Understand the Market

Along with Analysing Your Business you need to understand the market(s) you intend to bid in.

Public Contracts Scotland (PCS)

The Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) website, provided by the Scottish Government, is where all Scottish public sector buying organisations must advertise regulated procurements.

Regulated procurements are all contracts valued at £50,000 or above excluding VAT for goods and services and £2 million excluding VAT for works (excluding utilities and concession contracts).

You can browse the following notices on Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) to identify how goods and services have been bought in the past and what current and future opportunities exist:

Prior Information Notice (PIN)	how buyers can advertise that they intend to tender in the future
Contract Notice	how buyers formally advertise a contract opportunity
Contract Award Notice	how buyers formally advertise that a contract has been awarded
Innovation Notices	how buyers can assess what the market can provide, stimulate innovation and procure research and development

How to Search for Notices on PCS

You do not need an account to search for opportunities on PCS.

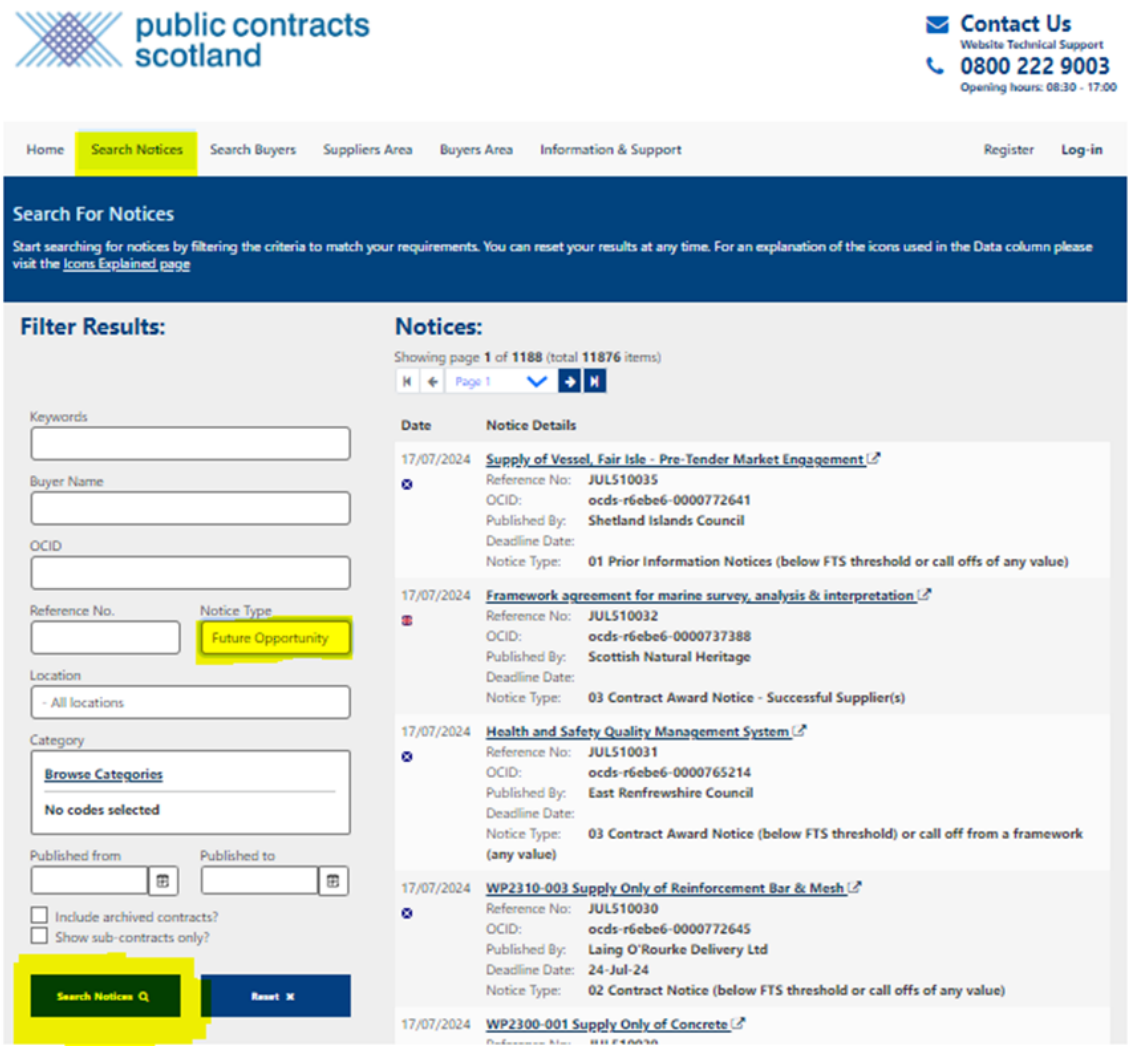
The Search Notices area allows you to search for notices based on the information which buyers provide when they publish a notice. The information provided may differ across public bodies. You should try different combinations of keywords and

filters to find notices that you are interested in.

To search for notices in PCS:

1. go to Search Notices on PCS:

   Image



2. add filters and keywords to refine your search
3. click on the "Search Notice" button.

You can streamline your search using the following filters:

Keywords	keywords that appear in a notice title or the notice details

Buyer Name	notices published by a specific buying organisation. You can also search by buyer organisation, and view more information about buying oganisations, by using the "Search Buyers" tab at the top of the PCS page
OCID Reference	search by Open Contracting ID reference
Reference No.	search by PCS reference number
Notice Type	filter for Current Opportunities, Future Opportunities, Contract Results (also known as Contract Award Notices) and Recent Notices
Location	you will be shown notices that match the location a buyer has selected as the contract delivery location (where the contract will be carried out). buyers can select multiple locations including "All of Scotland". For this reason, you may receive notice search results that have different locations from your search location. You can read the "Notice Details" page on any PCS notice to check its delivery location(s)
Category	categories are based on Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) codes you will be shown notices that match the category selected by the buyer (buyers select the CPV code which they think is the most appropriate to their procurement exercise, but these may not exactly fit with the goods or services you provide) CPV codes are also used to classify notices published in Find a Tender Service (FTS)
Sub-category	filter by sub-category once you have added a category filter
Published from and **Published to**	find notices published between specified dates
Show Sub-Contracts Only	you will only be shown sub-contracting opportunities

How to Register for an Account on PCS

To get the most out of PCS:

- register for a free account
- set up an Alert Profile and
- set up a Supplier Finder Profile.

You will find more guidance on how to do the above (including "How To" videos) in the Supplier Journey pages Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) and PCS-Tender(PCS-T).

Supplier Events

To understand the market you may also attend Supplier Events. For example:

- supplier days for a particular tender
- networking events such as Meet the Buyer
- explore the training and support available from multiple organisations

Supplier Events are often run in collaboration with other business organisations, sector-specific trade bodies and/or business support groups.

As a starting point we recommend that you look up the PCS News and Events page and the Supplier Development Programme (SDP) Events page. SDP provide training and support to Scottish SME or third sector organisations interested in working with the public sector.

Events may also be advertised in local or national press, sector-specific trade bodies, business groups and public sector organisation websites in your local area.

Other Sources of Information

You can also refer to:

- Contract Registers advertised on PCS or other websites e.g. buyer organisation websites
- trade journals/specialist magazines
- market reports and surveys that have been undertaken.

Checklist

Checklist

What Information Should I Source?

Gathering information from different sources will increase your knowledge of buyers and national, sectoral and geographic markets.

Information that will enable you to better identify and target your bids includes:

Information	Information Gathered/Know
Identify who the main buyers are for your commodity or service and where they are based.	
Understand how buyers procure e.g. do they buy their own goods or services? do they buy jointly with other organisations?	
Understand whether the tenders you are interested in are split into lots e.g. to group familiar products or services.	
Become familiar with the information buyers ask for in their tenders for the market you are interested in. This will allow you to prepare better for the next quotation/tender that is advertised.	
Determine whether you have the resources to deliver a large contract to the whole public sector or are you better suited to a local or unique market?	
Could you be a mini contractor or are smaller sub-contracting opportunities better suited for your business?	
Identify who the current supplier(s) are. How long have they been the supplier? This will help increase your market knowledge, including when the contract will be renewed in the future.	
Understand the level of competition you will experience. Which other companies are likely to pitch for this business?	
Information on previous contract awards (which include details of the successful supplier and their bid).	
Investigate what training and other support is available to you. For example register with the Supplier Development Programme if you are an SME and with Scottish Enterprise/Business Gateway etc. Training and networking will improve the skills and knowledge of you staff to aid your bidding.	

Blank rows are provided for your use i.e. to add your own additional checklist items.

Quickfire Guide

Procurement Exercises Outside Scotland

Contracts worth more than the threshold are advertised by Scottish public bodies on PCS. However for the rest of the UK opportunities can be found via a number of methods:

- for regulated procurements the Crown Commercial Service puts in place Framework Agreements that can be used to procure goods and services primarily in England but can be utilised throughout the UK
- the Find a Tender Service lets you search for contracts throughout the UK
- the National Procurement Service for Wales puts in place Framework Agreements that can be used to procure goods and services primarily in Wales but can be utilised throughout the UK
- Sell2Wales for opportunities with public sector bodies in Wales
- eSourcing NI and eTendersNI for opportunities with public sector bodies in Northern Ireland
- TED publishes Europe-wide contract opportunities.