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## Introduction

WHO ARE CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL

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## A guide to doing Business with Cumbria County Council

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WHY SUPPLIERS FAIL TO OBTAIN CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL BUSINESS

The purpose of this booklet is to 'ease access' to the purchasing mechanisms of Cumbria County Council, by clarifying the process involved:

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL PURCHASING CONTACT POINTS

It is hoped that, through being better informed, quality suppliers will be faced with the minimum of barriers when offering Value for Money services to the Council.

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The Council's Head of Strategic & Commercial Procurement is:

Alan Ratcliffe  
Client Services  
Barras Lane, Dalston Carlisle.CA5 7NY

Telephone: 01228 607762

Fax: 01228 607745

Email corporate\_procurement@cumbriacc.gov.uk

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## Our Purpose

We will work with, and on behalf of, the people of Cumbria to make sure we provide efficient and effective public services.

Cumbria County Council spends approximately £160m on bought in goods, works and services each year, providing firms of all sizes with a wide range of commercial opportunities

A lack of information about those opportunities and a lack of understanding of the Council's Procedures may well be preventing some suppliers from applying for Council contracts.

This guide aims to help all contractors, consultants and suppliers to tender for contracts let by Cumbria County Council.

The guide explains how to find out about our contracts and explains how to apply for contracts that are advertised, where there are advertised and the documentation is involved.

There is, of course, a great deal of competition for Cumbria County Council contracts and this guide cannot assure individual firms success. However it should provide enough information to give you the opportunity to tender for Council work.

The purchasing activities of each Department are the direct responsibility of budget-holders who carry out those activities with the assistance of Departmental and Corporate Procurement Officers.

We currently have approx 21,000 Trade creditors and 62 percent of our addressable expenditure is within the geographical boundaries of Cumbria.

### Procurement and community benefits:

The County Council is committed to using procurement to contribute to the regeneration of Cumbria. We will do this by ensuring that where practicable the money we spend on procuring goods, works and services benefits the people, communities and economy of the county.

We aim to encourage the county's small and medium enterprises to meet our specifications so they are on an equal par with other traders to conduct business with us.

We cannot guarantee any supplier future business or discriminate in favour of Cumbria businesses during any procurement. However, we would like to break down any barriers that small traders may be experiencing in doing business with us.





## What is the first step to offering my services?

Contractors and suppliers are requested to submit an expression of interest in response to tenders as and when they are advertised.

These expressions can only be accepted when received electronically or hard copy as specified and must include all information requested within the advert.

In order to facilitate "ease of use" each advertised tender will identify the names and telephone numbers of the contact person for further information. You should make use of this if further clarification should be required.

Once your expression of interest has been received you will be sent a [pack of tender documents](#) for completion, ensuring that all relevant documents are enclosed and returned within the timescale stated.

The [tender documents](#) may be structured in to several categories to help us establish a picture of your company and determine its suitability for the contract in question e.g. turnover, financial stability, Number of employees, details of work previously carried out, specialist knowledge, references, insurance cover, quality accreditation Etc, as appropriate to the contract in question.

In some cases we will advertise tenders for specific contracts while in other cases we may operate on a select list basis.

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## Where do we Advertise?

Tender advertisement may be placed in:

- Local Newspapers
- "Local Government Tenders"
- Trade and Professional Journals
- "Contrax Weekly"

Details will also be available at a later date on the Cumbria County Council website under "Business section"

If you are unsure about any aspect of the requirement please use the contact details provided in the advertisement.

If the contract is governed by EU public procurement legislation, which is dependant on value thresholds and certain categories of contracts, an advertisement is also placed in the 'Official Journal of the European Union' (OJEU).

You can subscribe to the following Website for further information regarding OJEU tenders.

[WWW.CLICTSO.COM](http://WWW.CLICTSO.COM)

- International Publications
- Public Procurement Opportunities
- *Scroll Down to E.C Tenders*

If it is considered that wider publication would be cost-effective, advertisements will be placed in other publications as and when necessary.

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## Do I have to complete any Documentation

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The short answer to this is yes, As a public body we are required to provide a high level of

You will be required to complete a Tender Documentation Pack for every tender applied for.

We may offer Tender Documentation Packs in both electronic form and hard copy.

You must provide all the information requested, tailor your reply to your audience and emphasis the experience that is most relevant. The information you provide will form the basis of deciding whether you will go through the next stage.

You will be required to supply supporting evidence where applicable.

We are constantly reviewing our procedures with a view to ensuring that the information we require within our Tender Document Packs is kept to the minimum required to evaluate contractors equitably and fairly when forming a short list of tenderers.

If you are in any doubt about what is needed, ask

Assuming your completed Tender Documentation Pack meets the criteria required by Cumbria County Council you will receive an Invitation to Tender pack consisting of: -

- The specification.
- Preamble and instructions for tendering.
- Conditions of contract.
- Award criteria.
- Tender return label.
- Acknowledgement letter.
- Tendering certificate.
- Any relevant supporting information.

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## Policies and Procedures

We would ask you to pay particular attention to the following policies, which are mentioned in the [Tender Documentation pack](#) and we stress the importance of ensuring you attach evidence to support your policies with your tender.

- Health and Safety Policy.
- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Environmental Policy.
- Quality Control Procedures.

Dependant on the type and/or scale of the work involved you may be required to provide your own policy documentation or to complete a questionnaire provided.

**Health and Safety** - depending upon the nature of the goods or services, organisations may be required to submit a Health and Safety policy signed by a senior person, which refers to Health and Safety legislation.

**Equal Opportunities** Cumbria County Council seeks to create, maintain and promote a working environment and a community where every individual has equitable opportunities to receive quality services regardless of age, association with a national minority colour, disability, family circumstances, hours of work, language, national or social origin, political or other opinion, property, race, religion, sex, or other status as identified within the European Convention of Human Rights. Our aim is to ensure that all organisations and individuals working on behalf of Cumbria County Council are conversant with and subscribe to our equal opportunities strategy.

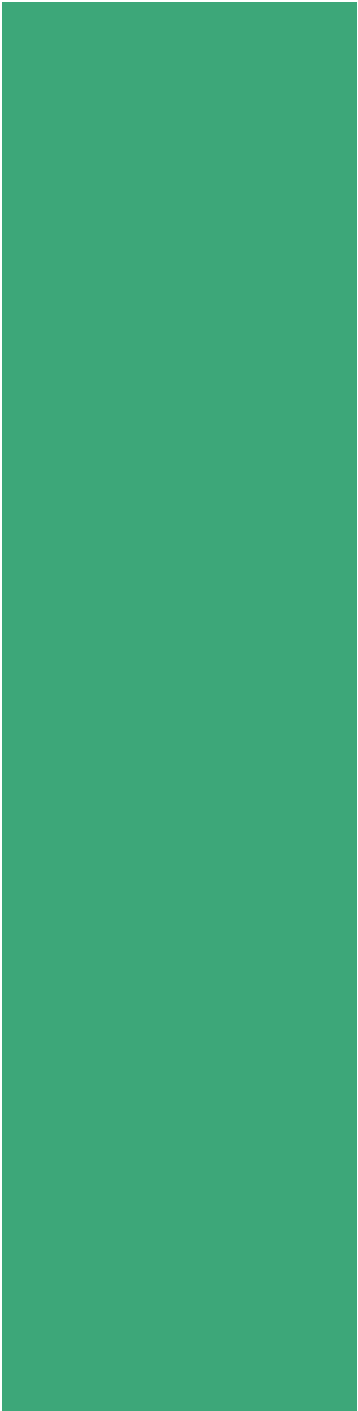
**Environmental Responsibility** - Cumbria County Council is committed to protecting the environment and taking responsibility for minimising the wider environmental effects of its purchasing decisions. Cumbria County Council expects its contractors and suppliers to meet a similar level of commitment to looking after the environment.

**Quality Control Procedures** - It is very important that you are able to demonstrate that you have in place recognised quality procedures to be able to ensure that quality service will be delivered and maintained.

### Freedom of Information Act 2000

Cumbria County Council, along with other authorities, is subject to the provisions of the FOIA. If a supplier or contractor considers that any information supplied to us is either commercially sensitive or confidential in nature, this should be highlighted and the reasons for its sensitivity given. In such cases the relevant material will, in response to FOIA request, be examined in the light of exemptions provided for in the FOIA.

**How to do business with Cumbria County Council**



## Invitation to Tender

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If you receive an invitation to tender, you are being invited to make an offer.

The decision about the provider chosen is based on laid down criteria, which are usually listed according to their importance. These will include quality and whole life cost issues as well as price.

It is important to give appropriate attention to the important criteria, but you must also make sure that you provide relevant information on all the criteria to ensure that your offer is complete and capable of being evaluated.

Respond in the required format, follow the layout requested, answer all the questions but be concise.

Once the required documentation is complete you must ensure that the offer reaches the officer in question within the date and time specified. Failure to do so would exclude you from the evaluation process.

Your company must not be identifiable from the envelope but it must be clearly marked "Tender" followed by the subject name to which it relates.

### Tendering Tips.

Ensure that you have supplied all the relevant information requested and enclose copies of any Policies/Accreditation where applicable

The Tender documents the Council send out to potential suppliers contain details of our requirements. You should read these documents carefully and make sure that you fully understand these requirements.

If you do not understand any part of the specification you should contact the Council Officer named in the tender documentation before the stipulated date and request further information.





## Tender Evaluation

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Returned tenders are evaluated against pre-determined criteria. As specified in the tender documentation evaluation will focus on examining how the tendering organisation propose to deliver the service (quality) and the cost of the services (price).

The balance between quality and price will depend on the particular service requirement. Normally the Council will award the contract on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT)

Within the limits of confidentiality the Council will always endeavour to offer the unsuccessful tenders feedback to find out why their bid failed. This information can be used to help any future bids

Being unsuccessful in one contract does not mean that you will be unsuccessful in the future.

You will be sent a letter informing you of whether or not you have been successful in your bid.

## E-purchasing to payment

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The council has a commitment to implementing Electronic Government which aims to increase levels of electronic business which over time will include electronic tendering, supplier portals, ordering and invoicing

The aim is to improve efficiency and reduce costs associated with the procurement process, for both the Council and supplier

It is recognised that e-commerce can help suppliers by opening up a suppliers products and services to a wider market. The Council will seek to work with suppliers which can help deliver its e-Commerce Strategy

*The Council accepts that some organisations may object to the use of e-commerce technology for religious or other moral reasons. Tenderers who do not wish to use electronic systems on these grounds will be provided with an alternative method by the Council to ensure that all organisations are provided with an equal opportunity to bid for Council business.*



## Why Suppliers Fail to Win Cumbria County Council Tenders!

- If you fail to comply with closing dates and times for submissions
- If you fail to comply with 'Instructions to Tenderers'
- If you fail to complete or submit the necessary documentation
- If you fail to match specifications
- If you have a history of poor quality performance
- If you fail to demonstrate the necessary stability
- If you fail to demonstrate sufficient resources
- If you fail to provide samples, when requested
- If you fail to submit the most cost effective, value for money offer
- If you have insufficient experience in relation to the goods or services required.

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# Cumbria County Council Complaints Procedure

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Cumbria County Council is committed to providing high quality services. Your feedback is essential to this and we welcome all comments, compliments and complaints.

The Council will adopt a variety of contract monitoring arrangements appropriate to the value and nature of each contract.

Most complaints will be discussed and resolved through these arrangements. However, if any contractor or prospective supplier has a complaint about unfair treatment or discrimination that cannot be resolved through normal commercial contact with the Council, the complaint can be made in writing through the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.

This procedure details Council's policy for dealing with complaints and ensures the Council acts promptly.

Anyone who has supplied a tender to the council under European Public Procurement Rules can take action in the High Court if they have been harmed or are at risk of harm by the council breaking these regulations. Anyone who feels they have not been treated fairly can also complain to the European Commission

You can contact us by letter, email or telephone

Customer Services  
Cumbria County Council  
FREEPOST NWW6059A  
The Courts  
Carlisle  
CA3 8NA

Telephone: 0800 121 8800

Email: [complaints@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@cumbriacc.gov.uk)



# Cumbria County Council Purchasing Contact Points

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**Strategic & Commercial Procurement**  
**Leslie Hopcroft**  
**01228 607757**  
[leslie.hopcroft@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:leslie.hopcroft@cumbriacc.gov.uk)

**Cumbria Supplies**  
**David May**  
**01228 607710**  
[david.may@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:david.may@cumbriacc.gov.uk)

**Graham Lewis**  
**Buying Manager(Food)**  
**01228 607713**  
[graham.lewis@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:graham.lewis@cumbriacc.gov.uk)

**Pam Sumner**  
**Performance and Services**  
**01228 607783**  
[Pam.sumner@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:Pam.sumner@cumbriacc.gov.uk)

**Public Protection**  
**David Patterson**  
**01900 820283**  
[david.patterson@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:david.patterson@cumbriacc.gov.uk)

**Education**  
**Harry Slater**  
**01228 606861**  
[harry.slater@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:harry.slater@cumbriacc.gov.uk)

**Social Services**  
**Care Procurement**  
**Jenny Weaver**  
**01228 606569**  
[jenny.weaver@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:jenny.weaver@cumbriacc.gov.uk)

Contracting activity for several areas, including Highways and Property is managed on behalf of Cumbria County Council by Capita and you may be referred to them as appropriate.