

Government levels playing field for SMEs on Small Business Saturday

This government is intent on giving smaller businesses better access to the £50 billion worth of public contracts, which can include anything from supplying hospital equipment to providing public sector pensions, which are tendered each year.

The guide includes advice on where business owners can look online for Government contract opportunities and also includes tips on how SMEs can make sure they are showcasing their strengths during the bidding process. This will be backed up by online webinar sessions for small businesses.

The guide also gives guidance on how businesses can secure work through supply chains by working with larger companies to help deliver things such as long-running IT or catering projects.

It also goes a step further, advising how the government considers Social Value when choosing suppliers. This will then allow agile, smaller enterprises to highlight the work they do in their communities and ultimately offer them a better chance of winning government contracts.

Cabinet Office Minister Lord Agnew said:

In the most recent figures, SMEs won more than £15 billion in government contracts.

But we want it to be easier for them to work with government and this guide, published in support of Small Business Saturday, will help small businesses navigate what can be a complex world of public procurement.

That's why we're also bringing in sweeping procurement rules changes, to make it easier and more flexible for SMEs to win government work.

The Cabinet Office has previously announced other measures which aim to level the playing field for SMEs in the Transforming Public Procurement green paper. The changes contained in the paper will completely overhaul the current EU rules, removing barriers for smaller suppliers by getting rid of unnecessarily complicated regulations. Bureaucratic rules can put SMEs off bidding for contracts so the new reforms will open the door to public procurement for small and medium-sized companies.

We are simplifying the bidding process to make it easier for SMEs to secure contracts by creating one single central platform which suppliers have to register on, so they only have to submit their data once to qualify for any public sector procurement.

Small Business Crown Representative, Martin Traynor OBE said:

Smaller organisations can offer excellent value for money and a rich source of innovation, as well as a more agile business model than larger suppliers. They play a vital role in helping government to deliver efficient, effective public services that meet the needs of our citizens.

We are fully committed to breaking down barriers for SMEs who want to supply to the Government either directly or in the supply chain. I welcome the publication of this guide as part of the support on offer.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully added:

From the pubs, restaurants and shops that make our high streets tick to personal care services like hairdresser, small businesses are at the heart of our way of life.

I urge everyone to back their local businesses on Small Business Saturday. The Government is leading the way, supporting firms with this new handbook as well as ground-breaking schemes like Help to Grow: Digital which will help businesses to level up with discounted software and free tech support.

As well as the £352 billion in support provided to firms to help them through the pandemic, the government is also helping small businesses to level up through the Help to Grow schemes.

Help to Grow: Digital will provide business leaders with the advice and funding they need to embrace digital technology and help their business grow through discounted software and free advice and support, while Help to Grow: Management offers business leaders management and leadership training. Designed to be manageable alongside full-time work, businesses receive 50 hours of training across 12-weeks as part of the Help to Grow: Management course provided at participating business schools.