

Dear Jo,

Opportunities for your local businesses in public procurement through Contracts Finder

Earlier this year I was appointed to role of SME Crown Representative by The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General. This role is intended to give a voice to SMEs in government procurement and to help open up our supply chains to more SMEs.

As I am sure you are aware, the Government has made a commitment that for every three pounds it spends on procuring goods and services, one pound will be spent with SMEs, by 2022. This represents a huge opportunity for businesses in your area and I am especially keen that the benefits of this initiative are spread right across the country. I firmly believe that LEPs could, and should, play an important role in drawing this opportunity to the attention of companies in their area, especially SMEs.

As you will be aware, since 2015 there has been a requirement for central government departments and their agencies to place all contracts that are openly advertised, above the value of £10,000, on our Contracts Finder website. In addition, other public sector bodies in England, such as NHS trusts and local councils, are also required to place openly advertised opportunities, above a value of £25,000, on Contracts Finder.

If we are going to drive this agenda forward and encourage more SMEs to consider doing business with the public sector, then Contracts Finder needs to be much better known amongst the business community. To help raise awareness, I am currently working with the major business representative organisations and leading trade associations to establish a link from their websites to the Contracts Finder website.

To raise awareness of Contracts Finder in your area, I am writing to ask you to consider providing a link from your website to the Contracts Finder website. For ease, my colleagues have drafted an example of the text that could appear on a website with the appropriate link:

Selling to government and the public sector

Government and the wider public sector buy a huge range of goods and services. It's not just the big-ticket items such as building prisons or buying aircraft carriers. You will find opportunities ranging from gardening services through to specialist scientific equipment used in the nuclear industry.

These business opportunities are advertised on Contracts Finder. This is the Government's single online portal, where contracts valued above £10,000 in central government and above £25,000 in local government, the blue light services, and the NHS, are all listed. In addition, major government contractors are using Contracts Finder to advertise sub-contracts in their supply chains.

*It's free to use, where you can register and search thousands of opportunities.
Simply go to <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>.*

In the event your team get queries about Contracts Finder from companies in your area, my team have developed a short guide that should help them answer any simple questions.

If you have any queries, then please don't hesitate to get in touch. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated and I hope that increasing the profile of the opportunities available will lead to more work being won by SMEs in your area.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Traynor". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Martin Traynor OBE
SME Crown Representative