**Overarching FAQs related to tendering processes with Medway Council.**

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# Using the Portal

## How easy is it to submit a tender, and how much time does it take to understand the system?

Very Easy, please follow the steps below:

*In order to make a submission for the tender opportunity, you need to login/register your company on the Portal (*[*http://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk*](http://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk)*) - it is free. You will then be able to register your interest in* ***any*** *opportunity and will have access to all the relevant tender documentation. To access a project after expressing your interest, the following actions need to be completed:*

*1) Click “Home”*

*2) Click “Recently Added”*

*3) Click “\*\*\*Project Name\*\*\*”*

*4) In the "Events" area of the page, open the link above "Expression of interest accepted". There will be your tender pack.*

*Once you have completed all required documents and ready to submit your bid, please undertake the following steps:*

*5) Complete steps 1-4 again*

*6) On the right-hand side click "Start My Response" (If you started already and returning to that again, you should have "My responses" on the right, click "Edit")*

*7) Complete steps 1 and 2 in the "Create RFQ response"*

*8) Attach all necessary tender documentation in step 3 of the “Create RFQ response”*

*9) Agree OR decline and propose amendments to the Terms and Conditions (please note that the Authority has the right to reject them)*

*10) Click "Finish"*

*Then you will have a chance to review all your submission details and if those require any modifications, you are still able to make changes.*

*Once you are happy, click "Submit response" button before the tender submission deadline expires.*

*Please note the documents may take up to an hour to be uploaded, subject to your Internet connection; hence please allow sufficient time to avoid a late response.*

*Should there be any further questions, please contact ProActis directly using “Help” button on the Portal. The Authority does not run the Portal itself hence will not be able to provide you with any additional guidance.*

## Where does Medway Council advertise their tender opportunities?

Medway Council (as well as most of other public sector organisations in Kent) publishes all advertised opportunities through the Kent Business Portal: <https://procontract.due-north.com/Opportunities/Index?p=8691483f-2f3d-e711-80e1-005056b64545&v=1>

## How do I know what opportunities may be coming soon from Medway Council?

Medway Council has a published contracts register, which may help determine when contracts are coming up for expiry, meaning they are soon to be retendered: <https://procontract.due-north.com/ContractsRegister/Index?p=8691483f-2f3d-e711-80e1-005056b64545&v=1>

## I cannot access my account on the Portal. Can you help?

Medway Council does not run the Portal so any additional guidance needs to be sought directly from ProContract using the “Help” button on the Portal.

## What should I do if I am having problems with the portal?

Contact ProContract directly by using the “Help” button on the Portal.

# What are my tendering options?

## Can I bid as part of a consortium?

Yes, just be mindful that if you were bidding as a consortium, we would expect one lead bidder who will co-ordinate the response. All members of the consortium will be required to complete the PQQ due diligence section but only one submission for the entire consortium needs to be made for all technical responses. If a single consortium member fails any PQQ element, the consortium will fail as a whole.

## Can we get together with another company to submit a joint proposal?

Yes, as long as the proposal makes it clear that one of you is going to take overall responsibility for the work done and as long as there is a legal entity with whom the council can enter into a contract.

# Submitting a tender

## My company is new and has few references; will I be allowed to compete for Council business?

Yes. The Council does not discourage new businesses. A view will be taken on your company's suitability and any potential risk to us. Thorough investigations will be made examining your financial status and past performance where possible. You could also be invited to an interview to further examine your suitability.

## How am I meant to answer the questions?

The questions need to be fully answered in line with the requirements of the project. Bidders should consider what they would be expecting to see as part of a response. Be as descriptive as possible within the word limits imposed. Use your tender to suggest solutions, not simply repeat what the specification says.

## How can I improve my chances of winning a Council contract?

You need to clearly demonstrate that you can meet the required standards and service delivery requirements at the most economically advantageous cost.

## What information will I need to provide when applying for contracts?

The contract notice or advert will detail what procurement procedure is being used i.e. open, restricted or a competitive dialogue.

Each tender process will require the supplier to provide some or all of the following information and this will be specified in the tender documents:

* Financial information - Details from each of the last two years may be required. Where requested, private and public limited companies must submit their fully audited accounts as registered with Companies House. Other suppliers should forward copies of financial statements, business plans or a certified statement of turnover. This information is assessed to ensure the company is financially stable enough for the contract in question. Other financial details, for instance; insurance cover, may also be required.
* Equal opportunity - The Council supports equal opportunity laws, and requires all suppliers to comply with equal opportunities legislation. Suppliers will be asked to detail and possibly provide evidence of how equality issues are included in a company's employment practices.
* Sustainability - Certain types of tenders will ask for information in relation to sustainable procurement and this will generally relate to social, economic or environmental considerations, and may incorporate requests for information on community benefits that will be provided as part of the contract.
* Health and Safety - The Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for everyone it works with.  Suppliers must provide information about their company's safety policies, operational safety procedures and risk assessments.
* Experience and technical ability - The Council needs to assess whether a company has the relevant experience, resources and technical ability to carry out the categories of work or to provide the type and quality of service required.
* Suppliers should provide details of similar work carried out over recent years. They must also provide contact details of referees so that confidential references can be directly obtained by the council. Further details may be required for particular contracts

## Why do you request so much information from suppliers in your tender documents?

We aim to make the procurement process as streamlined as possible and to be proportionate in both our processes and requirements. We are spending public money, so we have to be sure that the suppliers we are awarding contracts to are able to meet our requirements and adhere to our standards. We are taking proactive measures such as standardising requirements to ensure once you meet our requirements, you can simply reference that in future opportunities.

## How are contracts monitored?

The contractor will be expected to deliver or provide the service in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract papers and proposals on how to carry\_it\_out.

Suppliers and contractors working for the Council are regularly monitored to assess their compliance with predefined performance criteria. The contract conditions are strictly applied and explanations sought if a contractor fails to perform to the levels required.

## What happens if I cannot make the Council’s/ProContract deadline?

Tender opportunities will only be accepted if they have been submitted before the specified deadline.

If there is a technical fault preventing this, please contact ProContract using the “Help” button on the Portal at least 4 days before the submission deadline.

## Can I submit a tender with my own alternative conditions attached?

No, any proposed amendments to the Terms and Conditions contained with the tender pack must be raised as part of the clarification period, whilst the tender is live. It will be at the Council's discretion if any of them are implemented and a clear response to that effect will be shared with all bidders. If there is no response prior to the deadline passing, assume the original terms and conditions will apply to any subsequent contract. No changes to the terms and conditions will be made post submission deadline.

## Do I need to submit all policies with the tender document i.e. by tender submission deadline

Yes, where stated.

# After the tender is submitted

## Are evaluation criteria other than those identified in the specification used?

No. The evaluation panel can only evaluate your proposal in accordance with the criteria and weightings provided at the start of the process.

## If I am unsuccessful, will you explain to me why my bid failed and what can you tell me about the winning bid?

Yes - this could include a number of reasons. For example, you might be too costly, or have insufficient skills or experience, you may have failed to understand what is required or failed to complete the documentation correctly. Whatever the reason, if you ask for feedback, we will provide it. We will inform you who was successful (through the Contracts Register [[link](#_How_do_I)] once the award is officially made) and briefly outline the reasons for the award.

## Can we provide feedback on a project/procurement process?

Yes, you can email the procurement team at categorymanagement@medway.gov.uk with any feedback you may have about our tender process or documents. In the unlikely event that you opt out of a tender process on a project, you will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the Kent Business Portal. We welcome your feedback.

# Miscellaneous

## How can I introduce my business to Medway Council?

You can send a direct email to categorymanagement@medway.gov.uk. Our Category Management team will respond as soon as possible.

Whilst we appreciate the informal introduction, your best option to see and bid on opportunities for Medway Council is to register on the Kent Business Portal

## Does the Council try to support small/local businesses?

The Council has a clear objective to deliver local economic benefit and is keen for local businesses to compete for our contracts. Whilst we will encourage bids from local suppliers, we must be fair, open, and transparent in terms of our processes and our contract awards, as well as not to give any competitive advantage to anyone bidding for the opportunity.

The Council will look to make contracts awards to a prime contractor, who may sub-contract elements of work to local SMEs or existing supply chains. Therefore, if you are not able to bid for the work in your own right, please monitor the [contracts register](#_How_do_I) which will show who was awarded a contract and enable SMEs to contact that winning contractor to introduce their company and attempt to be part of that business supply chain.

## What is the FTS?

The FTS is an acronym for the Find a Tender Service, which replaces the OJEU (Official Journal for the European Union). If the value of a contract is above PCR thresholds, then the contract must be advertised in the tender supplement to FTS. Some types of services are exempt from this requirement.

## Does the council have an ‘approved supplier list’?

No, Medway Council does not operate an approved supplier list. All the council's opportunities are published via the ProContract e-tendering portal [kentbusinessportal.org.uk](https://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk/?ReadForm&login)

# Additional Tips

* Use your tender to suggest solutions, not simply repeat what the specification says and refrain from using jargon.
* All contracts are governed by the Council’s terms and conditions.
* Get your tender in on time.
* Make your tender easy to read, be concise but give sufficient detail to allow a full objective evaluation and provide all the requested information.
* Before you submit your proposal, make sure everything described under 'Evaluation Criteria' is either provided or addressed.
* Please submit in the format provided whenever possible. Whilst alternative formats will be accepted it is more arduous for the evaluation team to review a document in a different format to the one published and what the team are accustomed to reading.
* Please ensure when a signature is requested, one is provided, and you don’t simply initial the area.
* Please ensure you leave yourself plenty of time to apply, as there is a cut off time and date which is visible on the tender in the top right of the pages. Any late tenders will not be accepted.
* All questions should be sent via the Proactis messaging system.
* Please ensure any quires with the Terms and Conditions are brought up before submitting your application.