

SUPPLIER CHARTER

Introduction

We have an annual expenditure on goods and services of over £470m and we need suppliers who are innovative and proactive and will work with us to minimise costs and meet changing requirements.

We are committed to conducting our purchasing activities with suppliers in an open, transparent and legal manner, and expect our suppliers to operate to these same principles.

We will not give unfair advantage to any particular supplier or type of supplier¹ and will award contracts on the basis of value for money, not simply lowest price, in accordance with all relevant procurement legislation including: the Public Contracts Regulations (2015), [our Procurement Rules](#) and the Social Value Act (2012) .

We will work closely with local business and voluntary organisations to ensure that local providers can compete effectively for our contracts.

This Charter is aimed at all organisations that have contracts with us to provide goods, services or works or may do so in the future. The charter does not relate to service level agreements or grant agreements. It is not a legal document but is intended to outline our commitment to and expectations of our suppliers.

Our commitment to suppliers

In all our commercial dealings we will:

- treat all suppliers and potential suppliers with courtesy, honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity;
- be as open and informative as possible to all participating suppliers throughout the purchasing process;
- ensure that all tenderers have equal access to information;
- promote prompt payment, and pay suppliers within 30 days in accordance with our own guidelines and the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Act 1998;
- respond to enquiries and complaints courteously and in a timely fashion;
- carry out all purchasing activities to the highest ethical standards and in line with relevant legislation.

¹ We may reserve certain tendering opportunities in accordance with Regulations 11, 12 and 77 of the Public Contracts Regulations (2015).

This Charter has no legal status but is a general statement of intent of our commitment to our suppliers and conversely of the expectations we have of our suppliers.

We will:

- provide contact points for all procurement related enquiries;
- advertise contracts in a range of publications, including the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) for larger contracts, and the [Contracts Finder](#) system;
- work with local business and voluntary sector support organisations to promote the opportunities for businesses and social enterprises to work with us;
- have transparent, fair and equal procurement processes that provide opportunities for all suppliers to compete for our business;
- set out on our website lists of our current contracts;
- comply with diversity and equality legislation, seeking to recognise the value of a diverse supply base, and encourage a wide range of suppliers, including local businesses, Small and Medium Enterprises, Black and Minority Ethnic Enterprises, Disabled Owned Businesses, Women Owned Businesses, Voluntary and Community Organisations and Social Enterprises, to compete for our business.
- set out our procurement processes and estimated timetables clearly;
- provide clear and concise specifications avoiding over-specification and unnecessarily onerous contract terms and clearly stating any quality standards to be met;
- when tendering, only request information that is legally required, needed for monitoring purposes or necessary for the evaluation of tenders;
- assess potential suppliers against stated pre-qualification and tender evaluation criteria that are relevant to individual tenders, and avoid setting hurdles which will unreasonably exclude new or small businesses;
- debrief and provide constructive feedback on request, as fully as possible, whilst preserving confidentiality;
- provide feedback on supplier performance;
- aim to make tender documentation accessible in a range of formats if requested.

We expect that our suppliers will operate to the same high standards as we set ourselves, managing their social, economic and environmental impacts responsibly, and that they will:

- observe standards of integrity, professionalism, co-operation, courtesy, competence and efficiency including in the treatment of our staff, their staff and subcontractors;
- actively participate in pre-tender market engagement events;
- read carefully, and comply with, the evaluation criteria and the instructions for completing the tender and documentation;
- be pro-active in suggesting ways to reduce cost or wastage whilst maintaining or improving the quality of the product/service;
- provide early warning of issues and problems;
- have internet and email access (or use an agent who has), in order to take advantage of our contract opportunities advertised on the [Suffolk Sourcing](#) system, OJEU and Contracts Finder, and our e-mail ordering processes;
- pay subcontractors in accordance with agreed terms;
- be open to enquiries from potential subcontractors;

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- actively engage local supply chains where possible;
- demonstrate a commitment to our key policy objectives;
- comply with all applicable legislative requirements;
- fulfil the requirements of any contract we award to you and co-operate fully with our contract manager(s) during the period for which you are contracted to provide goods, services or works.

Whistleblowing policy

We operate a whistleblowing policy. Suppliers and individuals who believe that malpractice has occurred, either in the award of contracts by the us or the delivery of services by its contractors, may report the same by contacting our Whistleblowing Officer, in strict confidence.

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