

A greener place to live, work and visit Man gwyrddach i fyw, gweithio ac ymweld



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This guide aims to assist potential suppliers and contractors to understand how Caerphilly Council currently buys goods, services and works and help them to increase their chances of finding out about opportunities and bidding for work.

The guide has been developed in collaboration with Cardiff, Torfaen and Rhondda Cynon Taf Councils and they will be publishing similar guides during 2013/14. This guide will be updated as and when required to ensure that it remains in line with corporate governance and EU Procurement Regulations to reflect changes that take place.

This publication is available in Welsh, other languages or formats on request.

Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg ac mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais.

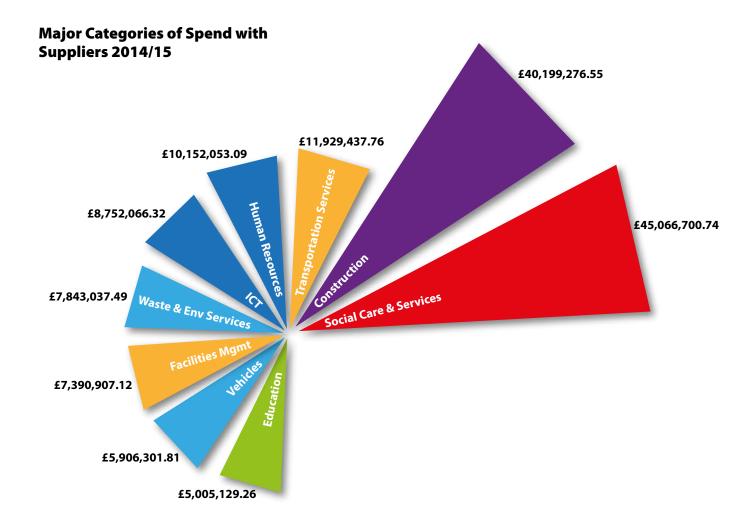
## How is Procurement organised?

Each year Caerphilly County Borough Council spends circa £180 million on goods, works and services.

This spend must be managed efficiently and effectively and it is the responsibility of the Corporate Procurement Team and other responsible Service Officers to manage the Council's procurement activities.

In 2008, the Council implemented a procurement management structure based on the principles of Category Management.

This is simply a way of managing buying activity by grouping together related products and services across the entire Council, so as to achieve better value for money.



We strongly advise suppliers to register on both Proactis Portal and Sell2Wales to access opportunities

## Where can I find out about contract opportunities?

Caerphilly County Borough Council publishes contract opportunities in two ways.

**Sell2Wales** is the National Procurement website for Wales. This site includes all widely advertised contract opportunities valued below and above the EU thresholds. Sell2Wales has a direct link to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) where contracts above the EU thresholds must be published.

The **Proactis Portal** (part of the Council's eProcurement system) is where tender opportunities are advertised to suppliers/contractors who have previously expressed an interest in doing business with the Council by registering on the Council's Supplier Directory.

The Council encourages suppliers to register on Proactis and Sell2Wales. Both systems are free to use and allow suppliers to receive automated tender notifications by email, view opportunities via the Bulletin/Notice Boards, update and maintain their profile, receive instructions on how to access tender documents and view details of awarded contracts.

To access Sell2Wales & Proactis Portals, please click on the icons below:



**N.B.** It is important to only register against the categories that are relevant to the goods/services/ works you supply. This will ensure that you only receive notifications about contract opportunities relevant to your field of work.

Assistance and support is available from a number of organisations; for further information please see the 'Further Support' section at the end of this guide.

In addition to the above, Caerphilly County
Borough Council publishes a Tender Opportunities
document, which provides a current list of tendering
opportunities for period contracts. This document
details the name of the contract, the expiry date and
whether there is an option to extend the contract.
If you are interested in submitting a tender for any
of the contracts listed, we advise that you contact
us 6 months before the expiry date, to register your
interest in tendering.

The Tender Opportunities document can be accessed via the procurement pages on the Council's website or by clicking on the link below.

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/pdf/Business/tenderopps.pdf

# What rules, regulations & procurement procedures does the Council follow?

The way in which the Council purchases goods, services and works is governed by European Union (EU) and UK law and by the Council's own internal Standing Orders for Contracts (SOC), which is supported by the Procurement Code of Practice.

Caerphilly County Borough Council has a legal requirement to comply with EU Procurement Directives, which govern the way in which public sector procurement is conducted for contracts over the thresholds set out below.

Goods	Services	Works
£164,176	£164,176	£4,104,394
€209,000	€209,000	€5,225,000

Fig 2:

EU Thresholds (values effective from 1st January 2016 for two years). For the current OJEC EU Thresholds click www.ojec.com/threshold.aspx

The purpose of the EU Directives is to encourage open and transparent competition which is delivered through competitive tendering throughout the European Union. All public sector procurement, including below EU thresholds, must abide by the EU Treaty Principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, mutual recognition, proportionality and transparency.

Prior to tendering new contract arrangements the Council will identify whether the need can be met through an existing contract or framework arrangement.

If the need cannot be met through an existing contract or framework agreement, a Request for Quotation (RFQ) or Tender process will be carried out depending on the value of the contract, as set out in the following section.



### **Request for Quote (RFQ) and Tender Processes**

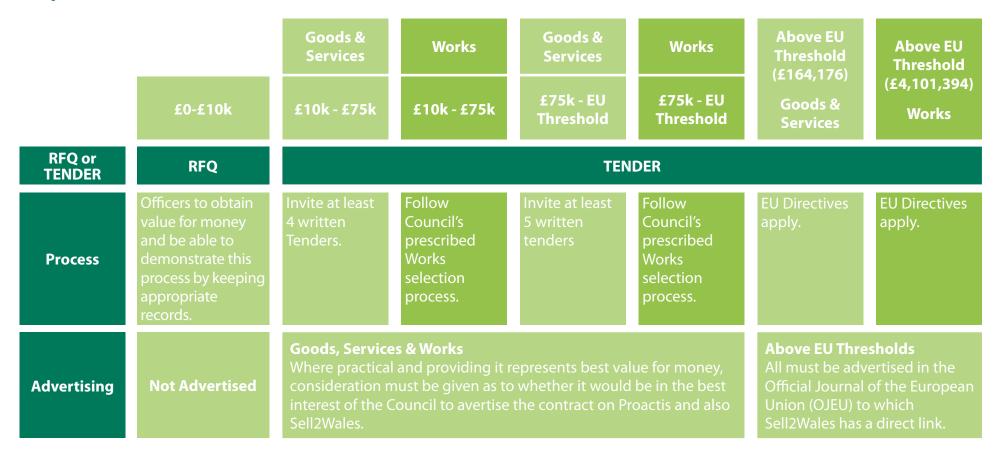


Fig 3: Procurement Processes

EU procurement processes must follow **minimum timescales** as set out in the EU Procurement Directives; these vary according to the procurement process chosen and whether a Prior Information Notice (PIN) was issued. The actual timescales will also vary according to the scale and complexity of the procurement.

### eProcurement / eTendering

The use of electronic procurement and trading is a UK wide government aspiration aimed at reducing costs and improving efficiency in the purchaseto-pay (P2P) cycle and procurement processes of public sector organisations. Over the last 10 years, Caerphilly has made significant advances in the use of eProcurement, employing Proactis eProcurement solutions to enable departments to order electronically and process related invoices electronically with minimal manual intervention. The Council is keen to develop its electronic Procurement capability and has adopted the Welsh Government's eCommerce Marketplace and Portal. This enables suppliers to receive orders electronically and 'flip' orders directly into invoices, which are returned to the Proactis P2P system for payment.

The Council also uses electronic tendering to increase process efficiency. Invitations to tender are issued via the Proactis Portal, and registered suppliers receive email notification indicating that an advert has been placed on the notice board for an opportunity that has arisen against the category codes used as part of the registration process. The tender process is then completed electronically through the Proactis Portal.

A guide has been produced to assist suppliers when submitting a tender via the Proactis Portal, please follow the link below for further information.

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/pdf/Business/proactis\_plaza\_e\_tendering.pdf

## How are suppliers selected for business opportunities?

Although the exact process followed for selecting and appointing suppliers will depend on the value of the goods, services or works being procured (see page 4 – RFQ and Tender Process for information) it will essentially contain the following steps, which are explained in more detail below.



#### 1) Notify Suppliers about RFQ or Tender Opportunities

Depending on the requirement the Council can notify suppliers about RFQ or Tender Opportunities in one of three ways:

Officers will:-

Consult the Supplier Directory on Proactis
 Portal and based on classification – Common
 Procurement Vocabulary code (CPV), select
 appropriate suppliers to invite to quote or tender
 in accordance with the minimum number required,
 as set out in the Council's Standing Orders for
 Contracts (shown in the table on page 4),

or

- Place an advert on Proactis Portal notice board and/or Sell2Wales. Any registered supplier can view and the advert will provide instructions to suppliers on how to obtain the tender documents and submit a response.
- For construction related requirements, where there is no contract arrangement in place and the lifetime cost is estimated to be greater than £10k (but less that the EU threshold level), use the Council's prescribed Works selection process. This process ensures that in addition to previously successful contractors (who have performed to a satisfactory standard), a random selection method offers tender opportunities to suitably accredited suppliers who have registered on the Council's Supplier Directory via the Proactis Portal. In this respect to be eligible for Works related opportunities below the EU Threshold, suppliers must be Constructionline registered and Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) accredited. (A link to the Constructionline and SSIP websites has been provided at the end of this document).

Contracts advertised on Sell2Wales that are above the EU thresholds will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

For contracts valued below £10,000, officers are encouraged to use suppliers who are already active in the Council's Purchase to Pay system.



#### 2) Selection of suitable and qualified suppliers

The Council must ensure that suppliers are suitable and are qualified to deliver the specified requirements against an agreed contract.

In order to assess the supplier's suitability, the Council will either:

- Issue a Pre-Oualification Ouestionnaire.
- Use selection questions as part of the tender process.

To ensure the Council does this in a way that is consistent and proportionate to the value, risk and complexity of the contract, the Council has adopted the Welsh Government's Supplier Qualification Information Database (SQuID). This provides a standard set of questions and guidance in respect of the application and use for the following areas:-

- **Supplier Acceptability:** discretionary grounds for excluding a bidder on the basis of offences such as conspiracy, corruption, fraud, bribery, bankruptcy and insolvency.
- Economic / Financial Standing: in some cases, potential suppliers may need to be registered with Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) and/or provide a minimum of 2 years audited accounts. This will depend on the type of requirement being tendered.
- Insurances: potential suppliers may be asked to provide evidence of minimum levels of Employer's & Public Liability & Professional Indemnity.
- Technical Competencies and Qualifications: provide evidence of contract specific competencies or qualifications e.g. Gas Safe.

- Capacity and Capability: detail about previous experience & contracts delivered.
- Management: information on quality-assurance techniques & performance review.
- **Equal Opportunities:** confirm suppliers' commitment to equal opportunities.
- Sustainability: confirm suppliers' commitment to economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- Health & Safety: the extent of the assessment
  will be appropriate to the nature of the contract,
  depending on the goods, services or works
  provided. Where the Council identifies that Health
  and Safety must be assessed, contractors must be
  accredited by a Safety Schemes in Procurement
  member before any contract is awarded. Other
  appropriate assessment criteria relating to
  asbestos and sub-contracting may also apply.

For further information on becoming Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) accredited, please visit: www.ssipportal.org.uk/Home/Login.aspx



#### 3) Submission of Quotation or Tender response and Evaluation

Dependent on the value of the contract, selected suppliers will either be issued with a Request for Quotation (RFQ) or an Invitation to Tender (ITT).

**Request for Quote** – is a much simpler process compared to a tender. At present, quotes will typically be requested by email and suppliers may receive all or some of the following:

- · Instructions for submitting the quote.
- Specification of Requirements (on which suppliers must base their quote).
- Method Statements (questions asking how the requirements will be delivered).
- Evaluation criteria & scoring methodology (if there is an element of quality that must also be assessed).

Suppliers will usually be required to return the quote by email.



**Tender Opportunity** – this is a much more comprehensive process. Where an opportunity is advertised suppliers must express an interest via the Proactis Portal or Sell2Wales system. Once an expression of interest has been made suppliers will be able to access the opportunity and begin completing a response via the system. The tender opportunity typically consists of the following:

- Instructions to Tenderers / Bidders.
- · Specification of Requirements.
- Method Statements (questions asking how the requirements will be delivered).
- Evaluation criteria & scoring methodology.
- · Pricing schedule.
- Contract Terms and Conditions (Ts&Cs).
- Form of Tender.
- Tender Return Instructions

At the tender/award stage, the Council will evaluate the supplier's proposal of how they intend to deliver the specified requirements and at what cost. This differs to the selection stage which qualifies the supplier based on capability and capacity derived from past experience.

Tender responses will either be assessed on a pass/fail basis or scored. Everything a tenderer needs to know about how they will be evaluated will be clearly stated in the tender opportunity.

Tender evaluation will be based on one of the following:

1. Price and Quality, this is used for the majority (if not all) services and works. This process is known as the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) with weightings assigned, for example, 40% price and 60% quality.

#### 2. Price only (lowest cost)

In order to assess the quality criteria, suppliers will be asked to submit a written tender response. Where appropriate they may also be invited to an interview and/or presentation.

#### 4) Contract Award

**Request for Quote** – typically the supplier who submitted the lowest price will be awarded the contract. However, if there is a quality element as part of the evaluation, then the supplier who submitted the lowest quote may not necessarily be the one who wins the contract.

**Tenders** – for those evaluated on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT), the contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose overall score is the highest. For those based on price only, the supplier who submitted the lowest price will be awarded the contract.



### **Community Benefits**

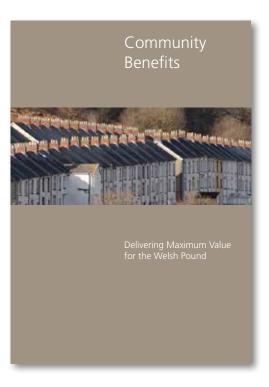
Where appropriate, the Council aims to include community benefits in its procurement activities to ensure that wider social and economic issues are addressed. We aim to encourage suppliers and contractors to consider ways in which they can add value to contract arrangements, for example:

- Targeted Recruitment & Training (TR&T) e.g.
   Provide training and employment opportunities to economically inactive persons.
- Supply Chain Initiatives e.g. Engage with local businesses, Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs) and the Third Sector through 'Meet the Buyer' events to increase subcontracting opportunities.
- Education Initiatives e.g. Work with local schools and communities to help unemployed young persons gain experience through apprenticeships or voluntary work.
- Community Initiatives e.g. Contribute to existing Community Schemes / Funds.
- Environment Initiatives e.g. Reduce waste to landfill.

As part of the response to ITT (Invitation to Tender) suppliers will be asked to submit a Community Benefits Plan or Method Statement setting out how they will deliver community benefits throughout the duration of the contract.

N.B. Community benefits can only be evaluated and scored (i.e. make up part of the award criteria) if they are core to the contract activity. Community benefits that are non-core to the contract activity will not form part of the evaluation; however they will be contractually binding.





## Why do we use framework agreements?

Framework agreements set out the broad terms and conditions for which the buying organization will purchase goods, services or works from those suppliers in the future. Framework agreements can have single supplier or multiple suppliers and can last up to 4 years.

Where appropriate, the Council will establish a framework agreement for categories of common spend, where goods, services or works are bought on a recurring basis. They are also used where a need has been identified to make repeated purchases over a period of time but exactly what the quantities will be or precisely when the need will arise is unknown at the outset.

Before going out for quotations or tender, the Council will first establish whether there is an existing framework in place which can meet the requirements. This will also include a consideration of frameworks let by collaborative purchasing organizations such as the Welsh Purchasing Consortium, Value Wales and other national collaborative groups such as the Government Procurement Service.

The following types of frameworks are available:

- Caerphilly Council Local Frameworks, e.g. CCTV.
- Regional Frameworks, e.g. South East Wales Framework for Construction and Works to Schools and Public Building (SEWSCAP).
- Sector Specific: Welsh Purchasing Consortium (WPC), e.g. groceries.

- National Frameworks (Wales): Welsh Government / Value Wales, e.g. stationery.
- Other National Frameworks, e.g. Government Procurement Service (GPS), Eastern Shires Purchasing Consortium (ESPO), North East Purchasing.

Caerphilly County Borough Council also uses County Borough Supplies (CBS), a collaborative undertaking supported by a number of neighboring Local Authorities, based in Bridgend for the supply of schools related and other products e.g. Stationery

N.B. The existence of a framework agreement does not commit purchasers to any purchases. If suppliers have been accepted onto the framework there is no guarantee that they will be used.



### **Consortia and Collaborative** bids

Caerphilly County Borough Council encourages suppliers and contractors to submit consortia or collaborative bids for Council work, particularly for larger value or complex contracts. Consortia bids may help to increase the chance of winning work and in particular benefit SMEs and the Third Sector who may not have the skills or capacity to submit bids for larger contracts alone.

The Council acknowledges the challenge consortia or collaborative bidding creates at the early stage of a tender process. in order to allow time to prepare consortia or collaborative submissions the Council will aim to provide sufficient information to suppliers prior to the tender process commencing. As well as working collaboratively or through consortia we encourage SMEs and the Third Sector to seek subcontracting opportunities and build relationships with main contractors.

Main contractors can help make supply chain opportunities visible by advertising on Sell2Wales or through Meet the Buyer events. Assistance and support is available from a number of organisations. For further information please see section 'Further Support' on page 12.

See attached link to the Joint Bidding Guide recently launched by Welsh Government to assist Welsh Businesses to form consortia to bid for public sector contracts.

www.wales.gov.uk/docs/dpsp/publications/valuewales/131016bidding\_guidefull.pdf

## Can tendering organisations receive debriefing (feedback)?

Caerphilly CBC aims to offer feedback to successful and unsuccessful tenderers to help them improve for future opportunities.

Where appropriate, debriefing is given in writing as part of the letter that informs the tenderer that they were unsuccessful (known as a regret letter). Further information may be provided via telephone or face to face as long as the debriefing request is submitted in writing.

## How does the Council pay its suppliers?

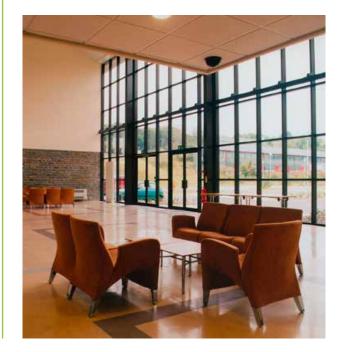
Payment terms will be set out in the contract documents. However the Council aims to pay suppliers within 10 working days of correct invoices being received anywhere within the Council.

To ensure prompt payment of invoices all suppliers are required to submit invoices that contain a valid Purchase Order (PO) number. Invoices should also be addressed to the correct billing address, which is provided on the official purchase order. Suppliers who do not submit an invoice with a valid Purchase Order number may experience a delay in receiving payment. Therefore, we encourage suppliers to insist on receiving a valid purchase order from the person within the Council who is placing the order.

## **Contract Monitoring** and Management

Suppliers and contractors will be expected to meet their obligations to provide the goods, services or works in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract documentation and demonstrate value for money. They will be expected to maintain and/or provide evidence such as on-going insurances, DBS's (Disclosure and Barring Service), and other relevant accreditation certificates. The Council will strive to ensure that there is a good open and constructive working relationship with its suppliers and contractors, which will help to identify and resolve any problems at the earliest possible opportunity. The Council also actively encourages providers to improve and develop the contract for mutual benefit.





### **Tendering Do's & Don'ts**

Do	Do Not
Check the deadline time and date for return of tenders. Ensure you put enough time aside to complete the documentation.	Do not return your tender after the closing date or time as late tenders will not be considered unless in exceptional circumstances.
Make sure you follow the tender instructions carefully when returning your completed tender to the Council	Do not do anything other than the stated instructions of the tender.
Ensure you answer all the questions in full as set, giving details of the specified requirements and providing evidence as indicated in the guidance.	Do not assume that just because you have worked with an organisation before they will fill in any gaps in your tender.
Ask for clarification if you are unsure on any part of the specification or have general queries in relation to tender documents, including contract terms and conditions. Queries must be submitted via the Proactis Portal for all Electronic Tenders.	Don't 'make up' the questions so you can include what you want in your response; we can only evaluate information that we have asked for.
Respond promptly to any requests for further information from the Council.	Don't be put off by the documents, seek support, e.g. from Supplier Relationship Officer or Business Wales Tender Advisors.
Make sure you allow sufficient time to upload all the required documentation as the Proactis system will not allow you to upload any documents once the deadline has expired.	Don't submit prices which are so low that if awarded the contract you can't actually supply the goods/services at that price to the quality specified.
	The Council has the right not to accept any tender which we think will be unviable.

### **Further Support**

The Council employs a dedicated Supplier Relationship Officer and encourages SMEs and Third Sector Organisations to discuss particular development requirements and collaborative working opportunities. To discuss further please contact:

Natasha Ford - Supplier Relationship Officer Tel: 01443 863075

Email: fordn@caerphilly.gov.uk

Caerphilly County Borough Council Procurement Clinic - Does (our) IT frustrate you?: in order to continue supporting our local supply chain, the procurement team host a series of one-to-one procurement sessions for our local suppliers to attend and gain advice and guidance on aspects of procurement.

Topics for discussion include:-

- eTendering.
- elnvoicing.
- xchangewales contract catalogue maintenance.
- Registration on Systems e.g. Proactis Supplier Directory, xchangewales, Sell2Wales.
- Accessing Contract Opportunities with CCBC.

Sessions are held fortnightly on a Wednesday between 1pm - 5pm. Suppliers are required to contact Procurement Services - Supplier Relationship Officer in advance to arrange an appointment, each session will last approximately 45 minutes.

**Business Wales** is a new service run by the Welsh Government that provides businesses of all sizes and from the private, public and third sectors with information, guidance, support and one to one mentoring. The service can be accessed by phone, online and through a network of eleven one stop shops located around Wales.

Business Wales also offers contract and tender support specifically for SMEs via 'Business Wales - Tendering'. Prior to January 2013, similar support was given via the Supplier Development Service (SDS), however the SDS is no longer in existence. Tender advisors (formerly known as Supplier Development Champions) are based throughout Wales and work with SMEs and the Third Sector to develop their capacity, run workshops and help complete tender documents. For further information on 'Business Wales - Tendering' please see the 'Growing a Business' section on the Business Wales Website. (The weblink and contact details for tender advisors can be found at the end of this guide).

**Meet the Buyer Events** are run by the Council and Business Wales to provide suppliers with information on contract opportunities and the tender process.

They can also provide an opportunity for suppliers to meet with main contractors to find out about potential supply chain/sub-contracting opportunities.

**The Wales Co-operative Centre** has a specialist team that can help organisations develop consortiums in order to bid in collaboration with other organisations. The team can provide support on how to structure your consortium, and can provide advice on governance and legal issues that might affect you.

Contact details for the above organisations can be found at the end of this guide.

Please note that the information provided in this document is intended to be a guide only. For full requirements that the Council must adhere to when purchasing goods, services or works, please refer to the Council's Standing Orders for Contracts available on the website.

### **Contacting Us**

This guide aims to help provide organisations who want to work with Caerphilly Council with a clearer understanding of how to bid for work and what may be asked of them as a supplier or contractor.

If you would like to contact us with feedback on suggested improvements to the guide or you have any queries about dealing with Caerphilly Council on contracting issues then you can contact us on procurement@caerphilly.gov.uk





#### **Useful Contacts**

#### **Caerphilly CBC Procurement**

Tel: 01443 863161

Email: procurement@caerphilly.gov.uk

www.caerphilly.gov.uk

#### **Caerphilly CBC Supplier Relationship Officer**

Contact: Natasha Ford Tel: 01443 863075

Email: fordn@caerphilly.gov.uk

### Help & Support with eTender and Supplier Directory

Contact: Caerphilly CBC Proactis Helpdesk

Tel: 01443 863161

Email: procurement@caerphilly.gov.uk

#### Caerphilly Business Enterprise Support Team

Tel: 01443 866222

Email: business@caerphilly.gov.uk

#### **Business Wales**

Tel: 030 0060 3000

www.business.wales.gov.uk

#### **Wales Council for Voluntary Action**

Customer Services Tel: 0800 2888 329

Email: help@wcva.org.uk

#### **Wales Co-operative Centre**

Tel: 0300 111 5050

Email: info@walescooperative.org

wales.coop/

#### **Federation of Small Businesses**

Customer Services Tel: 02920 747 406

Email: wales.policy@fsb.org.uk

#### **Useful Websites**

#### **Caerphilly County Borough Council**

www.caerphilly.gov.uk

#### **Caerphilly Contract Procedure Rules**

www.caerphilly.gov.uk

#### **Proactis Portal**

www.proactisplaza.com/supplierportal

#### Sell2Wales

www.sell2wales.co.uk

#### Constructionline

www.constructionline.co.uk/static

#### SSIP (Health & Safety)

www.ssip.org.uk

#### **Community Benefits**

gov.wales/topics/improvingservices/bettervfm/publications/community-benefits-2014/?lang=en

#### **Tender Electronic Daily (TED)**

www.ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do

#### **Federation of Master Builders**

Wales Office: 01656 750955 Head Office: 020 7242 7583 Join the FMB: 08000 965 765 Email: richardjenkins@fmb.org.uk

www.fmb.org.uk/

#### **South Wales Chamber of Commerce**

Tel: 02920 481532

Email: info@southwaleschamber.co.uk www.southwaleschamber.co.uk

#### Constructionline

Tel: 0844 892 0313

Email: constructionline@capita.co.uk www.constructionline.co.uk/static

#### **Job Centre Plus – Employment**

www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

#### **Working Links**

www.workinglinks.co.uk

#### **National Procurement Service (NPS)**

nps.gov.wales/

#### **EU Legislation / Public Contracts Regulations**

www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/5/contents/made

#### Part A & Part B Services (EU Tender)

www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/5/schedule/3/made

#### **Government Procurement Service (GPS)**

http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/



A greener place to live, work and visit Man gwyrddach i fyw, gweithio ac ymweld

