

Annual Report

2023/2024

1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024



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Introduction to the Supplier Development Programme

The Supplier Development Programme (SDP) is a partnership between Scottish Government, Local Authorities, public bodies, and private sector primary contractors, who work together to make their business opportunities accessible to the wider supply chain.

In Scotland, there is an annual public sector spend of £16bn, and throughout the rest of the UK, there is an annual public spend of £393bn. With such big spend comes big contract opportunities!

As a business support initiative, SDP uses training and networking to help Scottish SMEs and supported businesses find and win public sector contracts. This training includes free webinars and in-person events, held across Scotland throughout the year.

By assisting SMEs to become 'tender ready' for public procurement, SDP improves their efficiency, sustainability and market potential, making them more likely to win public contracts. As it helps more businesses win a share of Scotland's public sector contracts, SDP is supporting Community Wealth Building.

SDP's Key Objectives

- Raise awareness of opportunities arising from public sector spend
- Provide training and support on all aspects public sector tendering
- Improve the tender readiness of local suppliers through early intervention
- Support SDP member organisations to meet the Sustainable Procurement Duty
- Promote links and integrate with other government business support services

The SME Unique Business Registration data in this report has been updated on 4 July 2025 to fix an inaccuracy in the original published version.

SDP Chair Note

Fiona Conti



Fiona Conti is the Strategic Procurement Manager at Commercial and Procurement Shared Service (CPSS) and she has had the responsibility and pleasure of being SDP's Chair since July 2023.

In her CPSS role supporting Highland, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, Fiona has been leading on the Pathfinder project, for provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure across the North of Scotland. This work also includes close collaboration with Moray Council.

Pathfinder seeks to ensure fair and equitable access to charging infrastructure across the region, and more importantly in rural community areas that have been less well served to date.

With the help of funding from the Scottish Government, through Transport Scotland, one of the main aims of Pathfinder is to transform the way we travel and to make the change to a more sustainable alternative approach, while helping Local Authorities in the North of Scotland to deliver on their Net Zero commitments.

In her role as SDP chair, Fiona has supported multiple events, including Meet the Buyer North 2023, in which she joined a panel discussion with Nikki Archer (Deputy Director, Head of Procurement and Commercial Policy and Strategy at Scottish Government) and Gillian Cameron (SDP Programme Manager).

Fiona said: "I am really looking forward to our SDP events in 2024 and hope you will all continue to support the Programme, through coordination of training and events at a regional level and by inputting ideas for the future of the SDP.

"In these challenging financial times, SDP is continuing to provide best in class support for our supply chain and we will endeavour to ensure that this remains the case."

Introduction from the Programme Manager

Gillian Cameron, Programme Manager



This year, the Supplier Development Programme continued to demonstrate its agility in dealing with an everchanging environment. Just as our members have faced similar testing periods, the first part of the year brought recruitment challenges for SDP, however, by the end of the second quarter we were delighted to have secured a Customer Development Officer and a replacement Events and Marketing Officer. These new appointments have injected fresh thinking and experience to the SDP team, which continues to ensure the Programme remains as dynamic as possible.

In 2023, SDP saw deeper collaboration with the Scottish Government, Procurement and Property Directorate (SPPD) team, who joined us for interactive round tables at our Meet the Buyer events, offering businesses and social enterprises a unique opportunity to ask those all-important questions. These sessions also offered suppliers a conduit to provide valuable feedback on their experiences tendering for public sector contracts. We look forward to building on SDP's partnership with the SPPD team, who have already reiterated their ongoing support for the Programme.

As a national shared service, the power of SDP cannot be underestimated. At SDP, we continue to support our members in raising awareness of contract opportunities and projects, as well as providing critical tender training, in real time, with local and national partners, to build the bidding capability of Scotland's SMEs.

Our SDP Annual Report highlights some of these key SDP training results, but what it doesn't show is the work that goes on behind the scenes to achieve them! I am extremely grateful for the SDP team's commitment to collaborating with our partners, often in time-limited circumstances, to deliver fantastic reportable outcomes, including the continued increase of registered SMEs joining the Programme, as well as the delivery of high quality Meet the Buyer events and webinars. The feedback from our SDP events highlights the value of the Programme's work and the need to continue to expand on it.

I would also like to thank the SDP Board, particularly our Chair, Fiona Conti, who has been a fantastic ambassador for SDP, helping raise our profile, and joining us at many critical meetings and events.

Furthermore, I offer my gratitude to our public sector Core Members, who continue to support the Programme, while many are facing their own budgetary and resource challenges. These members form an extended reach into the local communities, connecting their businesses into the Programme.

Finally, I'd like to express my appreciation of our Affiliate and Corporate Members, whose pipelines provide a rich source of opportunities and important business connections, which give SMEs a stepping stone to grow their businesses.

A big thank you to you all! I look forward to working with you in the coming months.

Gillian

The Supplier Development Programme is led by its Board. At the time of publishing this report the Board comprised of the following representatives

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| • Fiona Conti: Chair | Aberdeen City Council |
| • Councillor Anthony Buchanan: Vice Chair | East Renfrewshire Council |
| • Councillor Chris Cullen | South Ayrshire Council |
| • Councillor David Inglis | Dumfries and Galloway Council |
| • Councillor Heather Brannan-McVey | North Lanarkshire Council |
| • Jane Morrison | Glasgow City Council |
| • Councillor Mark McGeever | South Lanarkshire Council |
| • Pamela Stevenson | Fife Council |
| • Paula Deegan | City of Edinburgh Council |
| • Rachael Thomas | Dundee City Council |
| • Councillor Stephen Canning | East Ayrshire Council |
| • Stuart Jamieson | Inverclyde Council |
|
 | |
| • Ex-officio | |
| Gillian Cameron | SDP Scotland |
|
 | |
| • Secretary to the Board | |
| Elizabeth Bailey | SDP Scotland |

During 2023/2024, the following changes were made to the Board appointments

Appointments

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Fiona Conti: Chair | Aberdeen City Council |
| • Councillor Chris Cullen | South Ayrshire Council |
| • Councillor David Inglis | Dumfries and Galloway Council |
| • Jane Morrison | Glasgow City Council |

Resignations

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Jackie Hill | Glasgow City Council |
| • Councillor Peter Henderson | South Ayrshire Council |
| • Councillor Stephen Thompson | Dumfries and Galloway Council |

Supporting our Members

The Supplier Development Programme (SDP) was established in 2008, and is a partnership of Local Authorities, Scottish Government and other public bodies that work together to bring free tendering support to Scottish-based SMEs.

Supplier Membership

SDP Supplier Membership is free and open to Scottish based SMEs and Third Sector organisations, which include charities, social enterprises, supported businesses and voluntary groups. It helps businesses that have little or no experience of tendering and often no bid team.

Such businesses can miss out on public sector contracts, as they lack resources to dedicate to formal procurement processes.

SDP aims to help these businesses become 'tender ready' for contracts, through training and networking events.

Core Membership

SDP Core Membership is available to Scottish local authorities, for an annual fee.

Through its Core Membership model, SDP helps councils engage potential suppliers, raising early awareness of contract opportunities, and providing bespoke aligned tender training to encourage local businesses, and social enterprises, to participate in the tender or quotation process.

This helps the councils diversify their supply chain and meet their legal obligations under the Sustainable Procurement Duty, Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

Affiliate Membership

SDP Affiliate Membership is available to public organisations that connect the public and private sectors. These memberships are available for an annual fee.

Through its Affiliate Membership programme, SDP helps public bodies including anchor institutions, such as those in the NHS and Higher Education sector, increase awareness of their goods, services and works pipelines and opportunities. SDP also works with its Affiliate Members to spread the news about their procurement policy updates and helps them meet their Community Wealth Building aspirations. Just as it supports its Core Members, SDP supports its Affiliate Members with training, events, marketing and reporting.

Corporate Membership

SDP's Corporate Membership is for larger prime contractors who wish to open their supply chain and demonstrate how they are seeking to work with local suppliers and social enterprises. Membership is on annual fee basis.

Through its Corporate Membership model, SDP helps prime contractors meet and hire local supply chain partners, helping them reach their sustainability and Community Wealth Building goals. SDP does this through Meet the Buyer events, Meet the Contractor events, Talking Tenders training, Aligned Tender training, marketing and reporting support.

Core Membership



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR



Affiliate Members



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA



National
Records of
Scotland



Corporate Members

Balfour Beatty



JACOBS



Housing Association Members

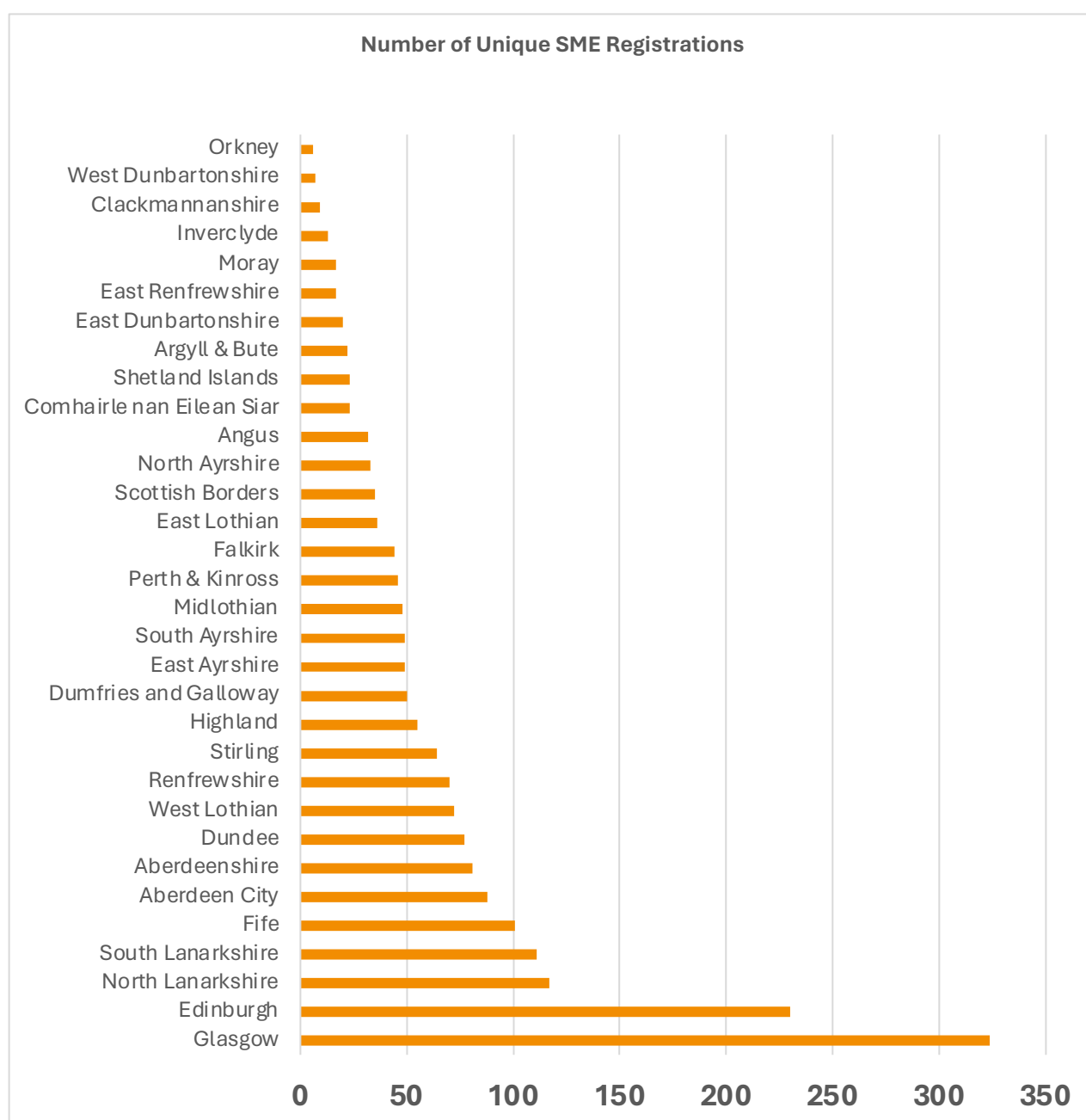


Strategic Objectives: Scottish SME Unique Business Registrations

SDP's work aligns with the National Performance Framework and contributes towards Scottish Procurement's drive to use collective spending power to deliver sustainable economic growth.

Website registrations of Scottish SME unique businesses 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024	Total to date last year	Cumulative total
1,969	21,583	23,552

SDP had **the target of increasing the Scottish SME Unique Businesses registered with it by 6%**. From 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024, 1,969 Scottish SME unique businesses registered with SDP Scotland, bringing the overall **cumulative total** to 23,552. This is a 9% increase in the cumulative total from last year, **meaning SDP surpassed its target by 3%.**



Strategic Objectives: Year-On-Year Increase in Supplier Registrations

From 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024, 1,969 Scottish SME unique businesses registered with SDP Scotland. Looking back at the same period last year 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, 1,988 Scottish SME unique businesses registered with SDP Scotland. This shows that SDP had a slight decrease in year-on-year registrations of 19 unique SME registrations or 1%.

During this period, SDP faced staffing shortages, with vacancies in two roles. Consequently, the SDP team lacked the resources it had in the previous year to focus on attracting new registrations at the same rate.

Local Authorities with the most Registrations

Following a similar trend of last year, registrations from SME unique businesses in Scotland's central belt made up the largest percentage of SDP's total new members. Suppliers from Glasgow City (16.5%) and Edinburgh (11.7%) contributed to this trend.

This was closely followed by individual Scottish SME unique businesses from North Lanarkshire (5.9%) South Lanarkshire (5.6%) Fife (5.1%) Aberdeen City (4.5%) and Aberdeenshire (4.1%) and Dundee City (3.9%).

The new member registrations in these areas correlate with SDP events that were held in these regions, over this financial year, including: South Lanarkshire Council webinars, City of Edinburgh Council webinars, Fife Council Meet the Buyer, and Meet the Buyer Tayside (Dundee).

SDP's Chair, Fiona Conti, continues to take a proactive approach to help boost SDP registrations in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and The Highland Councils, as Fiona is Strategic Procurement Manager (Interim) at Commercial and Procurement Shared Service, which works across all three of these councils.

Biggest Year-On-Year Increase in Registrations by Area

The following local authority areas saw the biggest increase in new supplier registrations (from last financial year to this financial year) Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (1050%) the Shetland Islands (666%) Orkney (600%) Midlothian (140%) and Glasgow (39%).

The dramatic year-on-year percentage increase in new registrations across the Scottish Islands reflects the low number of new registrations across the isles in 2022-2023, which made the moderate number of new registrations in 2023-2024 appear a big spike.

The year-on-year increase in new registrations across the Scottish Islands also reflects local suppliers' engagement in the Scottish Islands Deal webinar that SDP held on 5 March 2024.

Rise in new registrations across Midlothian correlates with SDP webinars held in partnership with its neighbouring authority Edinburgh City Council, over the months of September and November 2023 (for Accredited Pathways, Certified Counselling and Therapies).

The increase in new registrations across Glasgow reflects the upturn in local suppliers registering with SDP over the period to reserve their place in Meet the Buyer National, at Hampden Park (Glasgow), on 5 June 2024.

Strategic Objectives: Supplier Registrations

Local Authority	Total registrations 2023/2024	Total cumulative registrations 2022/2023	Total cumulative companies registered to 31 March 2024	Annual cumulative percentage increase
Aberdeen City	88	641	729	14%
Aberdeenshire	81	512	593	16%
Angus	32	388	420	8%
Argyll & Bute	22	301	323	7%
Clackmannanshire	9	227	236	4%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	23	46	69	50%
Dumfries and Galloway	50	552	602	9%
Dundee City	77	621	698	12%
East Ayrshire	49	507	556	10%
East Dunbartonshire	20	320	340	6%
East Lothian	36	299	335	12%
East Renfrewshire	17	329	346	5%
Edinburgh City	230	2253	2483	10%
Falkirk	44	502	546	9%
Fife	101	1099	1200	9%
Glasgow City	324	3753	4077	9%
Highland	55	653	708	8%
Inverclyde	13	224	237	6%
Midlothian	48	406	454	12%
Moray	17	184	201	9%
North Ayrshire	33	474	507	7%
North Lanarkshire	117	1573	1690	7%
Orkney	6	61	67	10%
Perth & Kinross	46	583	629	8%
Renfrewshire	70	854	924	8%
Scottish Borders	35	476	511	7%
Shetland Islands	23	49	72	47%
South Ayrshire	49	492	541	10%
South Lanarkshire	111	1737	1848	6%
Stirling	64	455	519	14%
West Dunbartonshire	7	253	260	3%
West Lothian	72	759	831	9%
Total	1969	21583	23552	9%

SDP Tender Training for Scotland and SDP eLearning Courses

SDP offers 11 core training courses to Scottish micro, small and medium sized businesses, third sector and supported businesses.

SDP Training

- 1.1 Working with the Public Sector – All You Need to know
- 1.2 Using Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) – How to Find and Bid for Opportunities
- 1.3 Getting your Business Tender Ready – The Checklist
- 1.4 Planning your Bid – Timing and Resources

- 2.1 Passing the Selection Stage – The Single Procurement Document (SPD)
- 2.2 How to Write Outstanding Tenders – The Invitation to Tender (ITT) Stage
- 2.3 Understanding and Bidding – Frameworks and Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS)
- 2.4 Improving your Bid Score – Increase Your Tender Win Rate
- 2.5 Responding to Tender Policy Requirements – Power of Procurement

- 3.1 Understanding your Role in Contract Management – Critical Success Factors
- 3.2 Expanding your Business Globally – Tendering in New Markets
- SDP Masterclass

Practical Workshop Webinars

- Quick Quotes Made Easy
- Helping you Bid Better: Examine the SPD Question by Question

Other Bespoke Webinars

- Talking Tenders
- Aligned Training

Added Value: Buyer Training

- Understanding the Questions in the Single Procurement Document (SPD) - Buyer Training for SDP Membership Organisations

SDP eLearning Courses

- 1.1 Working with the Public Sector - All You Need to Know
- 1.2 Using Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) – How to Find and Bid for Opportunities
- 1.3 Planning your Bid – Timing and Resources

- 2.1 Passing the Selection Stage – The Single Procurement Document (SPD)
- 2.2 How to Write Outstanding Tenders – The Invitation to Tender (ITT) Stage
- 2.3 Understanding and Bidding – Frameworks and Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS)
- 2.4 Improving your Bid Score – Increase Your Tender Win Rate
- 2.5 Responding to Tender Policy Requirements – Power of Procurement

- 3.1 Understanding your Role in Contract Management – Critical Success Factors
- 3.2 Expanding your Business Globally – Tendering in New Markets
- SDP Masterclass

Training Attendance and Feedback

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 3512 people from 2927 unique Scottish SME businesses attended 106 events with SDP. This was a 15.2% decrease on the number of events delivered this time last year. This year-on-year decrease reflects the pressures on SDP members' procurement staff and timelines to accommodate bespoke tender training sessions in tight tender timescales. In addition, the decrease in bespoke events from last financial year to this one reflects the higher-than-normal number of these events that took place in 2022-23, as SDP members caught up on procurements, and major framework contracts, following the post Covid 19 restrictions. SDP continues to work with its members to identify those contract opportunities that would benefit from bespoke tender training to offer additional support to Scottish SMEs.

Core Training

SDP hosts core training throughout the year to registered SMEs and supported businesses that are based in Scotland. Companies are encouraged to 'self-select' the training appropriate to them from Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3. In this financial year, SDP provided 48 core training webinars, which saw 1,972 bookings, and 872 attendees from 809 Unique Scottish SME businesses.

Of the 431 people that responded to post event core training survey, 97% (418) rated the training 'excellent' or 'good'.

Bespoke Training

SDP has worked with local authorities and other public bodies to align 'bespoke' training to actual tenders, improving the tendering capability of SMEs on live opportunities. In this financial year, SDP organised a total of 46 bespoke training sessions, which saw 1,962 bookings, and 870 attendees from 773 Unique Scottish SME businesses. These sessions included Talking Tenders events (which walked SMEs through requirements of specific contracts) Aligned Tender Training (post-Contract Notice publication events that follow up from Talking Tenders) Supplier Engagement events (led by prime contractors working on public sector projects) and Partner Events (where SDP member organisations led the training).

Of the 353 people that responded to post event bespoke training survey, 97% (323) rated the training 'excellent' or 'good'.

Meet the Buyer Events

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 SDP hosted and supported 7 in person Meet the Buyer events. Collectively these saw, 4,917 bookings, and 1,637 attendees from 1,233 Unique Scottish SME businesses. Meet the Buyers are networking events, where buyers can engage with suppliers, to discuss new projects, contracts, framework opportunities and supply chain developments.

Further analysis on Meet the Buyers can be found in the following infographics, showing numbers and feedback from each event.

External Events

As well as delivering its own training and events, in the last financial year SDP attended and supported 10 partner and external events, through promotion on the SDP events calendar, with bookings and data collection handled directly by the organisers.

SDP Supplier Training Numbers

SDP builds the capability of Scottish SMEs and Third Sector Organisations, to ensure they are 'tender ready' to win new contracts. SDP can evidence that it has improved SME and third sector suppliers' capability to bid, through its training attendance and feedback reporting, as well as in case studies.

1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024	Total Training Sessions	Bookings	Scottish SME Attendees	Unique Scottish SME Businesses
ALL SDP TRAINING				
SDP core training	48	1,972	872	809
SDP bespoke training	46	1,962	870	773
SDP Meet the Buyer Events	7	4,917	1,637	1,233
Meet the Contractor Events	5	342	133	112
Totals	106	9,193	3,512	2,927

1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024	Modules	Accessed by	Unique Scottish SME Businesses
SDP ELEARNING TRAINING			
SDP eLearning training	11	309	304

Social Enterprises and SDP

Analysing attendance for 2023/24, 34 individuals from 34 unique organisations classed as a social enterprise/ Scottish charity or supported business attended SDP Core Training.

Examining SDP Bespoke Training attendance for 2023/24, 46 individuals from 44 unique businesses classed as a social enterprise/ Scottish charity or supported business attended a bespoke training session.

Some of the highest engagement from charities and supported businesses were in SDP's Bespoke sessions, including Glasgow City Council's - Framework for Education Services Embedded Mental Health and Wellbeing Aligned Tender Training, Edinburgh City Council's Accredited Pathways and Certified Counselling and Therapies Talking Tenders and the Scottish Islands Deal Supply Chain Engagement webinar.

Breakdown of Unique Businesses at all SDP Supplier Training by Local Authority

Local Authority	
Aberdeen City	109
Aberdeenshire	133
Angus	37
Argyll & Bute	32
Clackmannanshire	23
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	14
Dumfries and Galloway	55
Dundee City	132
East Ayrshire	42
East Dunbartonshire	17
East Lothian	36
East Renfrewshire	15
Edinburgh City	396
Falkirk	95
Fife	159
Glasgow City	484
Highland	91
Inverclyde	15
Midlothian	54
Moray	26
North Ayrshire	44
North Lanarkshire	179
Orkney	5
Perth & Kinross	77
Renfrewshire	102
Scottish Borders	64
Shetland Islands	17
South Ayrshire	70
South Lanarkshire	180
Stirling	76
West Dunbartonshire	14
West Lothian	121
Total	*2927

*Of these, 13 delegates failed to supply sufficient business location information, SDP recognises this issue and has made important updates to the booking process that will eliminate this going forward.

Training Event Feedback

April 2023
1.3 Getting Your Business Tender Ready - The Checklist

"The delivery of the content was easy to follow and made sense. There were also elements on the course that helped navigate the (PCS) webpage that I had not known about previously."

June 2023
1.2 Using Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) - How to Find and Bid for Opportunities

"It was helpful to know that I could list my details as a supplier so that I could be contacted about potential contracts by buyers."

August 2023
Talking Tenders with Balfour Beatty

"Learning about the schemes which have been delivered, those to be delivered, as well as tendered works, and the future pipeline was all particularly useful."

November 2023
City of Edinburgh Council - Accredited Pathways and Certified Counselling and Therapies

"I feel more confident and understand the bidding process after the training."

December 2023
Tayside - Framework for Education and Social Support Services incorporating Counselling in Schools Service

"I feel more confident now in being able to move forward with the tender process. I particularly like that there is training and opportunities given as we proceed through. I don't feel as much out of my depth."

January 2024
2.2 How to Write Outstanding Tenders - The Invitation to Tender (ITT) Stage

"I particularly enjoyed the practical information on what to concentrate on, how to prepare and what key messages should be woven through good applications."

February 2024
Glasgow City Council - Framework for Education Services Embedded Mental Health and Wellbeing

"Good array of questions asked by participants including some I hadn't really thought about."

January 2024
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) Talking Tender

"Well informed. The webinar was a worthwhile exercise. It's definitely helped with upcoming tenders. I would highly recommend it."

February 2024
2.4 Improving Your Bid Score - Increase Your Tender Win Rate

"A lot of helpful tips, I especially appreciated learning more about getting feedback from buyers post tendering."

February 2024
1.1 Working with the Public Sector - All You Need to Know

"The breakdown of the tendering process, and the different terms and information on the different procurement organisations was useful."

March 2024
1.3 Getting Your Business Tender Ready - The Checklist

"This was an excellent session. The speaker was engaging, knowledgeable, and spoke to us on a level that we all understood. The checklist of essential info that we should have in place before our tender was exactly what we were looking for."

March 2024
Using PCS & PCS-Tender - South Ayrshire Council Minor Works Framework Agreement

"Really informative presentation regarding PCS-Tender. Having not used this portal before, I am now confident I can safely return a completed tender."

Case Studies: Supporting Scotland's Suppliers



Company bio:

Scottish Borders Council is a local authority that covers over 116,000 people. In the financial year 2022-23, the council estimated to have spent over £200k on procurement, with over £100k of that going to SMEs and over £78k of that being spent with 620 local suppliers.

In partnership with the Supplier Development Programme (SDP), Scottish Borders Council helped local SMEs understand how to bid for its Repairs and Maintenance Framework, by hosting a free Aligned Tender Training webinar on 25 April, 2023.

In total, 41 suppliers from 36 unique businesses attended this free online event, to learn how to bid for a place on the Repairs and Maintenance Framework. This included 38 attendees from 34 unique Scottish SME businesses. In the post-event survey, 84% of respondents said they felt confident that their bid (to join the framework) would be stronger after attending the SDP webinar. Furthermore, after the training almost all (95%) of respondents felt more positive about potentially working with Scottish Borders Council.

Suppliers in attendance said:

"I definitely feel more confident about undertaking the tendering process now that I have completed the course. I found the whole webinar useful, as I have never had to do this before."

"I heard about SDP Scotland through an employee of Scottish Borders Council, they encouraged me to tender as they felt I could offer a lot to the Scottish Borders, both in our trade and how our business operates. (Following the training) I am certainly going to go through the tendering process and hope to be accepted on to the list and being able to tender for work."

Of the 36 unique businesses that attended the training, 78% were successful in winning a place on the 'Repairs and Maintenance' Framework. What's more, 62% of successful bidders were registered with the Supplier Development Programme.

Thomas Adamson, Scottish Borders Council Senior Compliance Officer, said:
"We are delighted that 78% of the training attendees were successful in gaining a place on the Scottish Borders Council Repairs and Maintenance Framework."

He added: "Scottish Borders recognises that local SMEs are crucial for the council's repairs and maintenance. It also understands the difficulties that SMEs face accessing relevant contract opportunities, as well as operating tendering systems."

"The Council organised this free webinar, in partnership with SDP, to help SME businesses understand the framework and how to apply to it using both PCS and PCS-T portals. We are encouraged to see such great attendance."

2023-2024 Meet the Buyer events

10 May 2023

Meet the Contractor
Online McLaughlin
& Harvey, Inverclyde
Council and hub West
Scotland

- Online
- 42 registered
- 31 attended

28 June 2023

hub East Central
Scotland - Meet the
Contractor

- Perthshire
- 74 registered
- 50 attended

3 October 2023

Meet the Buyer South

- Langholm
- 378 registered
- 167 attended

5 October 2023

Meet the Contractor
hub East Central
Scotland, BAM and Fife
Council

- Online
- 22 registered
- 11 attended

9 November 2023

Fife Council Meet the
Buyer

- Dunfermline
- 328 registered
- 188 attended

20 February 2024

Meet the Buyer Tayside

- Dundee
- 545 registered
- 332 attended

17 May 2023

Meet the Buyer National

- Edinburgh
- 2657 registered
- 1396 attended

12 September 2023

Meet the Buyer North

- Aberdeen
- 842 registered
- 389 attended

4 October 2023

Ayrshire Meet the Buyer

- Kilmarnock
- 167 registered
- 96 attended

27 October 2023

The Westfield A9/A904
Improvements Project
'Fair Work' - Meet the
Contractor

- Falkirk
- 101 registered
- 63 attended

8 February 2024

hub East Central -
Callander Primary School
and Bannockburn ASN
School Extension

- Stirling
- 103 registered
- 36 attended

Meet the Buyer Events

Supplier Development Programme

Meet the Buyer 2023

2,657

Total Registered Suppliers

1,396

Attendees on the day

626

Attendees from unique Scottish SME businesses



"Thank you. This was a really useful event that exceeded my expectations. It was great to have an opportunity to talk to so many procurement teams under one roof. I was also able to do some useful networking with other delegates."

85%

of businesses were more likely to bid for contracts after attending Meet the Buyer

89%

rated the event 'Excellent' or 'Good' in terms of representation of buyers

77%

said the event increased their awareness of opportunities in the supply chain

58

Exhibition Stands on the day
Including headline partners: Scottish Government, Scotland Excel, UK Department for Transport, Elcom and SDP

97%

of buyers said they would recommend Meet the Buyer to other public and private sector organisations

94%

of buyers said they would participate in Meet the Buyer events again in the future

Exhibitors said: "A very good experience overall, great to have something like this again after covid."

www.sdpScotland.co.uk/events-mtb/

Supplier Development Programme

Meet the Buyer North 2023

842

Total Registered Suppliers

380

Attendees on the day

194

Attendees from unique Scottish SME businesses



"The event was well organised and well laid out for navigating the companies exhibiting: lots of information offered and lots of good open conversations. Clear concise presentations delivered."

96%

said the event increased their awareness of opportunities in the supply chain

91%

rated the event 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

86%

of businesses said they were more likely to bid for contracts after attending

32

Exhibition Stands on the day, including headline partners Scottish Government and the Commercial and Procurement Shared Services.

92%

of buyers said they would recommend Meet the Buyer North to other public and private sector organisations.

92%

of buyers said they would participate in Meet the Buyer North in the future

Exhibitors said: "Really well organised, in a central location accessible by public transport and very close to the train station. Extremely well attended by suppliers."

<https://www.sdpScotland.co.uk/>

Supplier Development Programme

Meet the Buyer South 2023

378

Total Registered Suppliers

167

Attendees on the day

98

Attendees from unique Scottish SME businesses



"Well organised - much better than I had anticipated. The calibre of exhibitors and guest speakers was exceptional."

100%

of respondents said that they were highly likely to or would definitely recommend SDP to other businesses.

90%

of respondents said that this event has encouraged them to bid for more public sector contracts.

97%

said the event increased their awareness of opportunities in the supply chain

12

Exhibition Stands on the day, including Scottish Government, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Borders Council, South of Scotland Enterprise, Balfour Beatty, BAM, and Business Gateway

100%

of buyers said they would recommend Meet the Buyer South to other businesses

100%

of buyers felt Meet the Buyer South helped their supply chain be more open and transparent

100%

of buyers felt Meet the Buyer South helped to make public sector contracts more accessible to SMEs.

<https://www.sdpScotland.co.uk/>

Regional Meet the Buyer Events

Supplier Development Programme

Meet the Buyer Ayrshire

167

Total Registered Suppliers

96

Attendees on the day

69

Attendees from unique Scottish SME businesses



"Events like these are absolutely crucial to help SMEs and social enterprises learn more about upcoming contracts, and to understand the tendering process in the public sector."

100%

of businesses were more likely to bid for contracts after attending

80%

rated the event 'Excellent' or 'Good'

93%

said the event increased their awareness of opportunities in the supply chain

13

Exhibition Stands on the day, including Scottish Government, Ayrshire Growth Deal, Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, and Hub South West

86%

of suppliers said they would recommend Meet the Buyer Ayrshire to other businesses

66%

of suppliers said they think they would not have engaged with these supply chain opportunities without this event

Suppliers said: "Engaging with the real buyers at events like this is the most direct way we can improve our tendering approach, to offer more value and win more points."

<https://www.sdpScotland.co.uk/>

Supplier Development Programme

Fife Meet the Buyer 2023

328

Total Registered Suppliers

188

Attendees on the day

108

Attendees from unique Scottish SME businesses



"Well worthwhile - this event de-mystifies the tendering process and helps to get bids fine-tuned for success."

83%

of respondents said that this event has encouraged them to bid for more public sector contracts.

93%

of respondents rated the opportunity for individual discussions with buyers and support agencies as 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

96%

of respondents rated the quality of buyers and support agencies on the day 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

38

Exhibition Stands on the day, including SDP, Fife Council Economic Development, Business Gateway Fife, Public Contracts Scotland, NHS Fife, Scotland Excel, Balfour Beatty, hub East Central Scotland, BAM, and more ...

"This was my 1st Meet the Buyer event. I took away a lot of useful information and met some really helpful people."

<https://www.sdpScotland.co.uk/>

Supplier Development Programme

Meet the Buyer Tayside

545

Total Registered Suppliers

332

Attendees on the day

199

Scottish SME businesses



"I particularly enjoyed the direct access to the decision makers and personnel that can influence the relationships we are looking to grow."

86%

of businesses were more likely to bid for contracts after attending

82%

felt more capable of bidding for contracts after attending

90%

rated the event 'Excellent' or 'Good'

28

Exhibition Stands on the day including headline partners: Dundee Council, Angus Council, Perth and Kinross Council and SDP.

93%

of those asked rated the exhibitors and speakers as 'excellent' or 'good'

78%

of respondents said the venue was 'excellent' or 'good'

One said: "Venue was good. Car parking was tight but suitable and we were warned of this in advance along with advice on how to avoid parking issues."

Social Media Analysis

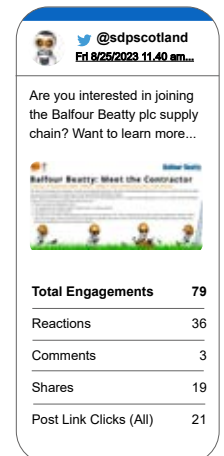
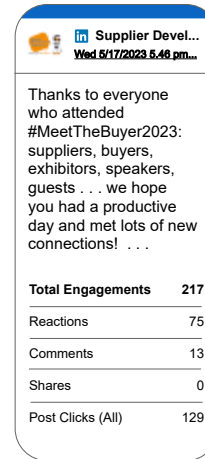
SDP uses social media to share information on upcoming training opportunities, events, market information, media releases, news, contract opportunities and other items of note relating to procurement, Public Contracts Scotland, and SDP member organisations.

During 2023/2024, SDP encouraged suppliers and partners to utilise hashtags, including:

#HelpingYouBidBetter
 #PowerOfSDP
 #SupplierOpp
 #10DR
 #MeetTheBuyer2023
 #MeetTheBuyerNorth2023
 #MeetTheBuyerSouth2023

Additionally, to maximise efforts in the public sector to be open and transparent in communications around public sector procurement, SDP utilises a joined-up approach to support the Scottish Government Procurement Communications Strategy with the use of the following hashtags:

#PowerOfProcurement
 #GoodForBusiness
 #OpenAndConnected
 #GoodForCommunities
 #GoodForEnvironment



Platform	2022/2023	2023/2024	% change in followers
Facebook	865	885	Increased by 2%
LinkedIn	2753	3067	Increased by 11%
Twitter (X)	3472	3462	Decreased by 0.2% *
YouTube	181	207	Increased by 14%

* Following the rebrand of Twitter to X and changes in the platform's management, SDP has seen a decrease in its followers on this platform, this could be due to the decreasing number of monthly users on the platform.

Throughout the last financial year, SDP has been helping its members understand and adopt Community Wealth Building (CWB) values within their businesses practices.

CWB and Procurement

Community Wealth Building is a policy often incorporated into public tenders, which asks suppliers to show how they can bring economic, social and environmental benefits to the local community, when they deliver a contract.

The aim of Community Wealth Building is to build robust local supply chains and increase employment, so that the whole community prospers.

Community Wealth Building has five main principles

- Plural ownership of the economy
- Making financial power work for local places
- Fair employment and just labour markets
- Progressive procurement of goods and services
- Socially productive use of land and property

SDP CWB Support in the Last Year

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 SDP has supported training, events and partnerships that encourage Community Wealth Building. Here are some of the events that specifically focused on it.

- 5 June 2023: Meet the Buyer National (including Edinburgh Science Net Zero Toolkit, Historic Environment Scotland, Living Wage Scotland, NatureScot, Social Security Scotland and The British Association for Supported Employment as exhibitors).
- 21 June 2023: Stirling Supporting Businesses through Community Wealth Building webinar.
- 9 August 2023: 2.5 Responding to Tender Policy Requirements (including Community Benefits and Net Zero targets).
- 12 September 2023: Meet the Buyer North (including Edinburgh Science Net Zero Toolkit, Historic Environment Scotland, Living Wage Scotland and NatureScot as exhibitors).
- 3 October 2023: Meet the Buyer South (with Ministerial Address by Tom Arthur MSP, Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance, Scottish Government).
- 4 October 2023: Ayrshire Meet the Buyer (with keynote from the Ayrshire Growth Deal on Community Wealth Building).
- 9 November 2023: Fife Council Meet the Buyer (with Fife Council Economic Development Team, Employability Fife, Skills Development Scotland, and Social Enterprise Scotland as exhibitors).
- 14 December 2023: South Lanarkshire Council, Community Wish List supplier meeting.
- 20 February 2024: Meet the Buyer Tayside (with Social Enterprise Scotland and Social Security Scotland exhibiting, as well as an Edinburgh Science Net Zero Toolkit keynote).

Contact us



Left to right: Elizabeth Bailey, Fiona Conti (SDP Chair), Lynzie McLean, Mark Houston, Julie Shennan, Gillian Cameron, Fran Goldie

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