Annual Report

2025 / 2026

1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026

Supplier Development Programme

Helping You Bid Better



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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 main 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 £17.5bn, and throughout the rest of the UK there is an annual public spend of £1,368bn. With big spend comes big 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 of public sector tendering
- Improve the tender readiness of local suppliers through early intervention
- Support SDP Partner organisations to meet the Sustainable Procurement Duty
- Promote links and integrate with other government business support services

SDP Vice Chair Note

Councillor Anthony Buchanan
Vice Chair of the Supplier Development Programme



As an elected member for East Renfrewshire Council and COSLA Spokesperson for Children and Young People, Councillor Tony Buchanan has been on the Board of the Supplier Development Programme since its inception in 2018 and currently has the responsibility and pleasure of being its Vice Chair.

Councillor Buchanan has seen SDP grow, both in terms of the number of businesses engaged in its training and events and in the Partners that it works with. SDP's work with the wider supply chain shows what can be achieved when organisations move beyond traditional boundaries and work together towards a common purpose.

He said *"SDP has created a trusted national platform that connects buyers, suppliers and communities, ensuring procurement delivers far greater value than contracts alone.*

"Through collaboration with local authorities, public sector partners, Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) and business support organisations, SDP has improved supplier engagement, strengthened local economies and increased opportunities for SMEs and third sector organisations.

"SDP's partnership-led approach has delivered tangible benefits across Scotland and provides an excellent example of effective cross-sector collaboration in action.

"It is a pleasure to see the success the Programme has had and I am delighted to continue to be part of this and continue to grow its reach."

Introduction from the Programme Manager

Gillian Cameron
Programme Manager



Through targeted training, practical guidance and direct support, SDP continued to help suppliers become tender ready.

The 2025/26 year was another busy and productive one for the Programme. Additional support from the Scottish Government provided an opportunity to explore new initiatives, expand our resources and further increase our impact across Scotland. This investment has enabled us to continue strengthening supplier capability while broadening access to support for businesses and social enterprises in all parts of the country.

One of the many highlights of the year was our visit to Stornoway, where SDP supported Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd in delivering a market engagement event focused on the future procurement of engineering, technical, professional and support services. It was a fantastic opportunity to engage directly with businesses and to work alongside colleagues from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Business Gateway Outer Hebrides.

Subsequent visits to Orkney and Shetland further reinforced the value of face-to-face engagement, allowing us to connect with buyers and suppliers across Scotland's island communities and better understand the challenges and opportunities they face.

I was also delighted to welcome two graduates to the SDP team, supporting our marketing and event activities. As demand for our events, training and support continues to grow, this additional capacity helps us enhance our communications, increase awareness of procurement opportunities and ensure that businesses and social enterprises are connected with the support they need. Their contribution has strengthened our ability to deliver on behalf of our partners and to engage more effectively with Scotland's diverse business base.

As Programme Manager, I am immensely proud of what has been achieved over the past 12 months. None of this would be possible without the continued commitment and support of our Board, partners and dedicated SDP team. My sincere thanks go to everyone who has contributed to another successful year. Together, we are helping to create a stronger, more capable supplier community and ensuring that more businesses and social enterprises are equipped to seize the opportunities that public sector procurement can provide.

Our Board

The Supplier Development Programme is led by its Board. The following individuals served on the board during 2025/2026.

• Fiona Conti: Chair	Aberdeen City Council
• Councillor Anthony Buchanan: Vice Chair	East Renfrewshire Council
• Councillor Alexander McVey	North Lanarkshire Council
• Councillor Chris Cullen	South Ayrshire Council
• David Aitken	Inverclyde Council
• Jane Morrison	Glasgow City Council
• Councillor Mo Razzaq	South Lanarkshire Council
• Pamela Stevenson	Fife Council
• Paula Deegan	City of Edinburgh Council
• Rachael Thomas	Dundee City Council
• Councillor Stephen Canning	East Ayrshire Council

Ex-officio

• Gillian Cameron	SDP Scotland

Secretary to the Board

• Elizabeth Bailey	SDP Scotland

During 2025/2026, the following changes were made to the Board appointments:

Re-appointments

• Fiona Conti (Chair)	Aberdeen City Council
• Councillor Anthony Buchanan (Vice Chair)	East Renfrewshire Council

New appointments

• Councillor Alexander McVey	North Lanarkshire Council

Resignations

• Councillor David Inglis	Dumfries and Galloway Council
• Councillor Heather Brannan-McVey	North Lanarkshire Council

Supporting our Partners

The Supplier Development Programme (SDP) was established in 2007, and is a partnership of Local Authorities, Scottish Government and other 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 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 Partnership

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

Through its Core Partnership model, SDP helps councils engage potential suppliers, raising early awareness of contract opportunities, and providing Bespoke 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 Partnership

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

Through its Affiliate Partnership Programme, SDP helps public bodies including anchor institutions, such as the NHS, increase awareness of their pipelines and opportunities. SDP also works with its Affiliate Partners to spread the news about their procurement policy updates and helps them meet their Community Wealth Building aspirations. Just as it supports its Corporate Partners, SDP supports its Affiliate Partners with training, events, marketing and reporting.

Corporate Partnership

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

Through its Corporate Partnership model, SDP helps main 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 Partners































































Affiliate Partners

CMAL
Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd
Stòras Mara Cailleannach Eta

Forestry and Land Scotland
Coilltearachd agus Fearann Alba

Glasgowlife

Government Commercial Agency

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND | ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA

hub
East Central Scotland

NatureScot
NàdarAlba
Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

NHS
Golden Jubilee

NHS
Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Northern Lighthouse Board

pfh | Scotland

POLICE SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe
POILEAS ALBA

Registers of Scotland

Scottish Enterprise

sepa

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

SPA
SCOTTISH PROCUREMENT ALLIANCE

Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

SPT

ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND

Corporate Partners

Balfour Beatty

RJ McLEOD

RFM
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
DELIVERED BY ROBERTSON

VEOLIA

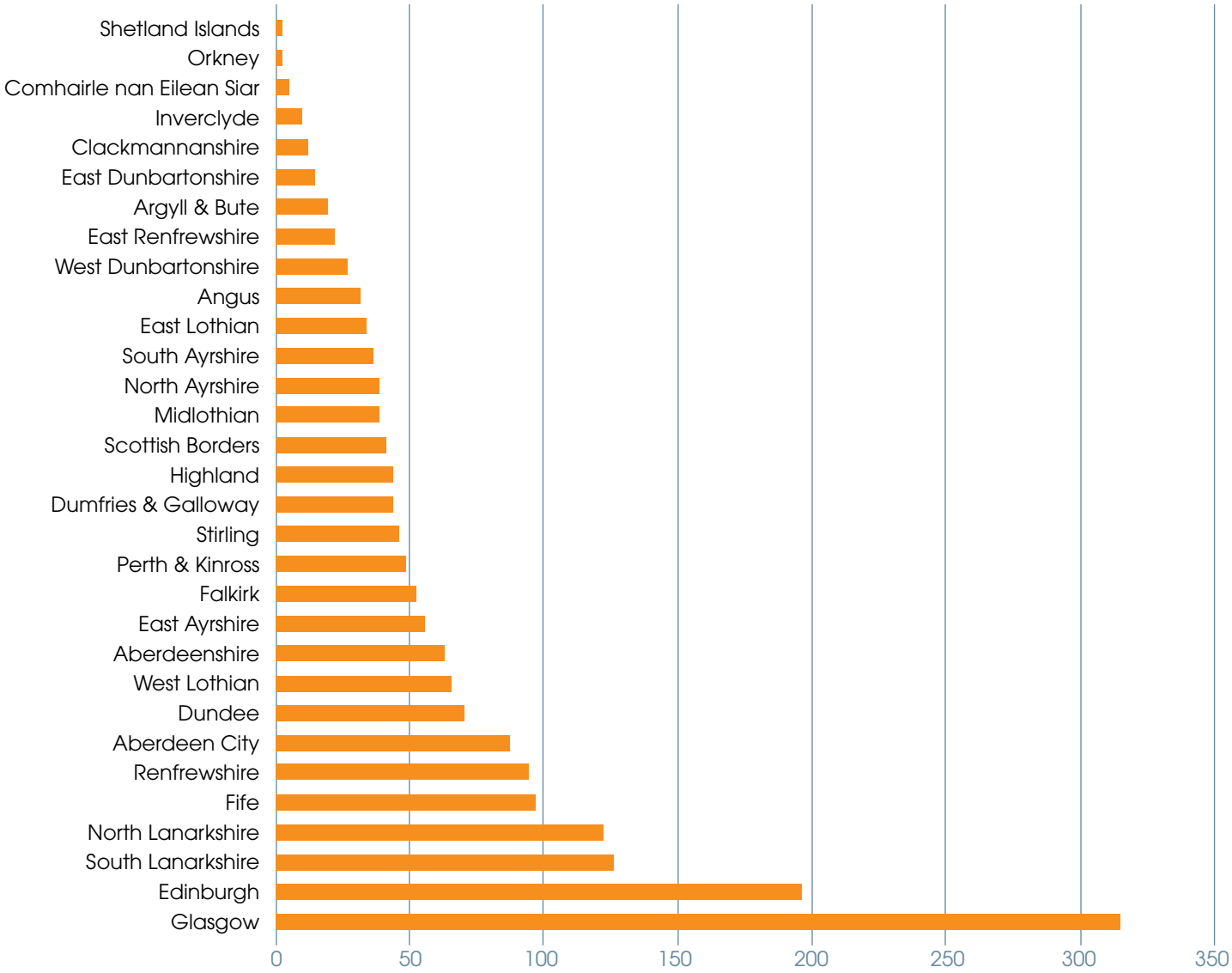
Strategic Objectives: Scottish SME Unique Business Registrations

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 2025 - 31 March 2026	Total to date last year	Cumulative total
1,827	25,487	27,314

SDP had **the target of increasing the Scottish SME Unique Businesses registered with it by 6%.** From 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026, **1,827 Scottish SME unique businesses** registered with SDP Scotland, bringing the overall **cumulative total** to 27,314. This is a 7.1% increase in the cumulative total from last year, **meaning SDP surpassed its target by 1.1%.**

Number of Unique SME Registrations



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

From 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026, 1,827 Scottish SME unique businesses registered with SDP Scotland. Looking back at the same period last year 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025, 1,935 Scottish SME unique businesses registered with SDP Scotland. This shows that SDP had a decrease in Year-on-Year rate of growth in Scottish SME registrations of -108 or –5.6%.

While SDP's YoY rate of registration growth was down for Scottish SME unique businesses (from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026) the number of overall people (from all sizes of businesses) registering with the Programme was up Year on Year.

2,973 people registered with SDP from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 (from businesses of all sizes), which was 294 more (10.9% increase) from the previous financial year's total people registered (2,679) showing that there is steady rate of growth in the wider Programme.

Local Authorities with the most Registrations

Following a similar trend to last year, registrations from unique SME businesses in Scotland's Central Belt made up the largest percentage of SDP's total new SME Partners. Suppliers from Glasgow City (17.2%) and Edinburgh (10.6%) contributed to this trend.

This was closely followed by unique Scottish SMEs based in South Lanarkshire (6.8%) North Lanarkshire (6.5%) Fife (5%) Renfrewshire (5%) Aberdeen City (4.6%) and Dundee (3.8%)

The new Scottish SME registrations in these areas correlate with SDP events that were held in these regions, over this financial year, including:

Glasgow Meet the 'Real' Buyer; Meet the Buyer National in Edinburgh; webinars on healthcare, transport, vehicle repairs and employability with South Lanarkshire Council; Meet the Construction Buyer: North Lanarkshire Council; traders, childcare and transport webinars with Renfrewshire, Meet the Buyer North in Aberdeen, and Meet the Buyer Tayside in 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 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 five local authority areas saw the biggest increase in new SME supplier registrations (from last financial year to this financial year) are North Ayrshire (225%) East Ayrshire (103.7%) Falkirk (96.2%) Midlothian (69.6%) and South Ayrshire (61.9%).

Rise in new SME registrations across the Ayrshire Councils correlates with Meet the Buyer Ayrshire, held on 18 November 2025; likewise, the Forth Valley Meet the Buyer held in September 2025 increased Falkirk registrations, and Meet the Buyer South (in October 2025) boosted Midlothian registrations.

Strategic Objectives: Supplier Registrations

Local Authority	Local Registrations 2025/2026	Total Cumulative Registrations 2024/2025	Total Cumulative Companies Registered to 31 March 2026	Annual Cumulative Percentage Increase
Aberdeen City	84	809	893	10%
Aberdeenshire	63	691	754	9%
Angus	30	450	480	7%
Argyll & Bute	19	364	383	5%
Clackmannanshire	11	256	267	4%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	4	73	77	5%
Dumfries & Galloway	42	668	710	6%
Dundee City	69	759	828	9%
East Ayrshire	55	583	638	9%
East Dunbartonshire	16	363	379	4%
East Lothian	32	400	432	8%
East Renfrewshire	20	372	392	5%
Edinburgh City	194	2668	2862	7%
Falkirk	51	572	623	9%
Fife	93	1292	1385	7%
Glasgow City	315	4410	4725	7%
Highland	42	757	799	6%
Inverclyde	9	249	258	4%
Midlothian	39	477	516	8%
Moray	0	213	252	18%
North Ayrshire	39	535	535	0%
North Lanarkshire	120	1809	1929	7%
Orkney	2	69	71	3%
Perth & Kinross	48	677	725	7%
Renfrewshire	92	1002	1094	9%
Scottish Borders	41	552	593	7%
Shetland Islands	2	78	80	3%
South Ayrshire	34	562	596	6%
South Lanarkshire	125	2026	2151	6%
Stirling	43	573	616	8%
West Dunbartonshire	29	286	315	10%
West Lothian	64	892	956	7%
Total	**1827**	**25487**	**27314**	**7%**

SDP Tender Training for Scotland and SDP eLearning Courses

SDP offers 12 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

1.5 Pricing Your Tender – A Sustainable Approach

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 to Sell into the Wider UK Market

Practical Workshop Webinars

- Quick Quotes Made Easy
- Consortium Creation and Planning

Other Bespoke Webinars

- Talking Tenders
- Aligned Training

Added Value: Buyer Training

- Understanding the Questions in the Single Procurement Document (SPD) - Buyer Training for SDP Partnership 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 Getting your Business Tender Ready - The Checklist

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 to Sell into the Wider UK Market

Training Attendance and Feedback

From 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026, 6,706 people, including 4,736 representatives from 3,855 Unique Scottish SME businesses attended 128 events with SDP. This was an 10% increase on the 116 events delivered last year.

Despite the increase in the number of events, attendance to events was down Year-On-Year, with 3,855 unique Scottish-based SME businesses attending SDP events this financial year, down 6.6% from 4,131 last financial year. SDP has taken note of this trend and will monitor it closely over the course of the next year.

Of the 128 events there were 48 Core Training events, 65 Bespoke Training events, 10 Meet the Buyer events and 5 Meet the Contractor events. Following all these events, SDP sent surveys to gain attendee feedback on what worked well and what could be improved.

Due to the large numbers of attendees at the Meet the Buyer events, these are analysed in a later section of the Annual Report, in infographics, showing numbers and feedback from each event. From its (non- Meet the Buyer) events, SDP received 1,072 survey responses, 467 from Core Training, 487 from Bespoke Training and 118 from Meet the Contractor events.

Core Training

SDP hosts Core Training throughout the year to registered SMEs, supported businesses, and charities 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 2,359 bookings, and 1,056 attendees, including 992 Unique Scottish SME businesses.

Of the 467 people that responded to post event Core Training survey, 98% rated the training 'excellent' or 'good'.

Bespoke Training

SDP has worked with local authorities and other Partners 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 65 Bespoke Training sessions, which saw 2,740 bookings, and 1,695 total attendees, including 1,014 Unique Scottish SME businesses.

These sessions included Talking Tenders events (which discuss an upcoming contract opportunity with potential suppliers); Aligned Tender Training (post-Contract Notice publication events that follow up from Talking Tenders); Supplier Engagement events (led by main contractors working on public sector projects) and Partner Events (where SDP Partner organisations led the training).

Of the 487 people that responded to post event Bespoke Training survey, 95% rated the training 'excellent' or 'good'.

Training Attendance and Feedback

Meet the Buyer Events

From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 SDP hosted and supported 10 in person Meet the Buyer events. Collectively these saw 7,434 bookings, and 3,755 attendees including those from 1,752 Unique Scottish SME businesses.

Meet the Buyers are networking events, where multiple 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.

Meet the Contractor Events

In this financial year, SDP organised a total of five Meet the Contractor Events, which saw 309 bookings, and 200 attendees, including 97 Unique Scottish SME businesses.

Of the 118 people that responded to post event Meet the Contractor survey, 88% rated the events 'excellent' or 'good'.

External Events

As well as delivering its own training and events, in the last financial year SDP attended and supported 11 external events, including P4H Scotland, Scotland Manufacturing & Supply Chain Conference, Procurex Scotland, and Space-Comm, as well as Department for Transport Small Business Supplier & Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) - to name but a few.

SDP promoted these external events on its website 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 2025 - 31 March 2026	Total Training Sessions	Bookings	Scottish SME Attendees	Unique Scottish SME Businesses
ALL SDP TRAINING				
SDP Core Training	48	2,359	1,056	992
SDP Bespoke Training	65	2,740	1,189	1,1014
SDP Meet the Buyer Events	10	7,434	2,362	1,752
Meet the Contractor Events	5	309	129	97
Totals	**128**	**12,842**	**4,736**	**3,855**

1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026	Modules	Users	Unique Scottish SME Businesses Using it
SDP ELEARNING TRAINING			
SDP eLearning Training	11	504	486

Social Enterprises and SDP Training

Analysing SDP Core Training attendance for FY 2025/26, 51 attendees from 51 organisations classed as a Scottish Social Enterprise/ Charity or Supported Business attended.

Examining SDP Bespoke Training attendance for FY 2025/26, 104 attendees from 78 businesses classed as a Scottish Social Enterprise/ Charity or Supported Business joined them.

Analysing SDP Meet the Buyer attendance for FY 2025/26, 58 attendees from 44 organisations classed as a Scottish Social Enterprise/ Charity or Supported Business attended.

Examining SDP Meet the Contractor attendance for FY 2025/26, two attendees from two organisations classed as a Scottish Social Enterprise/ Charity or Supported Business attended.

Some of the highest engagement from organisations classed as a Scottish Social Enterprise/ Charity or Supported Business was in SDP's Bespoke sessions, including Glasgow City Health Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP) Talking Tender, GCHSCP Flexible Purchasing Arrangements for Social Care Support Aligned Tender Training, Joint Employability Framework for Stirling and Clackmannanshire Local Authority Talking Tender, and Glasgow City Council Provision of Community Alcohol and Drug Recovery Services Talking Tender.

Breakdown of Unique Scottish SMEs at all SDP Supplier Training by Local Authority

Local Authority	
Aberdeen City	152
Aberdeenshire	153
Angus	27
Argyll & Bute	42
Clackmannanshire	50
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	2
Dumfries & Galloway	84
Dundee City	83
East Ayrshire	105
East Dunbartonshire	29
East Lothian	47
East Renfrewshire	41
Edinburgh City	523
Falkirk	83
Fife	167
Glasgow City	728
Highland	81
Inverclyde	19
Midlothian	63
Moray	6
North Ayrshire	77
North Lanarkshire	267
Orkney	1
Perth & Kinross	101
Renfrewshire	152
Scottish Borders	68
Shetland Islands	0
South Ayrshire	60
South Lanarkshire	351
Stirling	91
West Dunbartonshire	64
West Lothian	138
Total	**3,855**

Training Event Feedback

April 2025: Working with the Public Sector - All You Need to Know

"I found the "regulated procurement flowchart" and the information on sub-contracting and partnering particularly useful."

May 2025: NHS National Community Benefit Gateway (NCBG) portal

"Information was accessible and easy to understand. The expansion on what is available to read online was very useful as this scheme is difficult to understand without that."

June 2025
Talking Tenders with Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)

"Direct information from the people scoring the tender is always helpful, and most questions I had were answered during the Q&A sessions at the end."

July 2025
Getting Your Business Tender Ready - The Checklist

"The reference to policy, processes and procedure was helpful. Also the practical experience of the trainer when talking about financial criteria of bids was useful."

August 2025
Aligned Tender Training Aberdeenshire Blacksmith & Fabrication Framework

"It was great to learn about the different avenues available to collaboratively pursue innovative projects."

September 2025
Consortium Creation and Planning

"It debunked the myths around consortium governance and delivery with clarity and detailed knowledge."

October 2025
Planning Your Bid – Time and Resources

"It flowed really well and was explained in good detail without it being overwhelming. I liked how you could message questions and they were all answered."

November 2025
Aligned Tender Training: Scottish Borders Council Subcontracting Framework

"If I hadn't done the training I wouldn't have known about the PCS post box and to submit that way."

December 2025
Talking Tenders with Stirling Council & Clackmannanshire

"The webinar style was supportive and inclusive for all ranges of organisations."

January 2026
Aberdeenshire Council Hard FM - Lifecycle Component Replacement Projects (DPS) 2026

"The walkthrough of completing a tender on PCS was particularly useful, especially the guidance on locating documents, understanding mandatory requirements, and submitting responses correctly. The practical tips on avoiding common mistakes and improving compliance were also very helpful."

February 2026
Getting Your Business Tender Ready - The Checklist

"Very informative! I'm just starting to get involved with Public Contracts Scotland and the PCS Tender website, which can be quite daunting. Being able to ask questions freely and receive immediate answers is extremely helpful."

February 2026
Talking Tenders with City of Edinburgh Council

"Thank you for explaining the perspective of a procurement professional so we understand better to whom we are writing. The Q&A was very generous to us all asking niche sector queries."

Case Studies: Supporting Scotland's Suppliers

Esteem Training Delivers over £1m of Public Sector Work Following SDP Meet the Buyer Events



Esteem Training is an employee-owned training company that delivers Construction Modern Apprenticeships. Since attending SDP's Meet the Buyer events, Esteem Training has grown its public sector revenue from £70,000 in its first year of tendering, to reach over £1m in 2025.

Early Days

Founded in Glasgow in 1986 by Trudy Mackenzie, **Esteem Training** first discovered SDP events through the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.

SDP Training

After enjoying the format of its first Meet the Buyer event, Esteem Training started attending them every year. Over the years, the business attended Meet the Buyer National in 2026, 2025 and 2024, as well as Meet the Buyer North, Meet the Buyer South, and regional Meet the Buyers in Ayrshire Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, Forth Valley, Lanarkshire, Tayside, and West Dunbartonshire.

Attending these events also helped the Esteem Training team overcome their uncertainty around working with the public sector.

First Contract Win

When bidding for its first contract with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Esteem Training used learnings from the SDP Core Training keynote, delivered at Meet the Buyer.

In its first year of tendering, Esteem Training won a £70,000 contract with SDS for the delivery of construction Modern Apprenticeships. In 2025, the value of this work rose to over £1m.

Esteem Training now delivers more than 300 Modern Apprenticeships a year for Construction site supervisors, managers, and senior leaders.

Winning this contract has enabled Esteem Training to grow its team, which has doubled in size to 20 people over the past 10 years.

Future Plans

The Esteem Training team is planning to attend more SDP events in the future, including **Meet the Buyers in Aberdeen, Forth Valley and Lanarkshire.**

Sarah Campbell, Business Development Coordinator, said: "We would recommend other suppliers attend SDP events. They give you a chance to get in front of the people you want to work with, have real conversations, and build relationships that you simply can't create through emails or tender documents alone."

Case Studies: Supporting Scotland's Suppliers



£20k to £100k: How Passion4Social Secured a Decade-long Council Contract

Passion4Social is a Community Interest Company (CIC) with a mission to create sustainable employment opportunities for disabled people and people from minority groups. It provides web development, graphic design, social media, and digital accessibility services.

During SDP's Meet the Buyer National in 2019, Passion4Social was able to learn about Aberdeen City Council's ABZWorks project which then led to a win of nearly £100,000 of public sector work.

Early Days

Passion4Social started off in June 2018 as a creative agency of only four people. A year and a half later, its leadership recognised the need to expand the company's revenue sources and identified public sector contracts as an opportunity to do so.

SDP Training

Through the SDP website, Passion4Social accessed training that helped the team understand the requirements of public sector procurement and how to structure a competitive bid. They attended webinars on policy requirements, Community Benefits, Quick Quotes and how to improve bid scores.

Networking Events

Alongside the training, the Passion4Social team attended various SDP networking events, including Meet the Buyer National in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2024, and Meet the Buyer North and Fife Council Meet the Buyer in 2020.

First Contract Win

It was during a Meet the Buyer event that Passion4Social first learned about an opportunity with Aberdeen City Council: an accessible online portal to help young people explore and plan career paths called ABZWorks, it went on to bid for and win this work.

Following this win, Passion4Social was selected to maintain the ABZWorks website under a contract that has been renewed until 2030. The project later expanded to include ABZCampus, a website supporting career development by providing information on technical courses.

That initial contract was circa £20,000. The subsequent renewals and other projects stemming from it, brought the overall value of this work to close to £100,000.

Growing the Business

Today, Passion4Social has grown from a team of only four people to a group of over 20, including employees, freelancers, volunteers, and interns, 80% of whom are disabled or identify as disabled.

Managing Director and Co-Founder, Thiago Carmo, said: ***"We always check the SDP newsletter and website to see if there's anything new or relevant for us. In particular, it's the Meet the Buyers that we're most interested in attending, as they have the potential to bring in new clients."***

2025 - 2026 Meet the Buyer Events

22 April 2025

- **Glasgow Meet the 'Real' Buyer**
- 759 Registered
- 344 Attended



23 April 2025

- **Dumfries & Galloway Meet the Buyer - Dumfries**
- 325 Registered
- 189 Attended



30 April 2025

- **Dumfries & Galloway Meet the Buyer - Newton Stewart**
- 96 Registered
- 34 Attended



28 May 2025

- **R J McLeod Mill Rigg Windfarm Contractor Day**
- 74 Registered
- 51 Attended



4 June 2025

- **Meet the Buyer National**
- 2,666 Registered
- 1,377 Attended



10 September 2025

- **Meet the Buyer North**
- 880 Registered
- 498 Attended



16 September 2025

- **Forth Valley Meet the 'Real' Buyer**
- 464 Registered
- 250 Attended



17 September 2025

- **Market Engagement Drop-in: Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd & Supplier Development Programme**
- 12 Registered
- 9 Attended



2025 - 2026 Meet the Buyer Events

23 September 2025

- **Market Engagement Drop-in: Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd & Supplier Development Programme**
- 105 Registered
- 75 Attended



29 September 2025

- **Market Engagement Drop-in: Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd & Supplier Development Programme**
- 27 Registered
- 21 Attended



8 October 2025

- **Meet the Buyer South**
- 490 Registered
- 210 Attended



4 November 2025

- **Meet the Contractor: R J McLeod and Muirhall Energy**
- 91 Registered
- 44 Attended



6 November 2025

- **Fife Meet the Buyer**
- 470 Registered
- 273 Attended



18 November 2025

- **Ayrshire Meet the Buyer**
- 599 Registered
- 290 Attended



3 March 2026

- **Meet the Buyer Tayside 2026**
- 624 Registered
- 290 Attended



Meet the Buyer Events

Meet the Buyer 2025

2,610 Total Registered Suppliers

1,377 Attendees on the day

603 Unique Scottish SME businesses

"The exhibitors were all prepared with the email addresses / information to enable us to make direct contact with the leads we needed."

90% were planning to **actively pursue opportunities** with one or more of the **organisations they met**

79% rated the event **'Excellent' or 'Good'**

70% said they were **encouraged to consider bidding for more contracts** following the event



70 **Exhibition Stands on the day**
Including Scottish Government, Scotland Excel, NHS NSS, APUC, bp Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub, Brakes, Edinburgh City Council, hub East Central Scotland and Balfour Beatty

100% of exhibitor respondents said they **met suppliers that they would be interested in working with** in the future

94% said that they **would recommend this event to other organisations**

94% said they would **participate in next year's event**

Meet the Buyer North 2025

858 Total Registered Suppliers

498 Attendees on the day

225 Unique Scottish SME businesses

"There was a very good range of buyers at the event - mix of regional / national contractors and procuring authorities that enabled some good conversations. I also liked the presentations on procurement routes and requirements of the buyers

289 Attendees from Scottish SME businesses

36 Public and Private Sector exhibitors





91% **of survey respondents rated Meet the Buyer North 2025 as 'good' or 'excellent'.**

93% of respondents felt this event **helped them network and make useful connections**

93% of respondents **plan to actively pursue opportunities with one or more organisations** they met on the day

83.5% of respondents said the event has **encouraged them to consider bidding for more contrcts**

Meet the Buyer Events

Meet the Buyer South 2025

477 Total Registered Suppliers

210 Attendees on the day

110 Unique Scottish SME businesses

Suppliers said:
"Great to connect with some local authorities to discuss potential business opportunities for my organisation. Spoke with representatives who were all very helpful. Thank you."

18 **Exhibitors in attendance on the day**
Including SDP, East Lothian Council, Midlothian Council, Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Government, South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE), and more...



100% of respondents **rated the event as 'Good' or 'Excellent'**

95% of respondents felt **the event helped them network and make good connections**

93% of respondents **are planning to actively pursue opportunities with one or more of the exhibitors**

Glasgow Meet the 'Real' Buyer 2025

759 Total Registered Suppliers

344 Attendees on the day

204 Unique Scottish SME businesses

Suppliers said:
"Being able to meet so many potential buyers all in one place was particularly useful. I also got really helpful advice on bidding, and people shared useful contacts."

GLASGOW MEET THE REAL BUYER

15 Exhibitors on the day
Glasgow City Council, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, SDP, City Building, Glasgow Life, Glasgow Caledonian University, Business Gateway, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Scotland Excel, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, Wheatley Group



78% of respondents **rated the event as 'Good' or 'Excellent'**

64% said that they were **more likely to bid** for contracts after attending this event

60% felt **more capable of bidding** for contracts after attending the event

Regional Meet the Buyer Events

Meet the Buyer Dumfries Roadshow 2025

325 Total Registered Suppliers

189 Attendees on the day

78 Unique Scottish SME businesses

"I enjoyed speaking to contractors in much more detail about their current suppliers and how to join their chain"

97% of visitors rated the event **'Excellent' or 'Good'**

85% suppliers felt **more capable of bidding** for contracts after attending

85% of businesses were **more likely to bid for contracts** after attendingt



22 **Exhibitors on the day**
Including Dumfried & Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, Ashleigh Construction, Business Gateway, FSB, hub South West and Morgan Sindall

88% of respondents said they **made good contacts on the day.**

"Meeting buyers who usually don't do face-to-face meetings was particularly useful."

Meet the Buyer Newton Stewart Roadshow 2025

97 Total Registered Suppliers

34 Attendees on the day

18 Unique Scottish SME businesses

"I enjoyed speaking to various well-informed people"

100% of visitors rated the event **'Excellent' or 'Good'**

100% suppliers felt **more capable of bidding** for contracts after attending

100% of businesses were **more likely to bid for contracts** after attendingt

11 **Exhibitors on the day**
Including Dumfried & Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, McTaggart Construction, Social Enterprise Scotland and South of Scotland Enterprise

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY MEET THE BUYER

100% of respondents said they **made good contacts on the day.**

"It was quieter than other Meet the Buyers so provided more of a chance to speak to people"

Regional Meet the Buyer Events

Forth Valley Meet the 'Real' Buyer

464 Total Registered Suppliers

250 Attendees on the day

125 Unique Scottish SME businesses

Suppliers said:
"This was my first time in this type of event, and each exhibitor told me where to go next given the information I had supplied."

14 exhibitors on the day

Clackmannanshire Council, Falkirk Council, Stirling Council, Business Gateway, CITB, FES, Kilmac, McLaughlin & Harvey, NHS Forth Valley, Ogilvie, Robertson Group, Scotland Excel and SPA



94% of respondents **rated the event as 'Good' or 'Excellent'**

81% said that they were **more likely to bid** for contracts after attending this event

79% felt **more capable of bidding** for contracts after attending the event

Fife Meet the Buyer 2025

470 Total Registered Suppliers

273 Attendees on the day

134 Unique Scottish SME businesses

Attendees on the day said:
"The location, venue and information provided was fantastic. I was so impressed, I contacted friends in business and recommended that they popped into the event."



45+ exhibitors on the day

Including Fife Council, Balfour Beatty, Business Gateway Fife, Hub East Central Scotland, NHS Fife, PfH Scotland, Scotland Excel, Scottish Enterprise, SPA, SDP and more...



85% of respondents **rated the event as 'Good' or 'Excellent'**

86.5% of respondents **rated the exhibitors and speakers as 'excellent' or 'good'**

80% felt **more capable of bidding** for contracts after attending the event

Regional Meet the Buyer Events

Ayrshire Meet the Buyer

599 Total Registered Suppliers

290 Attendees on the day

161 Unique Scottish SME businesses

89% of those surveyed rsaid that the event met their expectations

89% **rated the event as 'excellent' or 'good'**

89% rated the exhibitors as 'excellent' or 'good'

"The best part of the event was being able to talk to local stakeholders, businesses, and council representatives to understand how our business can contribute to local initiatives"

27 **Exhibition Stands on the day** including Ashleigh Construction, Ayrshire Housing Association, CEIS, CCS, hub South West, McLaughlin & Harvey, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Ogilvie, Police Scotland, PfH, Scotland Excel, SPA and SPT

"I thought it was very well represented by a large selection of businesses and I was able to reach out to at least a third of the buyers."

Meet the Buyer Tayside 2026

624 Total Registered Suppliers

290 Attendees on the day

130 Unique Scottish SME businesses

Suppliers said:
"There were key clients I wanted to engage with and, after Meet the Buyer Tayside, I have the information I require to work with them."

31 exhibitors on the day

Including Dundee City Council, Angus Council, Perth & Kinross Council, Fife Council, Balfour Beatty, Clark Contracts, Crown Commercial Service (CCS), Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Hillcrest, Scotland Excel.



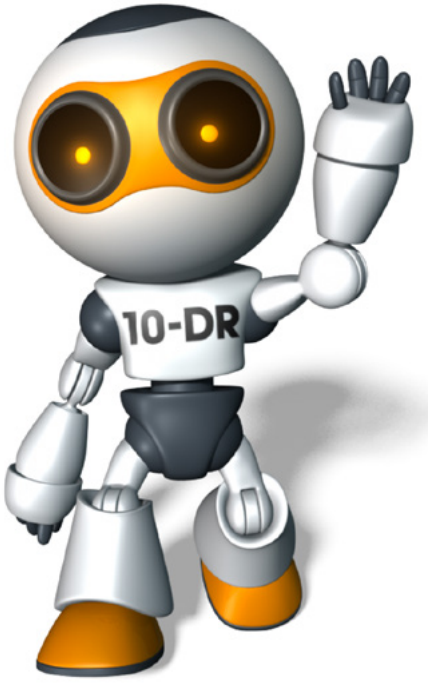
99% of respondents **rated the event as 'Good' or 'Excellent'**

92% felt **more capable of bidding** for contracts after attending the event

90% said that they were **more likely to bid** for contracts after attending this event

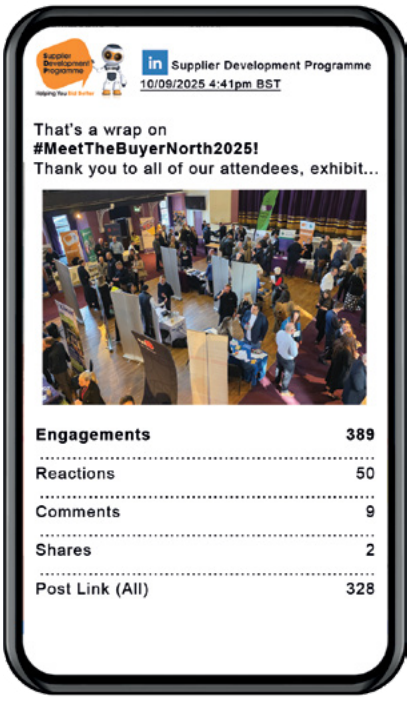
Social Media Analysis

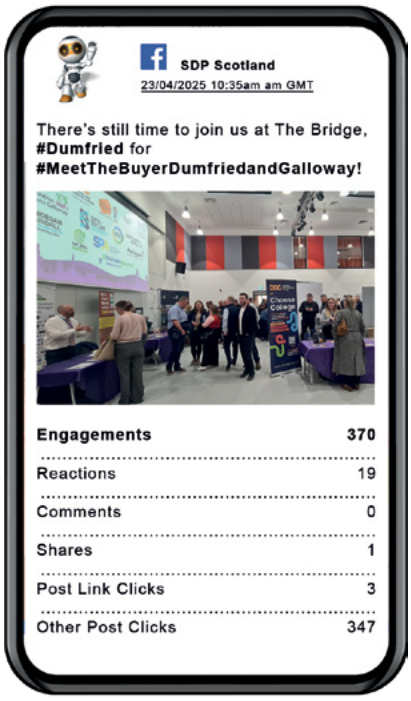
SDP uses social media to share information on upcoming training opportunities, events, market information, media releases, news,contract opportunities and other items of note relating to procurement, Public Contracts Scotland, and SDP Partner organisations.

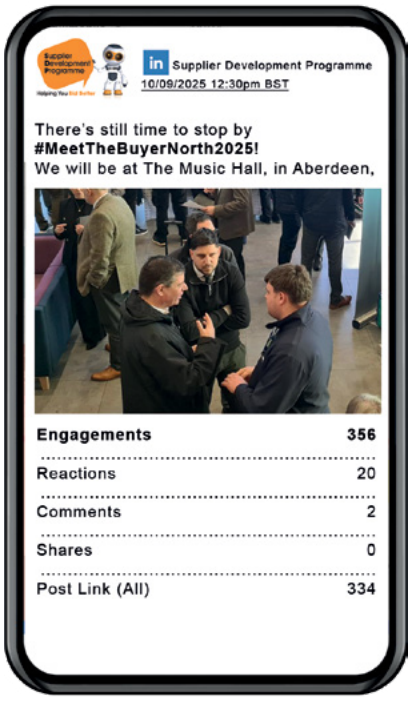


During 2025/2026, SDP encouraged suppliers and partners to utilise hashtags, including:

#HelpingYouBidBetter
#PowerOfSDP
#SupplierOpp
#10DR
#MeetTheBuyer2025
#MeetTheBuyerNorth2025
#MeetTheBuyerSouth2025





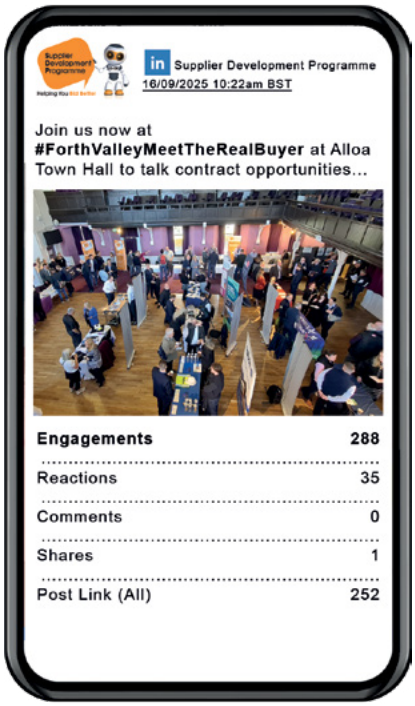


Additionally, to maximise efforts in the public sector to be open and transparent in communications around public sector procurement, SDP utilises a joined-up approach to support the Scottish Government Procurement Communications Strategy with the use of the following hashtags:

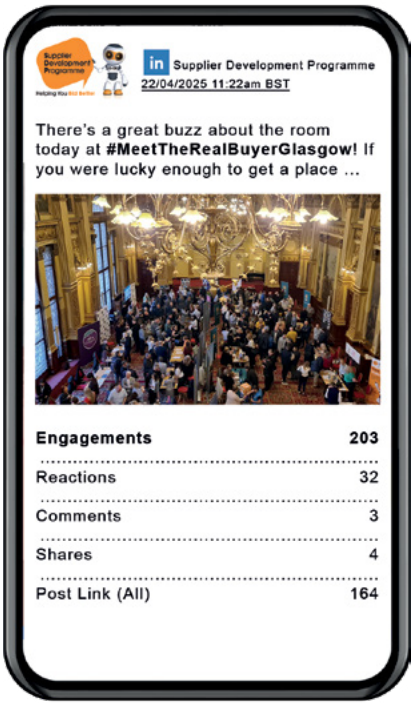
#PowerOfProcurement
#GoodForBusiness

Social Media Analysis

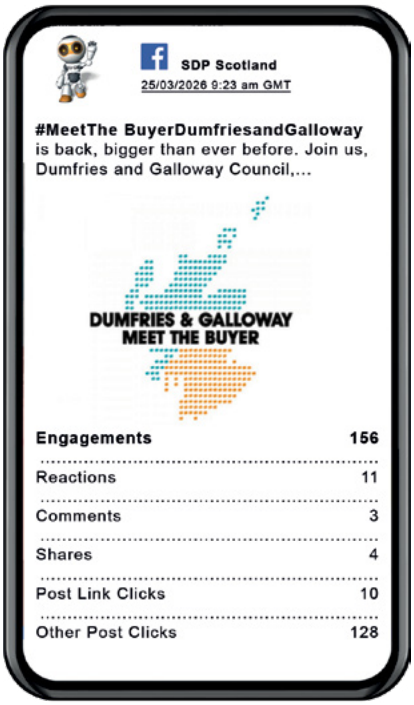












Platform	2024/2025 Follower Count	2025/2026 Follower Count	% Change in Followers
Facebook	910	962	Increased by 5%
LinkedIn	3,771	4,698	Increased by 25%
Twitter (X)	3,355	3,275	Decreased by 2%
YouTube	250	307	Increased by 23%

* Following the rebrand of Twitter to X and changes in the platform's management, SDP has seen a decrease in its followers, this could be due to the platform's decreased resonance among SDP stakeholders.

Supporting Scottish Government Policy and Community Wealth Building

SDP plays a vital role in helping Scottish SMEs understand and engage with Scottish Government policies, including the principles of Community Wealth Building (CWB).

A key pillar of CWB is Progressive Procurement. Throughout the year, SDP delivered a series of events and webinars designed to raise awareness, strengthen local supply chains, and connect businesses with new opportunities. These sessions highlighted the importance of local employment and keeping wealth within communities. Attendees primarily included Scottish SMEs, employee-owned businesses, social enterprises, co-operatives, and community-led organisations.



As the public sector looked to encourage consortium bids, SDP worked with Co-Operative Development Scotland (CDS) to provide training on The Consortium Model of Bidding for Bigger Contracts, helping suppliers consider bidding collectively for larger tenders.

In addition, SDP hosted a variety of webinars and events focusing on Net Zero, green and renewable energies, supporting suppliers to understand how to align their operations and bids with Scotland's climate emergency targets.

By working in partnership with the Scottish Government and our Partner organisations, SDP provides a practical mechanism for delivering these key policies, helping to build stronger, fairer, and more sustainable local economies. Below are the webinars and events that specifically focused on these topics:

- **23 April 2025: Dumfries and Galloway Council Meet the Buyer Roadshow: Dumfries, with exhibitors including Dumfries and Galloway Council Community Benefits and Net Zero Nation.**
- **20 May 2025: NHS National Community Benefit Gateway (NCBG) portal webinar.**
- **28 May 2025: R J McLeod - Mill Rigg Windfarm Contractor Day.**
- **27 May 2025: Renfrewshire Council Cenefits Training.**
- **04 June 2025: Meet the Buyer 2025, with exhibitors including bp Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub, Hydrasun, Bumblebee EV, Carbon-Zero, Flexibility Works, and Veolia.**
- **12 June 2025: 2.5 Responding to Tender Policy Requirements - Power of Procurement.**
- **29 July 2025: Aberdeen City Consortium Creation and Planning.**
- **06 August 2025: Peatland ACTION Proposed Restoration.**
- **19 August 2025: Highland - Battery Energy Storage System – Torvean, Inverness**
- **03 September 2025: 2.5 Responding to Tender Policy Requirements - Power of Procurement.**

Supporting Scottish Government Policy and Community Wealth Building



- 10 September 2025: Meet the Buyer North 2025, with exhibitors including Carbon-Zero and Veolia.
- 17 September 2025: South Lanarkshire Council, Community Benefit supplier meeting.
- 01 October 2025: Energy Supply Chain Drop-in with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Balfour Beatty.
- 08 October 2025: Meet the Buyer South 2025, with exhibitors including ESES Communities (community benefits portal), SP Energy Networks and Vattenfall.
- 29 October 2025: South Lanarkshire Council: Employability Services PSA.
- 04 November 2025: Meet the Contractor: RJ McLeod and Muirhall Energy.
- 06 November 2025: Fife Meet the Buyer, with exhibitors including Centre for Engineering Education and Development, Capital City Partnership, Employability Fife, Fife Council Environmental Service, Forth & Tay Offshore, Scottish Renewables, Skills Development Scotland and Social Enterprise Scotland.
- 18 November 2025: Ayrshire Meet the Buyer, with exhibitors including CEIS (Community Enterprise in Scotland), Fair Work Ayrshire, Living Wage Scotland, Social Enterprise Scotland, South Ayrshire Council Thriving Economy and Your Next Move, Working North Ayrshire.
- 25 November 2025: 2.5 Responding to Tender Policy Requirements - Power of Procurement.
- 26 November 2025: NLC Flexible Framework for Vocational and Skill Based Interventions.
- 12 February 2026: South Lanarkshire Council, Community Benefit supplier meeting.
- 03 March 2026: Meet the Buyer Tayside 2026, with exhibitors including Invest Dundee, Discover Work, Dundee and Angus College Skills Team, Dundee Fair Trade Forum, Invest Dundee, Living Wage Scotland, MVV Environment Baldovie Ltd, and Social Security Scotland.
- 18 March 2026: 2.5 Responding to Tender Policy Requirements - Power of Procurement.

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SupplierDevelopmentProgrammeScotland