Tools and Techniques on Writing Bids – small and local businesses

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The Procurement Act 2023 is designed to make it easier, fairer, and more transparent for suppliers to engage with the UK public sector (such as LBTH). Some of the benefits are:

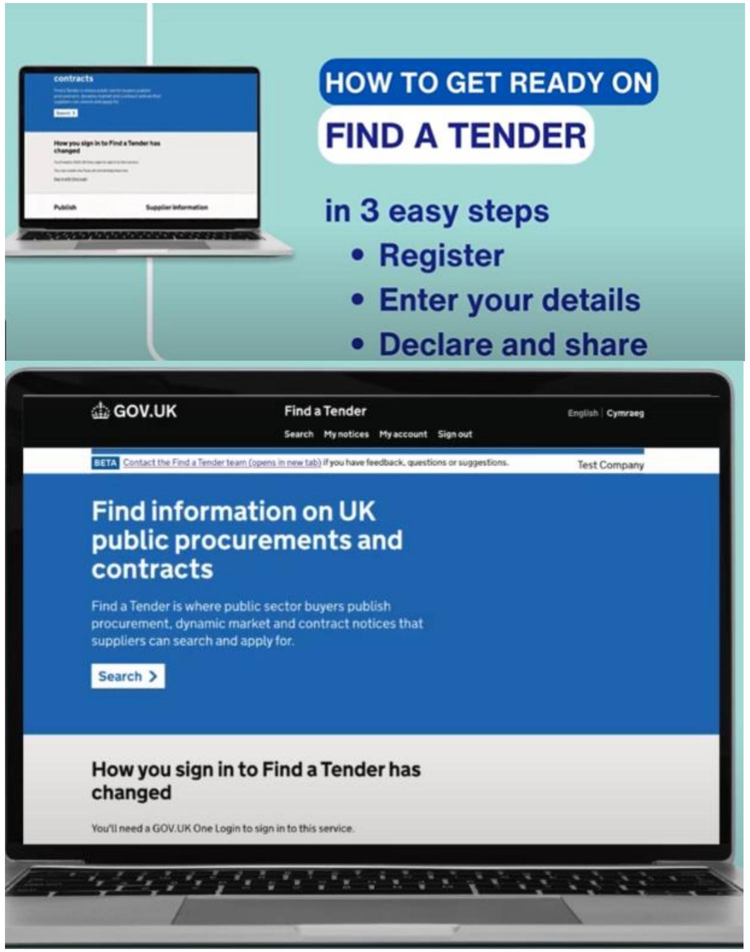
- **Streamlined Bidding**
- **Improved Access for SMEs and VCSEs**
- **Prompt Payment Commitments**
- **Enhanced Transparency**
- **Upgraded Digital Tools**
- **Fair and Equal Treatment**

Increased Transparency

- The central digital platform (FTS) - easier to locate and bid for contracts.
- Consistent feedback for suppliers; bid assessments provided for final tenders.
- Strengthened provisions - payment terms 30 days on range of public sector contracts.

Central Digital Platform (CDP)

- The central digital platform is free to access and is an enhanced version of Find a Tender (FTS) and new Supplier Information System - **https://www.gov.uk/find-tender**
- The platform will provide accessibility of commercial data for contracting authorities like LBTH and will give suppliers a single place to find tender opportunities, allow suppliers to register and submit basic business information required when submitting a tender.
- Upload key business credentials normally requested at initial stages of tender and ensure this information is kept up-to-date.
- It will include the publication of various notices and those that are linked to procurement opportunities and provide annual notification of pipeline projects.



Additional information/helpful guides:

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Cabinet Office have created a number of **helpful short guides**.

You can also watch some **short videos and animations** that help explain the new act. These include videos for suppliers, and suppliers classed as SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) and VCSEs (voluntary and community sector enterprises).

There are also **a series of helpful Knowledge Drops** that provide a high-level overview of the changes to the regulations and cover areas including:

- The new central digital platform
- Early market engagement
- Prompt supplier payment
- Changes to procurement procedures

What you need to consider:

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Be prepared to be involved in tendering:

- Read and understand the brief/requirements as set out in the RFQ/RFP/ITT
- Consider capacity to achieve deadlines and any policies and procedures in place
- Internal governance approvals (if necessary)
- What information is already available/standard – include in bid submission?
- Skills and experience in team
- Decision to opt in or out!

Getting ready!

- Understand the project, seek clarification (as necessary)
- Consider costs (breakdown of all costs)
- Draft methodology/proposed solution
- Consider the scoring criteria
- Other bid elements consideration (social value, sustainability)
- References
- Appendices

Timescales to note:

- Project delivery at various stages
- Project key milestones – project plan/gantt chart
- Mobilisation plans and implementation dates

Common mistakes in writing bids:

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🔍 1. Failing to Follow Instructions

•Ignoring formatting, word count, or submission guidelines.

•Missing mandatory documents or certifications.

2. Not Addressing the Evaluation Criteria

•Writing a generic proposal instead of tailoring it to the specific scoring system or priorities of the buyer/contracting authority.

📉 3. Weak Value Proposition

•Focusing too much on features rather than **benefits**.

•Not clearly articulating **why your solution is better** than other competitors'.

🕳 4. Gaps in Compliance or Capability

•Overpromising or under-delivering on technical or legal requirements.

•Not demonstrating the ability to meet all deliverables.

📁 5. Poor Structure and Presentation

•Disorganised layout, unclear headings, or inconsistent formatting.

•Typos, grammatical errors, or overly technical language without explanation.

🕒 6. Rushed or Last-Minute Submissions

•Leads to errors, omissions, or lack of internal review.

•Missed opportunities to refine and polish the bid.

📉 7. Inaccurate or Incomplete Pricing

•Not providing a full cost breakdown.

•Failing to explain pricing assumptions or value for money.

🧱 8. Lack of Evidence

•Making claims without backing them up with **case studies, testimonials, or metrics**.

🧡 9. Ignoring the Client's Perspective

•Talking too much about your company and not enough about **how you'll solve the client's problem**.

📊 10. Not Learning from Past Bids

•Repeating mistakes due to lack of **post-bid reviews** or feedback analysis.

Handy checklist:

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✅ **Bid Review Checklist**

📄 **1. Administrative Compliance**

- Submitted on time
- All required documents included (e.g., forms, certificates, financials)
- Signed and authorised by appropriate Director
- Follows formatting, word count and submission guidelines

🎯 **2. Responsiveness to Requirements**

- Addresses all mandatory criteria
- Meets technical specifications
- Answers all questions in the RFP/RFQ/ITT
- Includes clear and complete pricing

🧠 **3. Understanding of Scope**

- Demonstrates understanding of the client's needs
- Offers a tailored solution (not generic/ copy & paste)
- Identifies potential risks and mitigation strategies

💡 **4. Value Proposition**

- Clearly articulates benefits and differentiators
- Shows innovation or added value
- Aligns with strategic goals or sustainability targets

📊 **5. Commercial Evaluation**

- Transparent and competitive pricing
- Cost breakdown is logical and justified
- Terms and conditions are accepted
- Payment terms understood

🛠️ **6. Capability and Experience**

- Relevant experience and case studies provided
- Qualified team with appropriate expertise
- References or testimonials included
- Capacity to deliver within timelines

📈 **7. Risk and Compliance**

- Meets legal and regulatory requirements
- Insurance and certifications are valid
- No conflicts of interest or red flags
- Business continuity or contingency plans included

📜 **8. Presentation and Quality**

- Well-structured and easy to navigate
- Free of typos and grammatical errors
- Professional tone and formatting
- Visuals (charts, tables) used effectively