manual processes and allowing for real time reporting and forecasting.

## **Launch of New Social Security Benefits**

Many of our contracts, such as our contract for the Multi-Channel Contact Centre, have a direct impact on the service we offer to clients and efficient and effective procurement and contract management are key to the delivery of these services. To support the provision of an efficient service for our clients we will ensure that our contracts meet our internal customer requirements, thereby supporting clients to access the benefits that they are entitled to.

## **Deliver our Business Plan Priorities**

The procurement function will support our contribution to the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 principle of being efficient and delivering best value for money.

We will make sure our procurement activities are cost-efficient by buying our goods and services through collaborative frameworks when this approach helps to achieve our wider strategic aims. We will make sure that we achieve value for money by developing reliable procurement strategies and managing contracts effectively.

Our Annual Procurement Report will set out how we are delivering value for money through our procurement and contract management activity. It will include details of the money we have spent through collaborative frameworks and the savings we have made.

Where appropriate, our specifications (the description of the goods or services we need to buy) will be performance based and focus on the function of the product or the desired outcome of the service. In line with the Scottish Government Initiative to help promote and encourage innovation through public procurement, our approach will aim to encourage innovation, guided by Scottish Procurement and Policy notes, allowing and encouraging suppliers to propose cutting-edge, environmentally friendly solutions.

We will support the ongoing development of our organisations' service model to plan for the future by strengthening relationships with our stakeholders, and developing and improving our service, managing safe transition of the portfolio of contracts transitioning from the Scottish Government Social Security Programme and ensuring that our contracts are designed to effectively manage continuous improvements and support investment in future technology to reach digital maturity.

We will comply with the sustainable procurement duty and apply it to our processes to make sure we fully consider costs, quality, environmental impact and social effects over the whole life of an item or service when assessing value for money.

## **Preparing for the Future**

During the three year period of this strategy we will reach a significant milestone as the Scottish Government's Social Security Programme comes to a planned end in 2026. We have worked closely with our colleagues in the social security family to establish the Scottish social security system and we are ready to sustain and build on the strong foundations we have built together to deliver a system people can trust to support them now and for future generations.

By 2026, we will also be responsible for launching and delivering three additional vital payments to people across Scotland: Carer's Additional Person Payment, Pension Age Disability Payment and Pension Age Winter Heating Payment. We will continue to work collaboratively with our colleagues in the Department for Work and Pensions and the Scottish Government to complete the safe and secure transfer of client awards to Social Security Scotland.

We will provide support and advice to ensure a safe programme closure and safe transition of contracts procured by the Social Security Programme into Social Security Scotland, maintaining services aided by an understanding of an organisational target operating model and future service model. Our aim will be to build the foundations to manage, evolve and improve the portfolio of contracts.

We will further develop our skilled Procurement and Commercial Team to ensure they can support Social Security Scotland colleagues with their procurement requirements, providing comprehensive procurement and commercial advice.

We will continue to publish information on contracts we have awarded and opportunities for further contracts on Public Contracts Scotland and in our Annual Procurement Report, making this information more accessible for all suppliers and external stakeholders.

## Complying with our corporate responsibilities

As a public body, there are responsibilities and legal duties that we must meet. We will comply with relevant procurement laws for public-sector organisations in Scotland and the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. As procurement professionals it is also important to us that we fulfil our corporate (and social) responsibilities and assist the Agency to comply with the duties of a responsible public body. Our compliance framework makes sure we comply with our statutory obligations and those within the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018. This framework shows people that we are meeting our duties and makes sure we continue to learn and share best practice.

In the invitation to tender, and from the beginning of each contract, we will clearly set out controller and processor responsibilities for processing of any personal data necessary to carry out the contract. Where personal data is being processed, we will include appropriate data protection terms and conditions and an appropriate schedule in our contracts to ensure compliance with Chapter IV of the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Chapter 4 of Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

We will continue to manage contracts to make sure contractors are processing personal data in accordance with these requirements and responsibilities. The specification or scope of services in our contracts will include measures to protect systems, networks and computer programs from digital attacks to make sure that our contractors protect service users' information in line with the Government's requirements on information security and industry best practice.

We will publish information on contracts we have awarded and opportunities for future contracts on [Public Contracts Scotland](#) and in our Annual Procurement Report.

We also publish our higher-value contracts on [Find a Tender](#) – a website for the UK's public and utilities sectors to advertise their higher-value contracts (usually above £116,407 excluding VAT).

We will be open and transparent, and treat all suppliers equally and without discrimination and act in a proportionate manner. We encourage all suppliers to register on [Public Contracts Scotland](#) to make sure they receive alerts when we have a contract opportunity.

We will keep our [corporate website](#) updated to include details of how suppliers can access our contracting opportunities.

## Complying with our social responsibilities

The Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland, requires us to buy in a way which is:

- good for businesses and employees

- good for society
- good for places and communities
- open and connected



The Sustainable Procurement Duty also requires that before a contracting authority buys goods, works or services, it must think about how it can improve the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of the area in which it operates, with a particular focus on reducing inequality. Our approach to community wealth building and community benefits will also focus on these factors.

Protecting the environment is also at the heart of our sustainable procurement duty. We routinely consider the effect we will have on the environment when developing the procurement strategies for our individual procurement exercises.

We will continue to make sure that specifications for services contribute to the Scottish Government's commitment to reducing Scotland's environmental impact (the effect our actions have on the environment) and creating a cleaner, greener and healthier country.

Our Procurement Team use the Scottish Government Sustainable Procurement Tools and complete the Climate Literacy for Buyers e-learning that is available through the Scottish Government's Sustainable Procurement Tools platform. This further enables us to consider climate change in our procurement activities and play our part in supporting the shared national endeavour to tackle the global crises of health, climate emergency and biodiversity loss which are part of the public service reform programme.

We are already making progress towards reducing our effect on the environment. As part of our environmental stewardship our Place Plan identifies activities to help our organisation meet the Scottish Government's targets to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. Our fleet approach feeds directly into these activities and helps promote and recommend sustainable decisions in relation to our physical assets and behaviour in fleet utilisation.

## Key Priorities

Our priorities for the three-year period covered by this Strategy give consideration to the [Public Procurement Strategy for Scotland](#) and our local and national priorities and objectives. Our priorities align with the [National Performance Framework](#), the public service reform programme, and the goals in our Corporate Plan.

**Dignity, fairness, respect.**

## Our key priorities are:

1. to use our influence to achieve robust and prudent fiscal management and deliver best value for money (balance of cost, quality and sustainability). Also to make every penny count through legally compliant procurement and contract management activities.
2. to continuously improve the procurement and contract management services that we deliver, building relationships with our stakeholders and driving efficiencies.
3. to maintain and further develop our skilled, diverse and inclusive Procurement and Commercial Team and consider our values in everything we do.
4. to work with our stakeholders and contractors to improve performance, identify further opportunities for working more sustainably, promote fair working and fair and ethically traded products, reduce inequality, increase transparency and simplicity in supply chains and promote innovation.
5. to promote community wealth building in relation to national and local priorities and support immediate and longer-term resilience in critical supply chains. We will also ensure our procurement opportunities are easily accessible to small to medium-sized enterprises, third-sector organisations and supported businesses operating in Scotland.
6. to ensure that our procurement practices contribute to the Scottish Government Just Transition approach to addressing the climate emergency and decarbonising our economy.

## Actions we will take to achieve our key priorities

- 1. Use our influence to achieve robust and prudent fiscal management and deliver best value for money (balance of cost, quality and sustainability), and make every penny count through legally compliant procurement and contract management activities.**

We will:

- Contribute to robust business cases and ensure commercial cases deliver value for money and savings sustainably.
- Adhere to the Scottish Public Finance Manual and ensure expenditure will stand up to public scrutiny.
- Consider alternative options to procurement to achieve objectives which deliver better value for money.
- Routinely consider the optimum combination of whole life costs and quality for each tender process, to ensure value for money, minimise environmental damage and maximise socio-economic benefits.
- Identify and monitor opportunities for savings and efficiencies through effective procurement and contract management.
- Build in contractual provision to effectively manage price increases due to inflation and other market pressures.
- Make sure all policies, documents and processes take account of relevant legislation.
- Comply with all legislation including, but not limited to, equality, accessibility, climate change, data protection and health & safety in all procurement and contract management activities.



- Continue to build our team to be skilled, diverse and inclusive and ensure the procurement and commercial team attend regular procurement policy refresher training.
- Follow the national procurement competency framework guidance and associated online [National Procurement Development Framework tool](#) to assess skills, identify training needs and support career planning to help develop the skills and capabilities of staff. The guidance reflects the Scottish procurement context and aligns to the [Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply \(CIPS\)](#) global standards.
- Ensure that our procurement policies are available to stakeholders on our intranet, and guidance is shared with staff as part of our corporate induction.
- Continuously improve guidance and templates in line with the Procurement Journey.
- Report on our procurement activity and publish annual procurement reports. Implement and monitor improvements following audits, project reviews and external assessments.

## **2. Continuously improve the procurement and contract management services that we deliver, building relationships with our stakeholders and driving efficiencies.**

We will:

- Provide support and advice to ensure a safe programme closure and / safe transition of contracts from the Social Security Programme into Social Security Scotland maintaining services aided by an understanding of an organisational target operating model and future service model. Build foundations to manage, evolve and improve the portfolio of contracts.
- Support the [Social Security Scotland Digital and Technology Strategy](#) and ensure that our contracts are designed to effectively manage continuous improvements and support investment in future technology to reach digital maturity.
- Continuously improve by learning from experience, documenting and sharing lessons learned and actively seeking feedback from our stakeholders.
- Actively plan and manage the way workloads are prioritised and resources are allocated to ensure we provide an efficient and effective service to our stakeholders.
- Engage in early consultation with business partners to make sure business cases and procurement strategies explore all options and demonstrate the risks, benefits and value for money of contracts.
- Work with stakeholders to carry out effective market engagement with suppliers.
- Lead the procurement process, supporting stakeholders in developing specifications and ensuring organisational requirements and wider policy intent are considered at every stage, including sustainability, digital and technology requirements, data protection, security, health and safety, equality impact assessments and accessibility.
- Work with stakeholders to further develop and continuously improve our proportionate, risk based approach to contract management. Implement and monitor improvements to address feedback from the [Procurement Commercial Improvement Programme](#) assessment which took place in May 2024.

**3. We will maintain and further develop our skilled, diverse and inclusive Procurement and Commercial Team and consider our values in everything we do.**

We will:

- Attract talent to join our Procurement and Commercial Team and support their development through skills-based learning.
  - Continuously look for professional development opportunities and deliver the commitments in our **Procurement People of Tomorrow pledge** to address the skills gap in the procurement profession and grow our own talent.
  - Work as a successful, collaborative team, living our values of dignity, fairness, and respect to serve Social Security Scotland now and in the future.
  - Use the **National Procurement Development Framework tool** to identify any skills needed by our staff, invest time in personal development, and support our staff through coaching and mentoring.
  - Support procurement and commercial staff to gain professional qualifications and continuing professional development.
  - Provide appropriate training and guidance to all staff involved in the procurement process.
  - Regularly review procurement and wider professional environments to identify trends and changes in the profession, and ensure that future recruitment and people skills development flexes to provide appropriately skilled and trained procurement staff.
  - Focus on team-working with internal and external stakeholders to make sure we can deliver procurement outcomes successfully.
  - Ensure that the Procurement and Commercial Team attend training in inclusive communication that aligns with our organisation's Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) guidance to help them meet the needs of staff, stakeholders and service users who communicate in different ways.
- Ensure that all team members attend counter fraud training within the first 6 months of their appointment and thereafter every 3 years.

**4. We will work with our stakeholders and contractors to improve performance, identify further opportunities for working more sustainably, promote fair working and fair and ethically traded products, reduce inequality, increase transparency and simplicity in supply chains and promote innovation.**

We will:

- Adopt **Fair work and procurement** guidance in our tender process, and work with our contractors to promote fair working practices and the Real Living Wage.
- Follow Scottish Public Procurement Policy Note guidance to embed prompt payment performance in the supply chain through procurement and contract management processes.
- Follow Scottish Public Policy Notes on Fair Work First implementation. This explains how public bodies should apply the 7 elements of Fair Work First in regulated procurement processes.

- Work with contractors throughout the procurement and contract management lifecycle to discuss how they meet our expectations on ethical supply chains and sustainable development.
- Include in all contracts, where relevant, a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure contractor performance.
- Identify opportunities to help us become more sustainable through the contracts we award, and monitor progress by managing those contracts effectively.
- Follow Scottish Public Procurement Policy notes on supporting innovation through procurement to ensure that we consider opportunities to promote innovation.

**5. We will promote community wealth building in relation to national and local priorities and support immediate and longer-term resilience in critical supply chains. We will also ensure our procurement opportunities are easily accessible to small to medium-sized enterprises, third-sector organisations and supported businesses operating in Scotland.**

We will:

- Advertise contracts and supply-chain opportunities by using the Supplier Development Programme's marketing and social-media channels and advertising methods that are best suited to reach small to medium-sized enterprises and third-sector organisations.
- Continue to consider the use of lotting and lot-limiting so that small to medium-sized enterprises and third-sector organisations that might not be able to carry out the full contract can bid for part of it.
- Award contracts to supported businesses where possible, using the Scottish Government Supported Business Dynamic Purchasing System or reserved procurements where appropriate.
- Work with contractors to encourage small to medium-sized enterprises, third-sector organisations and supported businesses to be a part of our supply chain.
- Continue to work with the British Association for Supported Employment, not only discussing possible contract opportunities for its members, but also possible work placements, employment and employability support.
- Publish our Forward Plan of contract opportunities every 6 months on Public Contracts Scotland.
- Develop a Community Benefits Strategy to ensure that there is clear guidance for our team and suppliers tendering for our contract opportunities.
- Use Community Benefit clauses within contracts with an estimated value of £50,000 and above to deliver subcontracting, training, recruitment and other opportunities. The aim is to improve economic, social or environmental well-being of our local authority areas across Scotland, specifically our priority groups which are carers, disabled people and people on low incomes.
- Adopt a Community Wealth Building approach in Dundee and Glasgow where our main offices are based, making our contracting opportunities more accessible to local

businesses and working with our contractors to deliver subcontracting opportunities and community benefits in these areas where possible.

- Work with the Supplier Development Programme to help small to medium-sized enterprises and supported businesses to bid for future contracts and supply-chain opportunities.
- Use the Supplier Development Programme's Meet the Buyer events and other events to advertise upcoming contracts, including encouraging our contractors to open up supply chains and raise awareness of suppliers through the Supplier Development Programme's sustainable model.
- Maintain website guidance and advice for suppliers and potential suppliers on doing business with us that is inclusive, fair, ethical and transparent.
- Engage with potential contractors early in the procurement process to encourage participation and seek feedback to ensure that our specifications are deliverable.

**6. We will ensure that our procurement practices contribute to the Scottish Government Just Transition approach to addressing the climate emergency and decarbonising our economy.**

We will:

- Comply with the sustainable procurement duty and apply it to our processes to make sure we fully consider costs, quality, environmental impact and social effects over the whole life of an item or service when assessing value for money.
- Use appropriate tools and the Supplier Development Programme to increase opportunities for our procurement activities to have positive social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- Follow Scottish Public Procurement Policy notes on taking account of climate and circular economy considerations, and use relevant tools (e.g. the Scottish Government Sustainable Procurement Tools) to help us develop action plans and strategies for awarding contracts and directing resources to where they are needed.
- Increase the knowledge, skills and capability within the Procurement and Commercial Team and across our stakeholders. This includes making sure that all stakeholders become more aware of the effect they can have on climate change, and know how to access e-learning that is available through the Sustainable Procurement Tools platform.
- Consult appropriate experts.
- Include sustainability considerations when carrying out market research.
- Use recognised standards in our specifications where these are available and relevant.
- Manage contracts and actively work with contractors to make sure they provide the sustainable outcomes we want to achieve.
- Develop internal templates and guidance to help reduce demand for goods and services by cutting down on waste, and encouraging people to re-use and recycle, and to use goods and services that do the least harm to the environment.

- Contribute to a Net Zero Strategy for Social Security Scotland and ensure that this is aligned with our procurement and contract management processes and activities.
- Actively encourage our contractors to set targets through our procurement activities for reducing indirect/ supply chain emissions of greenhouse gases and monitor these through contract management activities.
- Collaborate with the Accredited Provider of the Accessible Vehicle and Equipment (AVE) Scheme, and colleagues in Transport Scotland and other public bodies to find solutions to perceived barriers to Just Transition for AVE scheme users in alignment with Scotland's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan.

## How will success be determined?

We will monitor and report on how we have met our key priorities in our Annual Procurement Report which allows us to record and publicise our performance and achievements in delivering our procurement strategy. To do this we will gather objective evidence and also seek feedback from our stakeholders on the provision of our services, making improvements where possible. Our Annual Procurement Report is also an opportunity to showcase work that has met our obligations and demonstrate how we have maximised the power of procurement.

In addition to the above, although this Corporate Procurement Strategy document covers the period from 2024 to 2027, we will review the document annually and update as necessary so that it continues to be fit for purpose and it reflects any changes in legislation, policy, governance etc.

## Spend & Finance

### Paying invoices

Our contract terms commit us to paying valid invoices within 30 days of receiving them, and under our prompt payment commitment we aim to pay 95% of valid undisputed invoices, within 10 days of receiving them. Our contractors must also meet this commitment in their supply chain contracts. We will manage contracts to make sure that contractors pay subcontractors, and that they in turn pay their subcontractors under the same terms.

We will monitor this payment activity throughout the life of each contract, and we will respond appropriately to any issues subcontractors formally raise about payment.

During the financial year 2023/2024 we paid 98% of all correct invoices within 10 days and we will continue targeting to pay valid invoices within 10 days of receipt, going beyond the contractual commitment to pay within 30 days.

Our existing business technology is currently being replaced with a new cloud based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system which will help to ensure that Social Security Scotland is supported by a modern, best practice purchasing and financial system.

The change will deliver strengthened end to end financial controls, automation of currently manual processes, eliminate the use of standalone spreadsheets and allow for real time reporting and forecasting.

This will drive significantly more insight, added value and support strategic and robust decision making. This project will support the Scottish Government's wider transformation ensuring that it has fit for the future finance technology.

## Meeting our obligations and supporting wider policy objectives

### The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014

This part of our strategy sets out how we will meet the requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act and to support wider policy objectives to maximise the power of procurement. We will make sure that our procurement activity adheres to relevant legislation and regulations, applying good governance and being accountable. The Procurement and Commercial Team will comply with relevant legislation and stay up to date with developments across legislation and relevant case law.

### Value for money

Our **Charter** states that 'the Scottish social security system is to be efficient and deliver value for money'. All Social Security Scotland contracts will be awarded on the basis of value for money. Value for money is defined in the Scottish Government's Procurement Policy Manual as 'the optimum combination of whole life cost and quality to meet the customer's requirement'.

We will make sure that we work with potential suppliers as early as possible in the procurement process by displaying prior information notices, requests for information and details of our forward procurement plan on **Public Contracts Scotland** to increase competition and achieve value for money and the best possible contract outcomes.

Whole-life costing will take account of all aspects of cost over the life of the contract and may include capital, maintenance, management and operating costs, and the cost of disposing of any goods or services at the end of the contract.

### Sustainable procurement duty

The **sustainable procurement duty**, as defined in section 9 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act, applies to all regulated procurement and means that we must consider how we can:

- improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the authority's area;
- make it possible for small to medium-sized enterprises, third-sector organisations and supported businesses to be involved in the procurement process; and
- promote innovation.



We will promote and develop opportunities which consider social, economic and environmental outcomes in our tender activities in an appropriate and realistic way.

For all contracts we will carry out an equality impact assessment in line with our organisation's Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) guidance and, where appropriate, an Island Communities Impact Assessment, to guide the procurement strategy.

To make sure that reducing inequality is a priority for procurement activities that will deliver community benefits, under section 25 of the [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act](#), we will encourage suppliers to recruit staff who are from areas listed in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation as the 10% most deprived areas.

Environmental considerations are at the heart of the sustainable procurement duty and we routinely consider these as part of our procurement exercises. We will take all possible steps to make sure that any goods and services we buy reduce emissions and are an efficient use of resources.

Our travel and transport requirements will be significantly influenced by where our national staff bases are and the travel involved in getting from these bases to appropriate locations to provide services to our service users.

We will continue, in collaboration with Transport Scotland colleagues & other public bodies, to work with our Accredited Provider of the Accessible Vehicles and Equipment (AVE) Scheme, to promote, develop and trial innovative solutions aimed at overcoming the affordability and accessibility challenges for AVE scheme users in making the transition to Electric Vehicles. This activity will contribute to the national outcomes of social inclusion, reducing poverty and just transition and further strengthen our contribution to public service reform.

For all regulated procurement, we will use the [Sustainable Procurement Tools](#) platform to help with market research and guide decisions on sustainability requirements for each contract. We will work closely with both the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland to support the plan to phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030.

For all our procurements we will make sure that contracting opportunities are structured in a way that makes them as accessible as possible for small to medium-sized enterprises, third-sector organisations and supported businesses.

We will encourage prime contractors to support small to medium-sized enterprises, third-sector organisations and supported businesses to get involved in our supply chain, and our contracts will include a commitment to advertising all subcontracting opportunities on Public Contracts Scotland.

We are a member of the [Supplier Development Programme](#), who provide guidance and help to businesses that have little or no experience of tendering for public-sector contracts. We will support the Meet the Buyer events that the Supplier Development Programme organise each year by displaying exhibitions with our 'real buyers' and giving presentations where suitable. We will also regularly identify relevant contract opportunities where early supplier involvement, such as personalised training sessions on the tender process, could help small to medium-sized enterprises, third-sector organisations and supported businesses get ready to bid for a contract.

We recognise how buying innovative goods and services can contribute to improvements in the quality of public services and lead to growth in the Scottish economy. We will involve

potential suppliers in the process before tendering begins and work with other authorities to promote innovation wherever possible.

## Community Wealth Building

Social Security Scotland has adopted the internationally recognised Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach to economic development.

Community Wealth Building is an approach designed to tackle long-standing economic challenges and transform Scotland's local and regional economies by considering the ways in which the public sector, in partnership with the private, third and community sectors, can ensure more wealth is generated, circulated and retained in communities and localities.

Through a defined five pillar model of deliberate and practical action in the areas of Spending, Workforce, Land & Property, Inclusive Ownership and Finance, Community Wealth Building aims to deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits. Community Wealth Building can be a key tool in supporting a just transition to net zero and ensuring environmental sustainability, helping Scotland's places and communities thrive within the planet's sustainable limits. The approach also supports the creation of fair work opportunities and ambitions to tackle child poverty.

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies states that anchor institutions can play a defining role in creating and reinforcing local economic ties when guided by community wealth building principles.

Social Security Scotland is identified as anchor institution in the Tayside area where our Dundee head office is located. Our Head of Procurement in Social Security Scotland is a member of the Tayside Community Wealth Building working group. Through its Community Wealth Building approach, Dundee's anchor institutions will seek to support the delivery of the Dundee Partnership's strategic priorities of reducing poverty and inequalities, tackling climate change and delivering inclusive economic growth.

The term 'anchor institutions' is used to refer to organisations which:

1. Have an **important presence in a place**, usually through a combination of: being largescale employers, the largest purchasers of goods and services in the locality, controlling large areas of land and/or having relatively fixed assets.
2. Are **tied to a particular place** by their mission, histories, physical assets and local relationships. Examples include local authorities, NHS trusts, universities, trade unions, large local businesses, the combined activities of the community and voluntary sector and housing associations.

We will commit to long term collaboration between Dundee Anchor Institutions to reframe the development of our local economies and environments through Community Wealth Building. This includes a commitment to increase understanding of Community Wealth Building within our organisations, agree actions for our organisations and to report on progress to the Dundee Partnership.

Our Procurement team's initiatives will focus on driving sustainability through the award decision, early market engagement and leveraging collaborative buying power, e.g. through

joint forward planning and placing greater importance on sustainability within our processes. We will aim to work with organisations in Dundee and also Glasgow, where we have a significant office presence and also meet the above definition of an anchor institution.



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.

## Community benefits

We will make sure that community benefits are specified clearly and included in all procurements over £4 million (excluding VAT), and will look for opportunities to include community benefits in all procurement activity with an estimated value above £50,000 (excluding VAT) where it's appropriate and possible to do so.

To support this approach we will develop a corporate community benefits strategy and supporting guidance for our staff and suppliers to maximise the impact of community benefits.

For these opportunities, we will involve our internal and external stakeholders to identify the most appropriate community benefits and the best way to achieve these.

**Dignity, fairness, respect.**

Social Security Scotland has identified the following priority groups to focus Community Benefit outcomes on:

- **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.

In relation to community benefits involving recruitment, we will raise awareness and ask our suppliers to consider the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind 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.

As a partner organisation we will continue to work with **Discover Work Dundee** to assist them in providing:-

- **Support to find work** including free advice, guidance and training opportunities
- **Support for employers** to find new employees and offer advice, guidance and funding to develop their existing workforce
- Local employability **news** including updates from employability providers and the **Discover Work Partnership**

**Employability in Scotland** also provides information on various employability services and recruitment toolkits.

Where possible, recruitment will 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 **Discover Work Dundee** and suppliers who deliver the **Employability in Scotland** service.

Where we have a requirement for modern apprenticeships, the contracts will include a requirement for the contractor to retain and further develop the apprentices after the apprenticeship ends, if appropriate. If this applies, we will ask the contractors for evidence that they are doing this.

We will monitor each contract to make sure the community benefits included in our contracts are provided successfully.

## Community benefits - the Social Impact Pledge

The Social Impact Pledge asks organisations to commit to increasing their social impact by making a public commitment to change three aspects of their current operations or



policies. These commitments should not be things they are currently doing or have done in the past, and should result in a positive effect on the community. These are usually targeted, short-term commitments. However, to have the biggest impact, the changes need to be maintained.

During the period covered by this strategy, we will support work to sign up to the Social Impact Pledge. Every organisation committing to take part agrees to do the following.

*“Challenge ourselves to increase the positive impact we make on our local community and make better use of our assets – our buildings/grounds and our people.”*

*“In the next six months we will do at least three things that we don’t do at the moment to improve our social impact.”*

For lower-value regulated contracts (that is contracts with a value of between £50,000 and £100,000), we will be looking for community benefits which will help us achieve the commitments we have under the Social Impact Pledge. We will monitor each contract to make sure contractors are successfully providing the community benefits.

## Annual Procurement Report

In line with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, we will prepare our Annual Procurement Report which will cover the financial year (April to March) that has just passed. Each report will include the following:

- Our achievements and outcomes measured against this procurement strategy
- Details of the regulated procurement we have completed during the financial year
- A summary of the community benefits achieved as part of our regulated procurement activity
- A summary of the steps we have taken to involve supported businesses
- A summary of the regulated procurement activity we expect to start over the next two financial years.

## Fair Work

Fair Work First is our policy for driving high quality and fair work, and workforce diversity across the labour market in Scotland. We believe that a supplier's approach to fair work practices can have a positive impact on the quality of goods, works and services in a public contract.

Fair Work First measures support the maximisation of social benefits through procurement.



Fair Work First encourages businesses bidding for a public contract to commit to adopting the following:

- payment of at least the real Living Wage
- provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition (including health and safety considerations)
- investment in workforce development
- no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts
- action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace
- offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment
- oppose the use of fire and rehire practice

The criteria are mutually reinforcing and seek to address challenges in the labour market. They aim to make a real difference to people and their communities, business, other organisations and the economy.

The Fair Work First criteria, and wider fair work practices will be applied to our contracts and frameworks, as well as publicly funded supply chains, where relevant and proportionate to do so. The criteria allow us to be specific in our tender documents as to what fair work practices it is looking for.

We are keen to incorporate fair work within all of our procurement activity. We will develop a fair work questionnaire which will be required to be completed by successful tenderers for all procurements. This has been designed to support Scottish Government policy for driving high quality fair work and workforce diversity across the labour market in Scotland.

We will also ensure, through our contract management activity, that contractors are adopting fair work first policies within their, and their sub-contractors, workforce.

It is anticipated that the fair work questionnaires will be implemented throughout all procurements by the end of December 2024.



We expect that contractors adopt the criteria in the delivery of our contracts as part of a fair and equitable employment and reward package.

Our Buyers are required to complete sustainable procurement e-learning training so that they can identify relevant Fair Work opportunities and risks.

## Living Wage

The Scottish Public Sector considers payment of at least the real living wage to be a significant indicator of an employer's commitment to fair work practices and that payment of at least the real Living Wage is one of the clearest ways an employer can demonstrate that it takes a positive approach to its workforce.



The real Living Wage is a rate of pay which applies to all employees aged 18 and above and is sufficient to ensure that the recipient may enjoy an acceptable standard of living. There are two rates of the real Living Wage: the UK wide rate and the London rate. The rates are announced annually by the Living Wage Foundation.

We are an accredited Living Wage employer and follow inclusive work practices, including our long-term commitment to inclusive communication. As well as paying our employees the current real Living Wage, we will continue to make sure that our procurement activity helps us meet the Fair Work provisions, including paying the real Living Wage to contractors' staff who work exclusively for us and within our premises. We will include these in contracts where this is appropriate. We will manage and monitor contracts to make sure we are meeting these conditions.

Benefits of paying the real Living Wage Research shows that paying the real Living Wage helps businesses recruit and retain better staff, reduce absenteeism, encourage higher productivity and 93% of businesses say that Living Wage accreditation has improved their reputation.

## Health and safety at work

Our contractors and subcontractors have certain duties they must meet by law, including under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and must put appropriate measures in place to make sure they do this.

All contractors and subcontractors must take appropriate and reasonable steps to make sure they carry out their business in a way that protects their employees and others from health and safety risks. When a supplier bids for a contract, they must meet certain qualification criteria so we can check they understand their responsibilities and that they have a good track record of meeting these in the past. For relevant contracts, we will ask suppliers for suitable method statements to show how they will meet health and safety requirements when carrying out the contract.

## **Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and Third Sector Organisations**

We will ensure that Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) and Third Sector Organisations are given every opportunity in all of our procurement activities, and will look for opportunities to include these organisations in the procurement process at the earliest opportunity.

The Scottish Government SME and Third Sector Procurement Action Plan 2024 – 2026 (Scottish Government SME and Third Sector Procurement Action Plan 2024-2026 ([www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot))), estimates that SME's provide 1.2 million jobs in Scotland and account for 54.9% or £4.2 billion of public procurement spend over the course of financial year 2021 - 2022.

We understand that it is critical that we further develop the support available to increase SME and Third Sector Organisations engagement in our procurement activity. We will utilise the Supplier Development Programme's marketing and social media channels where appropriate to advertise supply chain opportunities. We will consider the use of lotting and lot limiting approaches so SME's and Third Sector Organisations have the opportunity to tender for parts of contracts if they cannot bid for the full contract. We will use the Scottish Governments Supported Businesses Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) or reserved procurements where appropriate to reach SME's and Third Sectors.

## **Fairly and ethically traded goods and services**

We recognise the importance of promoting fair and ethical trading principles when buying goods and services. We will consider what conditions we could apply in all relevant contracts and the associated supply chains to make sure the goods and services we buy are traded fairly and ethically wherever possible.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 states that certain organisations must develop and publish a slavery and human-trafficking statement. We will make sure that all our relevant suppliers do this at the tender stage, and will monitor them to make sure they are keeping to their statement throughout the contract.

## **Food – health, well-being and animal welfare**

We are aware of the Scottish Government's goal of Scotland becoming a **Good Food Nation**. Our approach to procuring future catering services will ensure we meet this goal. We will work with suppliers to ensure the food on our menus reflect requirements such as traceability, using fresh seasonally selected sustainably sourced ingredients, animal welfare, environmental standards, nutrition and waste. We will also incorporate recyclable packaging and utensils, and the donation of surplus products to local initiatives. We expect all food supplies under our contract(s) to fully meet all applicable legal standards and will

monitor and measure contractor performance through the use of robust key performance indicators.

## Artificial Intelligence in Procurement

Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems, tools and products are part of a rapidly growing and evolving technology market. The responsible use of AI is permitted in the procurement process by both bidders of Scottish public sector contracts and Buyers, in accordance with relevant policies and guidance. When conducting our procurement and contract management activities, we will follow the specific guidance in the Procurement Journey relating to Artificial Intelligence. We will take proportionate actions and will work collaboratively with other internal teams such as our Digital Risk and Security and Data Protection teams within Chief Digital Office to mitigate risks and maximise any benefits which AI may present.

## Consulting and involving stakeholders

We involved key stakeholders (from within and outside our organisation) and consider their views when setting the priorities in this procurement strategy.

We will continue to work with other public-sector organisations to share knowledge and best practice. We will list all future procurement opportunities on Public Contracts Scotland and, where appropriate, we will issue prior information notices to encourage suppliers to get involved early and consult and engage with those affected by our procurements. The Procurement and Commercial Team will work closely with the Supplier Development Programme and will actively support and attend Meet the Buyer events across Scotland.



# Annex

## Contracting activity

### Programme of planned contracting activity

At the end of this annex we have listed projects and contracts that we have identified as being planned renewals or as being likely to be regulated tenders in the period of this procurement strategy. (A regulated tender is one where the total value excluding VAT over the term of the contract is more than £50,000 for goods and services or more than £2 million for Works.)

The programme of planned contract renewals will change during the year as we add requirements to meet a specific need or when funding becomes available. We will regularly review this programme and update and republish it when there are significant changes. We will update the tab within our [Public Contracts Scotland](#) page to include information on all future contracting opportunities.

### New tenders and contract renewals

We will advertise new tenders and contract renewals on the Public Contracts Scotland website. We can access a number of collaborative frameworks set up by other public bodies. The public bodies advertise contracts in line with their published contract work programme. We maintain and publish our contracts register on the Public Contracts Scotland website. The register lists the regulated contracts we have awarded and provides information such as expected contract end dates.

We will support suppliers and provide regional signposting, as well as appropriate tender training through the Supplier Development Programme's early engagement model.

### Collaborative frameworks

Our [framework document](#) encourages us to take part in collaborative frameworks and shared service arrangements to make sure we operate as efficiently as possible. We will support and use national collaborative framework agreements, including the [Scottish Government's collaborative frameworks](#) when this approach helps to achieve our wider strategic aims.

### List of planned contracts, including renewals

The following list shows regulated procurements anticipated in financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26. This list is subject to future changes. Our [buyer profile and contract opportunities can be viewed on Public Contracts Scotland](#). Our Forward Plan can be viewed in the Documents tab.

- We also place contracts under collaborative framework agreements & dynamic purchasing systems awarded by other organisations. [Find out more about collaborative contracts and frameworks](#).
- Opportunities for works are advertised on Public Contracts Scotland where the value is over £2 million.

Requirement	New / Re-let	Expected Contract Start Date	Estimated Contract Value
Digital Forms Software	Re-let	01/11/2024	£150,000
Secure Mail Couriers	New	01/02/2025	£50,000
Specialist Office Equipment	Extension	01/11/2024	£150,000
Debt Management: Case Management System	Re-let	19/11/2024	£330,000
Mobile Phone Signal Boosting	Extension	29/11/2024	£10,000
Integration Platform PaaS	Re-let	01/01/2025	£800,000
Low Code Technology Platform Licences	Re-let	04/01/2025	£3,500,000
SPM Live Service	Extension	06/01/2025	£3,700,000
Assistive Technology Training	Extension	29/01/2025	£50,000
IT Healthchecks and Related Services	Extension	01/03/2025	£100,000
IT Testing Services	Re-let	01/03/2025	£25,000,000
Lease of Web Based and Proprietary Devices	New	01/04/2025	£80,000
Identity Verification Solution	Re-let	01/04/2025	£2,200,000
Multi-Channel Contact Centre and Telephony Services	Extension	01/04/2025	£2,500,000
Property Advisor Services	Extension	24/04/2025	£200,000
Security Software Licences	Re-let	27/04/2025	£120,000
Same Day and Next Day Courier Services	Re-let	01/05/2025	£50,000
Document Management Advanced Implementation Support	Re-let	14/05/2025	£359,937
Management of Cards to deliver Best Start Food	Extension	01/06/2025	£550,000
Interim Digital Resource Services	Re-Let	01/06/2025	£7,500,000

Requirement	New / Re-let	Expected Contract Start Date	Estimated Contract Value
Document Management Enhanced Support	Re-let	01/06/2025	£220,861
Postal Services (Document Management - Outbound)	Extension	30/06/2025	£2,400,000
Talent Acquisition Tool	Re-let	01/07/2025	£80,000
Furniture and Associated Products	Re-let	12/07/2025	£120,000
Recruit, Train, Deploy services	Re-let	18/07/2025	£2,000,000
Support of Applications on the OutSystems Platform	Extension	26/09/2025	£500,000
Debt Case Management System	Re-let	19/11/2025	£300,000
Mail Screening	New	10/12/2025	£100,000
Test Software	Re-let	11/12/2025	£286,000
Travel Services	Extension	20/12/2025	£700,000
Interpretation, Translation and Transcription Services	New	31/12/2025	£890,000
SPM Live Service	Re-let	06/01/2026	£14,000,000
Creative Services	Re-let	23/03/2026	£900,000
Workload Security Licences	Re-let	01/04/2026	£400,000
Cloud Engineering Service	Extension	01/04/2026	£3,600,000
Multi-Channel Contact Centre and Telephony Services	Re-let	01/04/2026	£20,000,000
Catering Services	New	01/08/2026	£100,000
Threat Intelligence Platform	Re-let	13/12/2026	£380,000
Content Threat Removal Solution for Document Upload	Re-let	01/01/2027	£270,000
OutSystems Services Dynamic Purchasing System	Extension	20/01/2027	£2,000,000
Internal Knowledge Management Hub	Extension	17/02/2027	£88,800
SPM Software Licences	Extension	31/03/2027	£816,390





# Social Security Scotland

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