



Meet the Buyer North

11 September 2024 – The Music Hall, Aberdeen

www.sdpscotland.co.uk

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Draft 0.2

Supplier Development Programme

Meet the Buyer North 2024

1,040

Suppliers
registered

590

Attended on
the day

364

attendees were
from 271 unique
Scottish SMEs



35 Exhibitors

Including headline partners: Scottish Government, Scotland Excel, and the Commercial and Procurement Shared Services, as well as sponsors NHS National Services Scotland and CITB.

129

of those who attended
Meet the Buyer North
2024 gave feedback

95%

of respondents rated
Meet the Buyer North
2024 as 'Good' or
'Excellent'

95%

felt this event helped to
make useful connections
that could benefit their
business in the future



Suppliers said:

"Fantastic set up and lots of very knowledgeable people to help make the experience very enjoyable and insightful. We've come away from Meet the Buyer North in a stronger position than beforehand for sure."

100%

of exhibitors that
responded rated Meet
the Buyer North 2024
as 'Good' or 'Excellent'

100%

of exhibitors that
responded felt this event
provided an opportunity
to engage with new
suppliers

Exhibitors said:

"From start to finish, it was a great set up. The footfall was fantastic and we got a lot from the attendees we met. All in brilliant event!"

<https://www.sdpscotland.co.uk/events-mtbn-2024/>

Overview

The Supplier Development Programme (SDP) has published an online report on Meet the Buyer North, which took place on 11 September 2024, at The Music Hall in Aberdeen.

Meet the Buyer North 2024 was run by SDP, alongside headline partners Scottish Government, Scotland Excel, and the Commercial and Procurement Shared Services (Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Highland Councils), and sponsored by NHS National Services Scotland and CITB.

This free event gave suppliers in the North of Scotland access to buyers and decision makers from across the public and private sector, helping suppliers raise their profile as a business, and prepare for upcoming contract opportunities.

Supplier Registration and Attendance

In total, 1,040 suppliers pre-registered for the event on the SDP website (a 23.5% increase on last year's event). 590 suppliers were in attendance on the day (an increase of almost 55.3% on last year's event). This included 364 attendees, from 271 unique Scottish SME businesses.

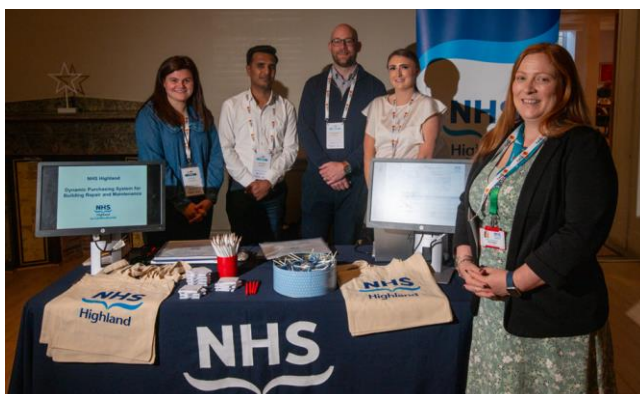
Buyer Exhibitions

The event featured a total of 35 exhibition stands, showcasing opportunities from an array of public and private sector buyers, as well as business support organisations.

Among the exhibitors were headline partners Scottish Government, Scotland Excel, and the Commercial and Procurement Shared Services, and event sponsors included NHS National Services Scotland and CITB.

SDP member organisations Balfour Beatty, Historic Environment Scotland, Moray Council, Police Scotland, RJ McLeod, Robertson Facilities Management, and Scottish Enterprise were present to showcase their commitment to engaging with a diverse range of suppliers.

The event also saw participation from several supply chain contractors, including Acrow Global Limited, AGS Airports, Bam Nuttall, CHAP Group, Clark Contracts, Kier Construction, Ogilvie Construction, Vattenfall, and Wills Bros.



Formal Agenda

Meet the Buyer North had a packed keynote agenda. Speaker sessions included:

- Welcome by the Supplier Development Programme Chair and Aberdeenshire Council, delivered by SDP Chair, Fiona Conti and Councillor Gillian Owen, Aberdeenshire Council.
- Engaging with Public Procurement in Scotland, delivered by Rachael Hughes, Strategic Engagement Team Leader, Scottish Government.
- Working in Partnership with Scotland Excel, delivered by Peter Barnes, Project and Account Manager, Scotland Excel.
- Aberdeenshire Council Session, delivered by Julie Maclean, Procurement Development Officer, Aberdeenshire Council.
- NHS National Services Scotland Session, delivered by Leanne Lyons, National Procurement Planning Manager, NHS National Services Scotland.
- NHS Highland Session, delivered by Becky Myles, Head of Procurement, NHS Highland.
- SDP: Quick Quotes Made Easy Workshop, delivered by Gill Joy, Expert Trainer, Supplier Development Programme.

Each of these sessions were recorded and are available to view on the [Supplier Development Programme YouTube channel](#).



Attendee Survey Feedback

An online survey was distributed to all attendees to Meet the Buyer North through the event app and email. The survey was live 11 September to 2 October 2024. 129 responses were received, and 104 of these came from businesses that listed themselves as an SME or a 'social enterprise, charity or supported business.'

The supplier survey highlighted that:

- Over 95% of survey respondents rated the event as 'excellent' or 'good'.
- Almost 95% of respondents felt Meet the Buyer North 2024 helped them network and make useful connections that could benefit their business.
- 93% of survey respondents said, following the event, they were planning to actively pursue opportunities with one or more of the organisations they met.
- Over 82% of those survey respondents said they were encouraged to consider bidding for more contracts following the event.

Some comments from suppliers included:

- "Excellent event, really well organised with clear and consistent communications. Great mix of exhibitors for our business, but I also thought the exhibitors would have been really good for most types of businesses. Perfect opportunity to make connections you might not be able to make so easily out with this event. Looking forward to future events."
- "I found the speaker programme to be well organised, time managed, informative and the attention to detail (providing audio headphones to provide clear hearing) was excellent. The event was a great opportunity to network. Those who were participating were very helpful. It was good to understand who and what was on hand, how organisations can benefit, and help each other in the process. Excellent all round and good timescales. It was an extremely positive experience and an event worth attending again."
- "Fantastic set up and lots of very knowledgeable people to help make the experience very enjoyable and insightful. We've come away from Meet the Buyer North in a stronger position than we were in beforehand."
- "This event was welcoming, engaging, informative, and inclusive."
- "Attending this event for the first time left me feeling apprehensive, but the experience turned out to be incredibly fulfilling. It was a great opportunity to make valuable contacts."
- "It was very well organised and had a great coffee and sitting area - that's really important. Staff were brilliant and very helpful. It was a great day of networking, and I found it to be overall a very successful day. Parking was a disaster - it was full anything within 15 mins radius."
- "Good range of companies, but it could be improved to meet a wider scope. Venue was okay, perhaps a little small and perhaps not as accessible being located in city centre."
- "The venue was too small, and some exhibitors seemed ill prepared."

Exhibitor Survey Feedback

An online survey was distributed to all exhibitors that attended Meet the Buyer North via email. The survey was live from 11 September to 2 October 2024 and received a total of 13 responses.

The exhibitor survey highlighted that:

- 100% of respondents rated the event as 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 100% of respondents felt this event provided an opportunity to engage with new suppliers.
- Almost 93% of respondents felt Meet the Buyer North 2024 helped make their supply chain more open and transparent.
- 100% of respondents felt this event helped make public contracts more accessible to SMEs.
- 100% of respondents said they would participate in future Meet the Buyer events.

Some comments from exhibitors included:

- "I found the event really worthwhile and was really surprised by the high turnout and interest. I liked the speed networking nature, as it allowed us to talk to so many different companies. The main benefit was the opportunity to find out what companies are out there, what they do and establish contacts for future discussions. Given the struggles we have faced in getting suppliers, it was reassuring to see so many companies in attendance."
- "We had a great experience; it was a well organised event. Our set up was smooth, and the SDP staff were all very helpful and friendly. As always, it was great to chat and engage with SMEs from different sectors to talk about how our procurement function operates. A busy day as always - thank you!"
- "From start to finish it was a great set up. The footfall was fantastic, and we got a lot from the attendees we met. All in a brilliant event!"



Additional Feedback

The Supplier Development Programme received additional feedback following the event via email.

Councillor Gillian Owen, Leader of Aberdeenshire Council, said:

"I was delighted to speak at and attend this year's Meet the Buyer North event. In a word, it was "brilliant". It was fantastic to see so many local businesses at this event, providing a real boost to the local economy by connecting buyers and suppliers, providing even the smallest of companies with the ability to find out about future opportunities, to help them grow their businesses."

Fiona Conti, Strategic Procurement Manager at the Commercial and Procurement Shared Services, said:

"We were delighted to have hosted Meet the Buyer North in Aberdeen once again. and to have attracted 51% more attendees than last year. This emphasises the importance of this event for suppliers, but also for us as buyers looking to procure a wide range of goods, services and works. This event really does help to facilitate the connection of local businesses and the councils, as well as other public sector buyers and a range of contractors that are keen to engage local businesses in their supply chain."

Rachael Hughes, Communications and Strategic Engagement Team Leader, said:

"This was the first Meet the Buyer that I participated in as part of my role as Communications and Strategic Engagement Team Leader at the Scottish Governments Procurement and Property Directorate. The Scottish Government's Small Medium Enterprise (SME) and Third Sector Procurement Action Plan outlines a commitment to fostering growth and support for SMEs and third sector organisations and this type of event is the perfect vehicle to foster that growth and support, and alongside working with the Supplier Development Programme we see these types of events as critical to delivering our action plan."

All feedback has been addressed and will be taken on board for future events.



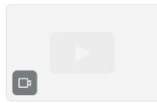
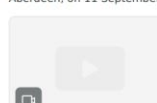




Promotion through the Supplier Development Programme

Social Media

Prior to the event, SDP published 105 posts, across Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter (X), promoting Meet the Buyer North. The campaign ran from 21 June to 11 September 2024. Collectively, the posts earned 23,498 impressions (the number of times users saw a post) and 1,564 engagements (the number of times users interacted with posts). In total, there were 1,012 clicks on the links embedded in these posts.

Highest performing posts include:

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Supplier Development Programme Wed 9/11/2024 5:45 pm...</p> <p>That's a wrap on #MeetTheBuyerNorth2024! Thank you to all of the...</p>  | <p>SDP Scotland Wed 9/11/2024 5:49 pm...</p> <p>That's a wrap on #MeetTheBuyerNorth2024! Thank you to all of the...</p>  | <p>Supplier Development Programme Tue 9/10/2024 12:45 pm...</p> <p>Meet the speakers presenting at #MeetTheBuyerNorth2024! We are delighted to have an...</p>  | <p>Supplier Development Programme Fri 8/9/2024 10:15 am BST</p> <p>#MeetTheBuyerNorth2024 is returning to The Music Hall, Aberdeen, on 11 September,...</p>  | <p>Supplier Development Programme Thu 8/22/2024 4:00 pm...</p> <p>Exhibitor Announcement: Bam Nuttall is exhibiting at #MeetTheBuyerNorth2024!...</p>  | <p>Supplier Development Programme Sun 9/1/2024 4:44 pm BST</p> <p>Exhibitor Announcement: Balfour Beatty plc Construction and Power tea...</p>  |
| Total Engagements 755 | Total Engagements 54 | Total Engagements 53 | Total Engagements 52 | Total Engagements 46 | Total Engagements 34 |
| Reactions 66 | Reactions 11 | Reactions 8 | Reactions 15 | Reactions 11 | Reactions 10 |
| Comments 7 | Comments 1 | Comments 0 | Comments 0 | Comments 0 | Comments 0 |
| Shares 1 | Shares 2 | Shares 3 | Shares 7 | Shares 2 | Shares 6 |
| Post Clicks (All) 681 | Post Link Clicks — | Post Clicks (All) 42 | Post Clicks (All) 30 | Post Clicks (All) 33 | Post Clicks (All) 18 |
| Other Post Clicks 40 | | | | | |

Newsletters/Mailings

The Meet the Buyer North event was announced in SDP's 2024, monthly newsletter, and featured in all subsequent newsletters before the event, on 11 September.

- July 2024: 232 clicks
- August 2024: 241 clicks
- September 2024: 2472 clicks

3 mailings were also sent to segmented groups of relevant suppliers registered with SDP, as part of the Meet the Buyer North email campaign. In total, these mailings received 1,480 clicks.

Contact

More information on the Supplier Development Programme can be found at www.sdpScotland.co.uk

You can also follow the Supplier Development Programme on social media via [Twitter \(X\)](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#) to stay up-to-date with