

DRAFT



NHS GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE

HEALTH ANCHORS LEARNING NETWORK

PILOT

DIVERSIFYING THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Interim review and progress report
December 2022

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1. Introduction and background

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) successfully applied to the Health Anchors Learning Network in late 2021 to test new approaches to diversifying the Board's supply chain. The Supplier Development Programme (SDP) was engaged as a key delivery partner in recognition of its leading Scottish wide role as a experts in supporting SMEs and social enterprise better connect to public sector procurement opportunities.

The immediate trigger for the pilot was identification in the NHSGGC Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) report (July 2021) of the need to strengthen an inclusive organisational culture through improved procurement practice. The subsequent TIDE 'roadmap' details the procurement actions required to make a long-term strategic change to become more inclusive. This informed the pilot project plan, and its overall aims to reach businesses owned and led by people from diverse backgrounds and increase diversity within the supply chain.

NHS Lanarkshire recognised similar issues, and joined the wider initiative through a similar but bespoke approach. Though 2 separate projects, there are significant similarities and a recognition that some joint activities and shared learning is appropriate. This also enables a further regional dimension to the work, as the 2 Health Boards combined cover the recognised Glasgow City Region area.

2. Overall Outcomes

From May to December 2022, SDP provided 6 supplier engagement and tender training webinars to 136 attendees from 127 unique Scottish businesses. In total, 282 bookings were taken through the SDP website in advance of these webinars which demonstrates overall awareness of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and SDP.

In total, 87 Scottish SMEs that registered and attended SDP events as part of this project identified as being 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics. This means that overall, 64% of all unique Scottish SMEs that attended the six supplier engagement and training events identified as being 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics, and therefore did increase NHSGGC's diversification goals.

Of those that responded to surveys, 81% of all Scottish SMEs said they were more likely to bid for future public contracts as a direct result of participating in SDP events with NHSGGC. Additionally, 86% were more positive about potentially working with the NHS and 82% thought their business could benefit from this specific project to diversify the NHS supply chain. Finally, after participating in SDP events with NHSGGC, 97% of Scottish SMEs felt the wider Scottish public sector is willing and

able to do business with organisations like theirs, and 100% of Scottish SMEs recommended SDP supplier engagement and training events to other businesses.

3. Initial pilot work

Initial pilot activity focused on two pieces of research.

Benchmarking current NHSGGC procurement spend to provide baseline data via the Scottish Procurement Information Hub. This tool filtered and presented data on suppliers by size of organisation, geography, and other domains that may indicate any information on the current diversity profile of suppliers. This information was presented at the supplier events.

Work with a range of partners/networks across Glasgow to improve our understanding of the potential 'diversity' supplier base in the city – the existing and emerging businesses we wish to further connect with and support to advance our procurement diversity aspirations. This identified businesses led by people from BAME communities, women, and people with disabilities. This involved secondary research with organisations such as: Glasgow City Council's economic development service; Business Gateway; specific ethnic minority and women into business initiatives/networks; Glasgow Chamber of Commerce; the Scottish Federation of Small Businesses; social enterprise networks; the Scottish Union of Supported Employment; and our key delivery partner the SDP. This increased intelligence on future supplier opportunities, and build ongoing communication networks to advance shared partner objectives.

4. Core pilot activities to date and participant feedback

To facilitate the project, SDP created a project plan with a series of proposed webinar events, and marketing materials – including press releases, key marketing messages, feedback surveys and social media promotions. In addition, dedicated pages were created on the [SDP website](#) to host information about the [NHSGGC project](#).

Data Analysis

SDP undertook research at the start of the project with NHSGGC using its Trade Spend data for the year 2020/2021. SDP was able to use this data to provide the project with a benchmark for those suppliers that are delivering for NHSGGC health board and are registered with SDP within the six Greater Glasgow & Clyde local authorities. In total, 271 of the 658 companies (41%) who currently deliver for NHSGGC are registered with SDP after the trade spend data had been crossmatched with SDP's supplier database.

Before the project began, SDP had an existing business data collection system in place to facilitate tender training and supplier engagement events. To gather a better understanding of participating organisations as part of this project, establish data baselines and measure data outcomes, at the outset of the project, SDP also designed and implemented an equalities data strategy to allow businesses to disclose information about the ownership and/or leadership of each business. This included optional account registration questions being added to the SDP website for businesses to ask: is the business 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics which included businesses owned or led by black, Asian, or minority ethnic (BAME), owned or led by people with a disability, owned or led by women, and owned or led by individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+).

Market Research and SDP Member Organisation Engagement

All 32 local authorities in Scotland (as well as a number of other public bodies) are members of SDP.

SDP leveraged its network of procurement and economic development colleagues at the eight local authority councils in the Glasgow City Region to support research into the marketplace. A number of pre-meetings were undertaken to connect with recognised social/minority organisations and networks to inform them about the NHSGGC project, and the up-and-coming engagement event where they could participate in a question-and-answer session to discuss the opportunity to work together and gather stakeholder views and opinions about tendering with the NHS.

SDP sent out a dedicated mailing (14/4/2022) to 126 partner organisations, which had been collated by SDP, inviting them to attend the "[Diversifying the NHS Greater Glasgow and NHS Lanarkshire Supply Chain Partner Engagement Event](#)". The link to a news article launched the project received 21 clicks and the link to the event page received 67 clicks.

SDP also created a free promotional toolkit to help these organisation publicise the project and future webinar events to businesses and social enterprises within their established networks. This also included an opportunity for free publicity of each organisation, with a link to websites and logos on SDP's NHS Support Wall.

[The NHS Support Wall](#) contains recognised organisations that are committed to working in partnership to engage and encourage wider diversity in suppliers to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Lanarkshire, to connect to free tendering support available in Scotland through the Supplier Development Programme.

NHSGGC Staff Engagement

In order to ensure there was awareness and understanding of the project, the first event organised as part of this project, was aimed at staff working in the procurement/ commissioning side of NHSGGC. The webinar was held on 6 April 2022. Prior to the event, 22 individuals registered on the SDP website to attend. On the day, 19 staff members from NHSGGC attended.

It was important to evidence that there was senior commitment to the pilot's work. Consequently, Chris Sanderson, Head of Procurement set the scene on why NHSGGC were undertaking the project, and how procurement could benefit NHSGGC with local community wealth building and the diversification of their supply chain

This online webinar-based session provided NHSGGC staff with an overview of the project, examples of supplier engagement and aligned tender training work that SDP had delivered for local authorities, and helped them gain an understanding of what NHSGGC can do to increase the potential for SMEs, social enterprises, and supported businesses to bid for and identify upcoming contracts suitable to advancing a more diverse supplier base.

The session sought to:

- Understand categories of contracts where there was a lack of suppliers registering interest in the contracts and/or bidding.
- Identify where buyers could not easily identify or find suppliers to invite to quick quote opportunities.
- Highlight common mistakes suppliers were making in their bid responses and look at the reasons for this.
- Identify up and coming contract opportunities.

Discussions then looked at potential improvements in these areas. Key options emerging included:

- Supplier engagement process: SDP suggested early awareness and utilising the SDP to connect out to the marketplace to engage potential suppliers, and target relevant businesses for up-and-coming contracts. In addition, raising awareness through appropriate network and trade organisations to cascade potential opportunities to their audiences.
- Tender process: procurement to consider the wording of questions and guidance to ensure these are "supplier friendly" and that there is a clarity on the tender requirements.

- Supplier training: identifying areas of weakness/regular mistakes from past supplier bids. This would help SDP ensure that these issues are covered in their general training courses, and to consider SDP delivering aligned training as an early intervention to bidders to improve the bid quality and potential submission rate. This in turn would reduce the time of buyers in evaluating poor quality bids.

A bespoke survey feedback form was designed for these events. This sought to gather responses related to their tender knowledge, the potential benefits this project could bring for both SMEs and NHSGGC, and to discuss any barriers that may make it difficult for organisations to bid for and identify contracts as part of NHSGGC's supply chain. Key messages from the survey were:

- In total, 5 responses were received from NHSGGC staff after attending the webinar.
- 60% of those staff were aware of SDP and its programme of expert training, support, and information for Scottish SME/supported businesses.
- 100% would recommend this type of event to businesses wanting to become part of NHSGGC's supply chain.

Findings in qualitative feedback included:

- "Smaller businesses and some third sector organisations probably don't have the same resources, time, or expertise as larger organisations to develop and submit tender responses. In addition, smaller businesses may miss out on QQ (Quick Quote) opportunities because they are not on our radar and therefore are not invited to bid."
- "Hopefully we will identify barriers and have the ability to make some changes which will make the process more accessible to SME's, third sector, supported businesses etc."
- "SDP provides a platform and link to support/engage SME for preparation for future opportunities."
- "Hopefully this pilot will encourage more local suppliers to bid for contracts across GG&C. We cover such a large geographical area we don't wish local suppliers to feel they don't have a chance or opportunity to work with us. If suppliers don't understand any of our paperwork, they can ask questions over the Q&A portal on PCS. We are trying to make bidding as easy as possible for suppliers, but if there is something that is stopping them from bidding from our side, they need to make us aware of it to see if we can change/amend this."

Partner/Stakeholder Event

A Partner and Stakeholder Engagement event was organised on 6 May 2022 prior to the initial supplier events. This joint event with NHS Lanarkshire was aimed at engaging organisations who could help both NHSGGC and NHS Lanarkshire progress towards putting diversity at the core of their supply chains, inviting them to promote the project to established networks of local businesses.

Both NHS Health Boards and SDP presented at this event, which was followed by a Q&A discussion session on identifying businesses that may be interested in participating in the pilot project.

Prior to the event, 37 bookings were registered on the SDP website and on the day, there were 26 attendees. These included: BASE, CRER, CVS Inverclyde, East Dunbartonshire Council, EDVA, Fair Trade Scotland, Federation of Small Businesses, GCVS, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Glasgow City Council, Govan Community Project, Govan Community Project t/a Voiceover Interpreting, H Clarke & Sons Limited T/A HCS Mechanical Services, Helping You Thrive Consulting Limited, Pathway Scotland, Smart Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd, Social Enterprise Scotland, Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire, Workplace Team, Health Promotion Service, and Fife Health and Social Care Partnership.

Out of those who attended this event and answered the equalities questions upon registration, 46% of them said their business was 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics which included businesses owned or led by black, Asian, or minority ethnic (BAME), owned or led by people with a disability, owned or led by women, and owned or led by individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+).

Feedback was received a total of 5 responses from those organisations attending the event:

- 80% of those respondents were aware of SDP and its programme of expert training, support and information for Scottish SME/supported businesses.
- All of those organisations who provided feedback said they would promote the planned future SDP events related to diversifying the NHS supply chain to businesses - utilising methods such as Newsletters, Social Media accounts, Organisation websites, and word of mouth.
- 60% also said that they knew of local businesses that would benefit from this project through engagement with SDP.
- All the respondents said that they have identified potential barriers that make it difficult – including those with protected characteristics – to bid for and identify public sector contracts. The three most common identified were: they do not have the staff expertise to bid; they do not have the staff capacity to bid; and that the tendering process is too complex.

Further qualitative feedback included:

- “As the local TSI, we are in a good place to both encourage organisations to participate and to demonstrate the benefits of participation in the Programme.”
- “Supporting local economy, create local employment opportunities, improve links and relationships between NHS and communities, and support social enterprise.”
- “Understanding of the tendering process particularly responding to technical questions in tender documentation which could improve the wider engagement of businesses in relation to this project.”

Supplier Engagement:

Diversifying the NHS Supply Chain: Supplier Engagement Event – 26 May

The next stage of the project involved directly developing supplier engagement with NHSGGC. The first of these was a ‘Talking Tenders’ with NHSGGC: Supplier Engagement Event’. Micro, small and medium sized businesses that may be owned or led by women, minority, disabled and LGBTQ+ individuals were particularly encouraged to attend this online, webinar-based event.

This event was held on 26 May 2022. Prior to the event, there were 117 bookings. On the day there were 67 attendees, including 52 individuals representing 52 unique Scottish SME/supported businesses.

Out of those who attended and answered the equalities questions upon registration, 42% of them said their business was 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics which included businesses owned or led by black, Asian, or minority ethnic (BAME), owned or led by people with a disability, owned or led by women, and owned or led by individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+).

A bespoke feedback form was also created for the supplier side events aiming to gain insight into supplier’s tendering experience – particularly with the NHS – as well as self-evaluating their confidence about tendering, and what benefits this project could have for their businesses. Key findings included:

- 20 responses were received from Scottish SMEs after attending this webinar.
- 90% of those respondents were more likely to bid for public sector contracts after participating in this event.
- 65% also agreed that they now felt more confident their tender will be stronger than it would have been without this event.
- 90% agreed that they felt more positive about working with the NHS.
- 85% of respondents felt that their business could benefit from this specific project to diversify the NHS supply chain as well.

- All of those who responded would recommend this type of SDP event to other businesses.
- 90% of those who provided feedback after attending said that they plan to attend/participate in future SDP training and events – specifically those related to diversifying the NHS supply chain.

In terms of tendering experience – particularly with the NHS – event feedback highlighted that:

- Over half (55%) of Scottish SME/supported business who responded had little or no experience of public sector tendering – particularly with the NHS tender process.
- 25% had some experience and have tendered regularly for services and frameworks.
- The remaining 20% of respondents had substantial or were very experienced in public sector tendering.
- 2 respondents (10%) added that they are currently providing services to the NHS.

Comments from Scottish SMEs highlighted the positive impact the event had for those who attended:

- “This was very informative and to be able to ask the Head of Procurement direct questions online was extremely helpful.”
- “I feel better equipped to seek tender opportunities within NHS.”
- “This webinar gave me a lot of background information and I now understand the health board's tendering/procurement process much better.”

Diversifying the NHS Supply Chain: Supplier Engagement Event at Meet the Buyer 2022 – 15 June

Organised by SDP, the Meet the Buyer 2022: Live Virtual Event took place on 15 June 2022. The Scottish Government and Scotland Excel were official partners of this event.

Meet the Buyer 2022 allowed suppliers to engage with virtual exhibitors from the public sector, private contractors, and business support providers. For the second year in a row, Meet the Buyer was scheduled in an alternative format, as a virtual event, to support efforts towards economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and allowed suppliers to connect with the public and private sectors from the comfort of their own screen.

The free virtual event affords suppliers unprecedented access to buyers and decision makers from across the Public and Private sector, with the opportunity to raise their profile as a business and prepare for upcoming contract opportunities.

Suppliers were encouraged to sign up to register interest in the overall event through a widespread promotional campaign in partnership with SDP's membership organisations and valued partners. Pre-event communications related to diversifying the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde & NHS Lanarkshire supply chain, Net Zero, Community Wealth Building and was promoted by Public Contracts Scotland to registered suppliers on PCS at SDP's request. SDP also promoted the event through a small paid social media campaign aimed at SME business owners through Facebook and Twitter.

Several polls ran during the event's live sessions, asking if suppliers were more likely to bid for more public sector contracts after attending the session, and 100% said they were more likely to bid for public sector contracts after attending the Working with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde session – this session attracted 100 attendees, 89 of which were suppliers.

Talking Tenders with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde: Pest Control Services – 20 July

The first bespoke, aligned tender training event was held on 20 July 2022 with NHSGGC and focused on the upcoming contract opportunity for the delivery of Pest Control Services throughout the Health Board. The contract required a supplier to deliver a variety of services including pro-active, re-active and ad-hoc services for NHSGGC. At the event, representatives from NHSGGC were in attendance to provide more information about the contract with one of SDP's expert trainers also showing how to access and respond to the tender documents on the PCS and PCS-Tender portals.

Prior to the event, there were 15 bookings registered on the SDP website. On the day, nine attendees from 8 unique businesses were in attendance. Out of those attendees, 7 were from 6 unique Scottish SME businesses who were based in Glasgow City Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Midlothian Council, and Perth & Kinross Council.

Out of those Scottish SME businesses who attended and answered the equalities questions upon registration for this training event, a third (33%) said their business was 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics – which included businesses owned or led by people with a disability, owned or led by women, and owned or led by individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+).

Post-event feedback received a total of two responses from those organisations who attended the event – both of which were from Scottish SME businesses:

- Both respondents rated the 'Course Content' and 'SDP's expert trainer' for the event as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'.
- Both respondents also said that this training event had made them more likely to bid for this specific contract.
- In addition, both of those businesses who provided feedback agreed that they felt much more confident that their tender will be stronger than it would have been without having participated in this event – with one of those respondents adding that "I will now tender for this specific tendering opportunity" – Medium-sized business based in Perth & Kinross.
- Finally, one piece of feedback that highlighted the positive impact SDP's supplier engagement is having for this project was that having participated in this event, both respondents felt their business could benefit from this specific project to diversify the NHS supply chains.

Talking Tenders with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde: Ground Maintenance and Winter Services – 15 September

NHSGGC required a sole supplier to provide Ground Maintenance and Winter Services, which included litter picking, grass cutting, garden areas, hedge trimming, jet washing, gritting and snow removal services. The supplier was required to provide all labour, machinery and vehicles for all seasonal work at sites which are not maintained by in-house staff. This contract will be in place 365 days per year, 24 hours a day, as and when required. SDP organised a webinar on 15 September 2022.

Prior to the event, there were 15 bookings registered on the SDP website. On the day, 4 attendees from 4 unique businesses were in attendance. Of these, there were 2 attendees from 2 Scottish SME businesses based in Dundee City Council and West Lothian Council.

Out of those Scottish SME businesses that attended and answered the equalities questions upon registration for this training event, 100% said their business was 50% or more owned or led by individuals with one or more protected characteristics – which included businesses owned or led by people with a disability, owned or led by women, and owned or led by individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+).

Post-event feedback received just one response from those organisations that attended the event – a sole trader who had no previous experience with tendering:

- 100% rated the 'Course Content' and 'SDP's expert trainer' for the event as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

- 0% said that this training event had made them more likely to bid for this specific contract, adding, "If there were opportunities for smaller business to tender for public sector opportunities, I would be interested in hearing about them."
- 100% agreed that they felt much more confident that their tender will be stronger than it would have been without having participated in this event – adding, "I would like information on how I as a small business can collaborate with bigger companies to bid for work. For my sector in asbestos consultancy, most public sector bodies require surveying companies to have UKAS accreditation. For me, this is a huge expense and not absolutely required but majority of public sector companies require it as mandatory."

Talking Tenders with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde: Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Services – 11 October

NHSGGC has a population of 1.2m people, and it provides services for people with neurological conditions, including multiple sclerosis (MS), from the Institute of Neurological Sciences (INS). The Institute is a world-recognised specialist centre for Neurology, Neurosurgery, Spinal Injuries and Neurorehabilitation Medicine.

Its neurological services are provided predominantly to the populations of:

- NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
- NHS Highland – Argyll & Bute HSCP
- NHS Lanarkshire

INS also provides a range of regional and national services to wider populations of up to 5.3m people.

There are over 11,000 people in Scotland who are living with MS, many of whose needs are not purely clinical in nature. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde has therefore funded various specialist support services for people affected by MS for several years. NHSGGC wished to commission a robust set of services to provide support and care to people with MS and their families/carers which aligns to the aims and strategies of both NHS Scotland and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde in particular.

Prior to the event, there were 28 bookings registered on the SDP website. On the day, 14 attendees from 9 unique businesses were in attendance. Of these, there were 8 attendees from 8 Scottish SME businesses: 5 SMEs were based in Glasgow City Council, 2 SMEs were based in North Lanarkshire Council, and 1 SME was based in South Lanarkshire Council.

Out of those Scottish SME businesses that attended and answered the equalities questions upon registration for this training event, 38% said their business was 50% or more owned or led by individuals with one or more protected characteristics – which included businesses owned or led by people with a disability, owned or led by women, and owned or led by individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+).

Post-event feedback received a total of four responses from those organisations that attended the event – three of which were from Scottish SME businesses, and two of those were new suppliers that had no previous experience with tendering:

- 100% rated the 'Course Content' and 'SDP's expert trainer' for the event as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'.
- 67% said that this training event had made them more likely to bid for this specific contract, with the one that responded 'no' adding, "I was joining in with a view to see how the tender process works, I won't be tendering just yet."
- 100% agreed that they felt much more confident that their tender will be stronger than it would have been without having participated in this event – with the micro SME based in South Lanarkshire Council adding, "Thanks for making the whole process more accessible," and the sole trader from North Lanarkshire Council stating, "I feel empowered to tender."

Talking Tenders with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde: 1.2 Using Public Contract Scotland Tender (PCS-Tender) - MS Services Supplier Aligned Training – 23 November

Following on from the supplier engagement event in October, SDP organised aligned training for NHSGGC on 23 November 2022, to help suppliers understand how to bid for the MS Services contract using Public Contracts Scotland Tender (PCS-T). SDP's expert trainer gave a live step-by-step demonstration, including how to find the contract advert and access the live tender documents. The trainer also provided hints and tips on how to potentially improve bid writing skills to achieve a better score. Finally, suppliers learned how to ask questions to the buyer using the portal's Q&A functionality.

Prior to the event, there were 18 bookings registered on the SDP website. On the day, 11 attendees from 10 unique businesses were in attendance. Of these, there were 10 attendees from 9 Scottish SME businesses: 2 SMEs were based in Glasgow City Council, 2 SMEs were based in North Lanarkshire Council, 2 SMEs were based in Inverclyde Council, 1 SME was based in South Lanarkshire Council, 1 SME was based in West Dunbartonshire Council, and 1 SME was based in Renfrewshire Council.

Out of those Scottish SME businesses that attended and answered the equalities questions upon registration for this training event, **78% said their business was 50% or more owned or led by individuals with one or more protected characteristics** – which included businesses owned or led by people with a disability, owned or led by women, and owned or led by individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+).

Post-event feedback received a total of five responses from those organisations that attended the event – four of which were from Scottish SME businesses, and all of those were new suppliers that had little to no previous experience with tendering:

- 100% rated the 'Course Content' and 'SDP's expert trainer' for the event as 'Excellent'.
- 50% said that this training event had made them more likely to bid for this specific contract, with the one that responded 'neutral' adding, "I still want to have a look at the first webinar and join it with the today's so that I can gain enough confidence. I am starting my recruitment agency and with a considerable amount of help like this, I can grow fast. I would like to find out how I can get some quick quotes from my local authority to learn the ropes before I can take on big contracts like the NHS ones."
- 67% agreed that they felt much more confident that their tender will be stronger than it would have been without having participated in this event – with one supplier comment, "The most useful part was the step-by-step guide of how to complete the tender, plus the excellent nuggets that the presenter shared!"

Wider NHS Awareness – P4H Scotland 2022, 25th April 2022, EICC Edinburgh

Officially supported by National Services Scotland, National Procurement (NSS NP), P4H Scotland, provides a unique platform for both buyers and suppliers to engage across a range of interactive and educational features. These are designed to enhance collaboration, in support of driving greater efficiencies and savings across Scotland's NHS

Around 700 delegates attended the event at which SDP had an exhibition stand and had many discussions with buyers from the Scottish NHS about the project. This sparked interest from other NHS organisations who were keen to follow the progress of the project, and consider a similar approach for their own organisations.

NHSGGC and SDP delivered a joint presentation highlighting the 'Diversifying the Supply Chain' project. Over 60 attendees attended and it was followed with a Q&A session.

The next supplier activity was incorporated into SDP's national 'Meet the Buyer 2022' event on 15 June 2022. The event was a virtual session entitled 'Diversifying the NHS Supply Chain: Working with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde' and incorporated a presentation from Chris Sanderson, Head of Procurement at NHSGGC followed by a live Q&A session.

100 people attended the NHSGGC session. 89 were suppliers, with 57 attendees from 52 unique Scottish SME/supported businesses.

Of those who attended and answered the equalities questions upon registration for this session, 31% of them said their business was 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics which included businesses owned or led by black, Asian, or minority ethnic (BAME), owned or led by people with a disability, owned or led by women, and owned or led by individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+).

Throughout the session, a live poll ran asking if the session had encouraged them to bid for more public sector contracts – in total 14 votes were received, and 100% of those said they were encouraged to bid for more public sector contracts after participating in this session. Additionally, 37 comments and questions were also asked during this session at Meet the Buyer.

Social Media Analytics

The Supplier Development Programme has a robust social media presence on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#) and utilises this to promote contract opportunities and engagement events on a regular basis to Scottish businesses. During the Diversifying the NHS Supply Chain project to date, SDP has promoted every event.

SDP, NHSGGC and NHS Lanarkshire attended the P4H Scotland event to announce the project. Collectively, the posts received 3,930 impressions and 117 engagements. After this event, SDP ran a campaign promoting all NHS events from 3 May to present. Collectively, the posts earned 8,467 impressions, 259 engagements, and 1269 video views.

In addition, on 14 April, SDP sent out a mailing to partner organisations inviting them to attend the Diversifying the NHS Greater Glasgow and NHS Lanarkshire Supply Chain Partner Engagement Event. The event page received 67 clicks.

NHSGGC's 'Talking Tenders' event was featured in SDP's May newsletter. The event received 62 clicks. On 17 May, SDP sent out a dedicated mailing to the NHS events. From this mailing the NHSGGC events page received 101 clicks, and the SDP's working with the NHS page received 6 clicks.

5. Final observations

The pilot project had a number of key elements, and though some learning can be seen, longer-term impacts cannot be assessed at this stage. Nonetheless, some observations include:

- SDP's existence as the lead strategic partner for Scotland's public sector in supplier engagement provided a solid foundation to NHSGGC to launch this pilot project.
- The pilot project progressed and delivered as planned, data was captured independently and robustly by SDP, and learning was reported on an on-going basis through a partner steering group which met monthly.
- Participant numbers across all the events held were encouraging – confirming the need and demand for a project of this nature. This was greatly assisted by the buy in of all partners in enthusiastically promoting the pilot, and assisting in the identification of targeted businesses that could benefit from the support.
- Ongoing and wide-ranging social media reach also assisted awareness and involvement.
- In addition to overall numbers, metrics also indicate significant connections were made to businesses with protected characteristics, and to many businesses with no or very limited experience of public sector tendering, or health sector tenders.
- Qualitative feedback on all events was very good and highlighted significant learning, growing participant awareness, and increasing intentions to become a part of the NHSGGC supply chain in future.
- The pilot developed new and deeper networks and partnerships. The core relationship between NHSGGC and the SDP worked extremely well – utilising respective strengths and intelligence, and growing understandings.
- The links with the sister pilot in NHS Lanarkshire were positive, including shared events where applicable. This added the potential to add a further regional dimension to pilot learning.

But within these overall positive reflections is also the recognition that it is early days in assessing the impact the pilot can make in addressing the challenges identified in the NHSGGC report. Good foundations and new connections are being made, but it will be some time before progress can be robustly evidenced in terms of longer-term impacts.

Further observations include:

- As timelines for contracts are so long, further data analysis would be required to align SDP's supplier engagement data with Open Data on PCS, to evidence correlation with Contract Award Notices.

- Participant numbers increased when the aligned contract opportunity was thoughtfully planned to encourage SME bids by NHSGGC in conjunction with SDP; for example:
 - numbers for a sole supplier to provide Ground Maintenance and Winter Services for all labour, machinery and vehicles for all seasonal work at multiple sites attracted just 2 unique Scottish SMEs at SDP tender training, while later,
 - SDP's aligned model for supplier engagement event first followed by an aligned tender training session for NHSGGC's contract aimed at multiple suppliers to provide services for MS, attracted 17 unique Scottish SMEs collectively at both events.
- Registration by suppliers was highest when the NHSGGC communications team supported SDP's communications on social media and within the media, which suggests that this area could be expanded upon more strategically in the future between the two organisations. Additional capacity is also recommended to support partner organisations in promoting supplier engagement events in the future to Scottish SMEs with targeted demographics.
- Further work is recommended to be taken forward by SDP to further drill down into supplier data to delineate between supplier attitudes and outcomes from businesses owned or led by people with protected characteristics, to further evidence the diversification of Scotland's public sector supply base.

6. Next steps

The next steps of the pilot have commenced. These will focus on specifically identified tender areas. 2 further 'Talking Tenders' webinars focused on the upcoming Pest Control Services contract and the Electrical and planning contract have recently been held. Subsequent service specific supplier events are scheduled in September and October 2022, respectively discussing Ground Maintenance and Winter Services and an HIV/HCV Tender contract. These will enable the tracking of more specific pilot impacts in terms of tenders subsequently submitted, and potential contract awards to participating companies.

SDP will continue to work with NHSGGC with regard to their forward procurement plans, and support further supplier engagement and contract awareness sessions. An end pilot review report will be prepared on the conclusion of all activities in December 2022.

Full SDP Data Outcomes

Supplier Engagement & Tender Training Bookings and Attendance

All supplier engagement and tender training webinars were entitled "Talking Tenders with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde" and had sub-headings related to each specific event.

2022	Bookings	Attendees	Scottish SME Attendees	Scottish SME Unique Businesses
26 May	117	67	52	50
15 June	89	89	57	52
20 July	15	9	7	6
15 September	15	4	2	2
11 October	28	14	9	8
23 November	18	11	10	9
Total	282	194	136	127

Business Equalities Monitoring

Before the project began, SDP had an existing business data collection system in place to facilitate tender training and supplier engagement events. To gather a better understanding of participating organisations as part of this project, and establish data baselines and measure data outcomes, SDP designed and implemented an equalities data strategy to allow businesses to optionally disclose information about the self-defined ownership and/or leadership of each business.

This included optional account registration questions being added to the SDP website for businesses to ask: is the business 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics which included businesses owned or led by black, Asian, or minority ethnic (BAME), owned or led by people with a disability, owned or led by women, and owned or led by individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ+).

Keeping in mind that these questions were asked as individuals (not unique businesses) and some suppliers answered "Yes," in more than one area, the project outcomes data shows:

Scottish SME Supplier Responses	50% or more BAME owned or led?	50% or more Woman owned or led?	50% or more Disabled owned or led?	50% or more LGBTQ+ owned or led?
Yes	16	54	14	3

No	88	52	86	74
Unknown	11	8	11	31
Prefer Not to Say	21	22	25	28
Total	136	136	136	136
Scottish SMEs with 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics				
% of total unique Scottish SMEs	12%	40%	10%	2%

In total, 87 Scottish SMEs that registered and attended SDP events as part of this project identified as being 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics. This means that overall, 64% of all unique Scottish SMEs that attended the six supplier engagement and training events identified as being 50% or more owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics, and therefore did increase NHSGGC's diversification goals.

Supplier Bidding Experience and Attitudes

Of those that responded to surveys, 81% of Scottish SMEs said they were more likely to bid for future public contracts as a direct result of participating in SDP events with NHSGGC.

2022	Scottish SME Unique Businesses	50% or more Scottish SMEs owned or led by individuals with protected characteristics	All Scottish SMEs with little to no experience tendering with the NHS	All Scottish SMEs more likely to bid NHSGGC/SDP event
26 May	50	46%	60%	90%
15 June	52	39%	67%	83%
20 July	6	33%	50%	100%
15 September	2	100%	100%	0%
11 October	8	38%	50%	50%
23 November	9	78%	100%	50%
Overall	136	64%	62%	81%

Other data outcomes regarding Scottish SME behaviour, attitudes and information after events had concluded, included:

Outcome	% of Scottish SMEs Respondents
Booking Process 'Excellent' or 'Good'	100%

Webinar Process 'Excellent' or 'Good'	97%
SDP Trainer 'Excellent' or 'Good'	95%
SDP Course/Event Content	92%
Not Aware of SDP Prior to NHS Event	41%
Feel More Positive About Potentially Working with NHS	86%
Would recommend this type of SDP supplier engagement/training event to other businesses	100%
Feel their business could benefit from this specific project to diversify the supply chain of the NHS	82%
Feel the Scottish public sector is willing and able to do business with organisations like theirs	97%
After attending, couldn't identify any further barriers to bidding for public sector contracts	58%

After attending these project events, 58% of respondents from Scottish SMEs said they couldn't identify any further barriers to bidding for public sector contracts.

Of the remaining 14 businesses that still could identify further barriers to bid for public sector contracts, Scottish SMEs could choose one or more barriers still existed:

- 50% said they don't know where to look for public sector contract opportunities
- 57% said the tendering process is too complex
- 14% said they do not have the staff capacity to bid
- 14% said they do not have the staff expertise to bid
- 14% said required insurance levels are too high

Some further qualitative comments from Scottish SME suppliers included:

- "SMEs need more help like these in order to grow fast and assist in the recovery of the economy."
- "I will look forward to attending more events."
- "Keep up the good work... I have enjoyed your events!"
- "Thank you for organising. These are somewhat useful."

Further Information

Further information on the Supplier Development Programme can be found by visiting www.sdpscotland.co.uk.