



**London Borough
of Hounslow**

Doing Business with the London Borough of Hounslow

*A Guide for Suppliers
April 2015*

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About the Borough

The London Borough of Hounslow is an outer London borough situated in West London, along the M4 corridor between Hammersmith in the east and Heathrow Airport in the west.

The population of Hounslow is around 253,957 (latest ONS estimate). There is a rich mix of communities; about one third of the population of Hounslow is comprised of people from minority communities.

The Borough is an important business location and attracts major global companies within its boundaries. In addition, Heathrow Airport, situated on the western borders of the borough is also a significant employer.

Hounslow Council is primarily based at the Civic Centre, Lampton Road. It spends in excess of £160m per annum on services, supplies and works. It encourages all businesses to interact with the Authority and to that end regularly places public notices concerning upcoming contracts on OJEU, on its website, and on the London Tenders Portal. The Council would like to engage with local small and ethnic minority businesses and encourage them to bid for the Council's contracts.

Introduction – Doing Business with the Council

The Council is keen to encourage a diverse range of contractors and suppliers, both large and small, and has created this guide to provide key information about the Council on what and how it buys.

What does the Council Purchase?

Purchases made by the council cover a wide range of services, supplies and works. The list below shows some of the common categories:

- Agency staff.
- Furniture.
- Highways maintenance.
- Utilities.
- Telecoms.
- Stationery and computer consumables.
- Consultancy services.
- Facilities management.
- Building works & maintenance.
- Banking and insurance services.
- Cleaning and catering.
- Protective clothing.
- Care services for children and older people including those with disabilities and mental health needs.
- Vehicles.
- IT hardware and software.
- Training.

Finding Out About Contracts

There are a number of ways to find out about current contracting opportunities within the Council.

The Council seeks to ensure that it meets its legal obligations when advertising contracts and uses the following framework:

Item	Value	Advertising (examples)
Services and Supplies	Over £172,514	Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do London Tenders Portal www.londontenders.org
	Below £172,514	London Tenders Portal www.londontenders.org
	Below £30,000	At least 3 competitive quotes
Works	Over £4,322,012	Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do London Tenders Portal www.londontenders.org
	Under £4,322,012	Pre-qualified suppliers on Constructionline www.constructionline.co.uk

In addition to the above, contract notices may also be placed in relevant trade magazines and local papers.

All public tenders greater than the EU thresholds must be published in the Supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) and published throughout the EU. Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) is updated every day and published in 11 languages:

<http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do>

London Tenders Portal is an e-tendering system built specifically for the Public Sector, and is currently used by 17 London Boroughs. It is free for suppliers to register. The provider of the portal, Due North, are launching a new system in 2015 which will give suppliers the ability to search for opportunities nationally, not just across London. To access the system please visit [londontenders.org](http://www.londontenders.org).

Details of all contracting opportunities are listed on the London Tenders Portal; [Current tenders](#).

The Tendering Process

The Council uses public money, we therefore have a responsibility to obtain Best Value in all expenditure. All spend by the Council is regulated by U.K. and European legislation. The main objectives of the legislation are to achieve fairness, transparency and competition. Tendering for a contract is carried out in one of the following ways:

Open – a single stage process where tenders are issued to all who express an interest.

Interested organisations will need to respond to the advertised opportunity by submitting a request to participate in accordance with the contract notice.

Under the open procedure, invitations to tender will be sent to all organisations that submitted a request to participate. If using one of the other procedures (restricted, negotiated and competitive dialogue), to complete to enable the Council to pre-qualify organisations to tender.

Restricted – a two-stage process where a shortlist of tenderers is prepared for the purpose of inviting bids.

Companies will be asked to provide details by way of completing a Pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) for assessment in the following areas:

Financial Information – This is used to assess the financial position of the company in relation to the size of the contract and to check that it is registered (if appropriate) for tax considerations.

Technical Capability and Experience – We ask about the relevant experience and technical ability to carry out the categories of work or type of service required. Also, we would normally ask further specific questions tailored to the need of the individual contract. References for similar works undertaken will also be requested at this stage.

Health and Safety – In respect of works and construction, all organisations will be required to submit a Health and Safety Policy signed by an authorised person, which relates to Health and Safety legislation.

Equalities – Hounslow Council strongly supports equal opportunity, equal access and positive outcomes for all sections of the community. As a result the Council assesses a company's compliance with the Equality Act 2010, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Sustainability – Hounslow Council is committed to the sustainable development of the borough, a fundamental objective of which is the protection and enhancement of the environment. Organisations that the Council deals with will be expected to have similar levels of commitment.

Negotiated – a process used only in certain circumstances, e.g. where only a single supplier exists or contract requirements cannot be fully defined.

Competitive Dialogue – a dialogue with a number of potential suppliers that may request to participate with the aim of developing one or more suitable alternatives capable of meeting the contracting authority's requirements and on the basis of which the chosen candidates are invited to tender.

Preparing Your Tender Submission

When an organisation is invited to tender, the specification, contract terms and conditions along with any other relevant documents will be issued. The documents will also inform the tendering organisation the weighting of questions, and what needs to be submitted as part of the bid.

When tendering, it is acceptable to submit written enquiries regarding your submission or to ask genuine questions about any aspect of the process. It is the Council's policy to seek written questions (e-mail being the preferred method). It should be noted that all queries and their responses will be circulated to all potential bidders. Lobbying for information from Officers of the Council or Councillors is not acceptable. See Point 9 below.

The Evaluation Process

Evaluation Panel - The successful contractor or supplier will be the one that, in the opinion of the Council, submits the most economically advantageous tender, i.e. scores best overall in the evaluation of both quality and price. All competing tenders are assessed against the same criteria, which will have been established before tenders are opened. The evaluation panel will normally consist of three or more officers.

Interviews and Presentations - At any time during the tender process, contractors may be invited to give a presentation or attend an interview as part of the tender procedure.

Timeliness in Tendering - Completed tender documents must be returned to the Council by the date and time stipulated. Tenders received after the deadline will not be considered unless evidence can be given showing the delay was for a reason outside of the control of the bidder.

Contract Award - A contract is awarded as soon as possible after the evaluation process has been completed and authorisation for award has been obtained.

Debriefing - The Council recognises the importance of providing useful feedback and will provide a full breakdown of the areas of your response where you have not scored as highly as the winning tenderer. Please note that the Council will always seek to ensure that it does not knowingly breach any current legislation during the feedback process.

Propriety

The Council's employees follow a strict code of procurement ethics. Neither gifts nor offers of hospitality from individuals or organisations with whom the Council has or may have in the future a contractual relationship can be accepted.

During the Contract Period

Payment Policy

Payment terms will normally be set out in the contract documents. Payment will normally be made within 30 days net of receipt of an accurate invoice. In order to ensure that your payment is dealt with efficiently, you must;

- Submit the invoice in the format agreed in the Contract or Purchase Order.
- Quote a Purchase Order Number on all invoices.
- Address the invoice to the location specified on the purchase order.

The Council's payment method is by BACS

Management of Contracts

The Council values its relationships with its suppliers and believes that contract award is only the beginning of a successful partnership. Any KPIs and performance measures for the contract will be set out during the tender process. Once a contract has commenced a Contract Manager will be assigned to monitor agreed KPIs and to work with the suppliers to improve the delivery of the contract.

Useful Links

London Contracts and Supplies Group: www.lcsq.org

The Efficiency and Reform Group (ERG) works in partnership with HM Treasury and government departments to deliver efficiencies, savings and reforms on behalf of UK taxpayers. ERG aims to save money, transform the way public services are delivered, improve user experience and support UK growth.

Equal Opportunities Commission offers information on gender equality issues:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/efficiency-and-reform-group>

Equality and Human Rights Commission provides information on equality issues:
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

Constructionline - This is a co-ordinated National Pre-Qualification Services, owned by the Department of Trade and Industry and supported by the Office of Government Commerce and the Department for Communities & Local Government.
www.constructionline.co.uk

CHAS - (Contractors Health and Safety) Scheme is a nationwide scheme for the public sector setting standards in Health and Safety: www.chas.co.uk

Contracts Finder is a government-backed service designed specifically to give companies easy access to low-value contract opportunities offered by the public sector.
www.businesslink.gov.uk/contractsfinder

The West London Alliance (WLA) comprises the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow. www.westlondonalliance.org

Contact Us

Please send any comments or questions to:

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