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Introduction

This is a quick reference guide for Buyers creating a contract notice on Public Contracts Scotland (PCS).

This is practical PCS system guidance. For best practice guidance visit the Scottish Government Procurement Journey website.

Screenshots and Videos Guide

The following step-by-step video guides which show how to navigate the system are available:

- Create a Contract Notice on PCS
- Creating an Award Notice on PCS
- Additional Notice Options within PCS

General tips for navigating and writing in the system

Buyers can use the PCS notice creation wizard functionality to create notices on the system. Please be aware, the system will timeout after 20 minutes of inactivity. If you do not click "**save**" or "**next**" within twenty minutes then you will be logged out and your progress will not be saved.

Navigating between questions and saving your progress

When navigating between questions use the "**next**" button. The system automatically saves your answers when you use the "**next**" button. The "**go to question**" button **will not save your progress** so you must also click "**save**" if you use this option.

The "go to question" can be used to jump to the question you were last editing.

Writing and text in PCS

To prevent corrupted characters appearing and prevent delays when publishing your notice we recommend that you:

- Write larger sections of text outside of the system then copy and paste them into the system.
- Do not use the bullet points or pound signs (£).
- Keep all text in sentence case text.

Creating a Contract Notice on PCS

View Chapter 1 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

To create a new notice:

- log in to your Public Contracts Scotland Buyer's account,
- click "**Buyers Area**",
- then under the "**Notices**" section, click "**Create New Notice**".

To completed or edit an existing notice:

If you or someone within your organisation, has already created a notice which you need to complete or edit then this can be found in the "My Unpublished Notices" and "Buyer Unpublished Notices within the "Buyer Area of the portal.

- click "**My Unpublished Notices**" to edit or complete a notice you have started
- or click "**Buyer Unpublished Notices**" to edit or complete a notice another buyer within your organisation has created.

If the Contract Notice has an existing relating notice on PCS

For new notices that relate directly to a previous Publication, such as a prior information notice, please create the new notice from the status page of the pre-existing notice. This ensures the correct notice type is created and will pre-populate the previous publication question.

Create Notice – Title and Notice Type

Working Title

The "Working Title" acts as a reference for your notice. It can only be seen by your organisation and the PCS support desk. It is not published within the notice and is not visible to the public.

Notice Type

On Public Contracts Scotland, you have the choice of creating a website or above threshold notice. Following Brexit all above threshold notices are sent to the UK procurement portal "Find a Tender".

If your above threshold notice is in relation to EU funds and you identify this within the relevant notice question, the notice is sent to the Official Journal of the European Union (Tenders Electronic Daily) only.

If you are unsure of which Procurement Journey route you should be taking, please access the Scottish Government's Procurement Journey website for further guidance.

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Create Notice – Nature of the Contract

Nature of the Contract

The "Nature of the Contract" section is where you have the option to choose between services, supply or works. If your exercise involves two or more of the options select the one which makes up the majority of the contract.

Create Notice – Procedure Type

Procedure type

You will be prompted to indicate the procedure you will be using for this procurement. The options available will differ depending on whether you have selected an above or below threshold notice. Some procedure types have specific questions that will need to appear within the notice wizard, so selecting the correct procedure type at this stage is important.

For guidance on the various procedure types, please consult the Procurement Journey website.

Accelerated Procedures

If you intend to use an Accelerated Procedure then you must select "**Accelerated Procedure**" at this point. This is only an option for above threshold notices and will not appear when creating below threshold notices.

Create Notice – Confirmation

The answers you select for these questions will create the correct notice wizard for you to complete. Once you confirm these options you will be provided with an overview of questions applicable to your notice.

PCS will save your responses to the questions as you proceed through the questions by clicking on the "**Next**" button.

Questions

I.1) Name and address

View Chapter 2 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section

This is the name and address of the organisation who will be signing the contract with the supplier at the end of the process. This section will be prepopulated with your organisations details. You can edit this information if required. If you are a Buyer publishing on behalf of another organisation then you must change the details on this page to your clients details.

I.2) Joint procurement

View Chapter 3 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section

This question is only applicable if you are carrying out a joint procurement exercise. A description of "joint procurement" is provided at the top of the page on the system.

Only select "**central purchasing body**" if you are an authorised central purchasing body. All other organisations must list all the buyers who are included in the procurement exercise. To do this select "**Add Additional Buyers**". When adding additional buyers you can either search the PCS database for the organisation or "**enter the buyer's details manually**". This option appears above the search fields.

If the buyer is registered on PCS then you should use the search option. Do not enter their details manually.

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Data for transfer to the Scottish Procurement Information Hub (SPIKES)

View Chapter 4 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

This information is for transferring to the Scottish Procurement Information Hub (SPIKES). It will not be included in your notice on Public Contracts Scotland.

This question is linked to the question 1.2) joint procurement. If you have selected that you are carrying out a joint procurement then you select the appropriate category on this page. If you are not an authorised central purchasing body then do not select category A or B.

Select all applicable organisations from the list below. Do not select yourselves, as the notice is being published by you we will already be sending the information to SPIKES on your behalf. The list provided is a list of all organisations who are required to send their data to the Scottish Procurement Information Hub. If an organisation does not appear on this list then it will be because they do not need to send this information.

I.3) Communication

Access to procurement documents

View Chapter 5 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
All documents must be made readily available online at the point when you publish your notice.

- If you intend to add your documents to the notice on PCS then add www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk into the URL box.
- If you are providing access to the documents elsewhere then add the appropriate URL into the URL box.

Emailing documents does not satisfy the legal obligation of "readily available" so you cannot provide an email address in this field.

Additional information

View Chapter 6 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
Most organisations should select "the contracting authority, address listed in I.1".

If you are a consultant, you can provide your details as the point of contact for additional information. To do this, select "**another address: (please provide another address)**" and enter your organisations details here.

Submission of tender or request to participate (PQQs)

View Chapter 7 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
If you are using the PCS postbox facility, enter www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk into the URL box.

If you are using a different system such as PCS-Tender then enter the appropriate URL in the URL box.

All responses should be submitted electronically. If you require responses to be sent by post then provide details here.

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Unrestricted access to tools for electronic communication

View Chapter 8 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
This section is not mandatory and should only be completed if it is applicable. This section refers to whether the documents require specialist software to be opened. Specialist software does not include Public Contracts Scotland or PCS-Tender as these are portals that can be accessed using generally available web browsers. Specialist CAD software is an example of the types of tools that would need to be listed here.

You will have the option to upload your documents and select the postbox facility at a later stage.

Section II: Object

View Chapter 9 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

"**Object**" refers to the general scope of the procurement exercise. More details can be added on the next "**description**" question. You must add an object to be able to proceed to add a description. Most contract types will only allow one "**object**" to be added.

Selecting "**Add Object**" will open up a new list of questions applicable to the object you are adding.

II.1.1) Title/Reference number

View Chapter 10 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
Enter the "**Title**" of the object as it should appear on PCS.
The "**reference number**" is an optional field for any internal reference numbers you may be using for this opportunity.

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II.1.2) Main CPV code

View Chapter 11 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

There are 9454 CPV categories in total. The CPV codes are a set list that is created and maintained by the EU. The support desk cannot amend this list or offer advice on what category you should select.

You must select a CPV code that matches the type of procurement exercise you selected at the start. For example, if you selected a services contract then you must select a services CPV code.

- CPV codes that begin with 01 to 44, and 48 are concerning supplies.
- CPV codes that begin with 45 are concerning works.
- CPV codes that begin with 50 to 99 are concerning services.

Only one CPV can be selected as the "**main CPV code**". You will have the option to select more CPV codes within the "**description**" question.

To use the search facility, enter part of the description and selecting "**find**". Select the category that is most appropriate for what you are looking to procure. Select the code from the search list to add it to your notice. Once added it will appear on the list of CPV(s) added.

II.1.4) Short description

View Chapter 12 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

Provide a short description of the procurement exercise. You will have the option to provide further details within the "**description**" question.

II.1.5) Estimated Value

View Chapter 13 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

This is not a mandatory field. If you are completing this field then you should only provide numbers. No currency, commas or decimal places.

II.1.6) This contract is divided into lots

View Chapter 14 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

This question is important as it will determine how many descriptions you can add on the next question.

Due to the requirement to make procurement exercises more open to SMEs you must provide a justification for why you are not dividing the contract into lots.

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II.2) Description

View Chapter 15 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

If you have advised that the contract will be split into lots then you must add at least two descriptions. One for each lot. Select "**add description**" to add your first description.

You will be asked what object this description falls under. In most cases there will only be one object to select from the drop down menu. Once selected you can provide the details.

If you have advised that the contract will be split into lots then you will be asked for the lot number and the "**description title".** This is the description of this "**lot**".

This section will not appear if you have said "**no**" to the lots question.

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

View Chapter 17 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

This is where you can select additional CPV codes. These are the codes applicable to the lot you are currently describing. These CPV codes **do not** have to match the contract type (services, supplies, works).

II.2.3) Place of performance

View Chapter 19 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
This is a mandatory field.

You must select the NUTS location from the drop down lists.

- Select "**United Kingdom (UK)**"
- and click "**Select**"

- A second drop down list will then appear allowing you to be more specific with your location if you wish.
    - For a contract with multiple locations nationwide select "**UK – United Kingdom**"
    - For a contract across Scotland only select "**UKM – Scotland**"
- Click "**Add**"
- The "Main site or place of performance" box will appear allowing you to type a specific location.

Remember, if you are using lots this will only be the location for that lot.

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

View Chapter 20 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

This is where you can go into more detail about what you are looking for. If you are using lots this should be the description for that lot only.

II.2.5) Award criteria

View Chapter 21 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

Guidance is available on the screen regarding what should and shouldn't be selected here:

"Using price only or cost only as the sole evaluation criterion for the award of a public contract within the scope of The Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 is prohibited by regulation 67(1)(b).
Contracting authorities must also have regard to statutory guidance published under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 when awarding public contracts subject to that Act This guidance says at section 5.7.1 that "Higher value regulated procurements/EU-regulated contracts may not be awarded on the basis of lowest price or lowest cost only. This approach should also be applied to any award criteria for regulated contracts below the GPA/EU contract threshold values.".
If selecting "**Price and Quality**", "**Cost Only**" or "**Cost and Quality**" then you must provide weightings in the section below.

- For "**Price and Quality**", you must enter the "**Price Weighting**" in the field provided. Then add at least one "**Quality**" criteria.
- For "**Cost Only**", you must leave the "**Price Weighting**" empty and add at least one "**Cost Criteria**". You can change the "**type**" of weighting from "**Quality**" to "**Cost**" by using the drop down menu. You must only add "**Cost**" Criteria if this option is selected.
- For "**Cost and Quality**", you must add at least one "**cost**" criteria and at least one "**Quality**" criteria. The "**Price Weighting**" must be left blank.
- For "**Price only**" all the fields should be left blank.
- For "**All award criteria are stated only in the procurement documents**" all the fields should be left blank.

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II.2.6) Estimated value

View Chapter 22 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
If yes, enter only numbers only in this field. No currency, commas or decimal places.

II.2.7) Duration

View Chapter 23 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
This information is important if you are using the PCS Contracts Register. Check that the information you provide is accurate.

Is this contract subject to renewal?

If extensions will be available then select "yes" to this question.

II.2.10) Information about variants

View Chapter 24 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
This means if a supplier can meet your need by offering an alternative solution or product would you consider their offer. For example, if you are looking for PCs to be supplied then would you allow a tenderer to offer Mac's as an alternative?

II.2.11) Information about options

View Chapter 25 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
If options will be available then provide details here.

II.2.12) Information about electronic catalogues

View the video guide Chapter 26 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
This is not a mandatory field. Only complete this if it is applicable to you.

II.2.13) Information about European Union funds

View Chapter 27 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
This question is important if this contract notice is to be sent to OJEU. You must select "**yes**" to this question for your notice to be sent to and accepted by OJEU. As of 1st January 2021 OJEU will only publish contract notices from the UK that relate to a project or programme financed by EU funds.

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II.2.14) Additional information

Guidance is available on the system. The note at the top of this screen reads:

"A set of standard statements, aligned to the relevant questions in SPD (Scotland) has been developed in order to assist Procurement Officers to adopt a standard approach to defining selection and minimum requirements in the Contract Notice. It is recommended that Procurement Officers include a statement in the additional information field regarding the exclusions that may apply. These statements are not intended to be a definitive list and professional judgment must be used on a case-by case basis when selecting which, if any, of these statements are relevant and proportionate to a particular procurement exercise.

The set of standard statements, the SPD (Scotland) and guidance are available on the Procurement Journey website"

Delivery Location (local)

View Chapter 28 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
The locations you enter are used for the supplier alert service. When supplier set up alerts subscription on PCS they select which regions they are interested in. By selecting the appropriate locations on this page the notice will be sent to the most appropriate suppliers.

Commodity Categories

View Chapter 29 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
A description is provided at the top of this screen. It reads:

"Commodity categories are used by suppliers to search for relevant tenders. Accurately selecting the relevant commodity category will enable qualified suppliers to respond and also reduce requests for further information.

Please add a separate commodity category code for each category of supplies, services or works required under this contract by clicking on the Add button. You can then click on the appropriate folder(s) and select the relevant categories.
You are required to include at least one commodity category for publication.

The categories you selected through the Object and Description questions are already displayed below.

The answers provided in this question are solely to trigger the notice alert e-mails dispatched to suppliers, and are not sent to the OJEU. Adding additional Categories at this stage will ensure the broadest range of relevant suppliers will receive an email alert regarding this notice."

Justification for the use of accelerated procedure

View Chapter 30 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
If you selected "Accelerated Procedure" during the creation stage you must provide justification provide justification for the acceleration timescales here. This question will only appear if you selected "Accelerated Procedure".

IV.1.3) Information about a framework agreement or a dynamic purchasing system

View Chapter 31 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
If you are establishing a framework agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) then please provide details here. If you are establishing a DPS then you must be using the restricted procedure. If DPS does not appear then you have chosen the wrong notice type and you will need to start again selecting the correct notice type.

IV.1.4) Information about reduction of the number of solutions or tenders

This question is only applicable if you have created an above threshold notice and selected "**Competitive procedure with negotiation**", "**Competitive dialogue**" or "**Innovation partnership**".

IV.1.5) Information about negotiation

This question is only applicable if you have created an above threshold notice and selected the "**Competitive procedure**".

IV.1.6) Information about electronic auction

This is not a mandatory field. Only complete if it is applicable to you.

IV.1.8) Information about Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

View Chapter 32 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
If you are unsure if your organisation is covered by the World Trade Organisation's Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) then there is a link at the top of the page which will take you to their website (Appendix 1).

The United Kingdom is towards the bottom of the list on this page. Select "**Annex 1**" to view the list organisations included. If your organisation is on this list then you must select "**yes**" to this question.

IV.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure

View Chapter 33 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
If you have created this notice from a previously published notice (for example a PIN) then this section will be completed for you with the details of the previously published notice. You can manually enter the details in this section. Guidance on where to find the Notice number is provided at the top of the screen.

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IV.2.2) Time limit for receipt of responses and other administrative information under IV.2)

View Chapter 34 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.
The time limit fields that appear on this page will depend on what procedure type you have selected.

For an above threshold notice then take the "minimum time scales" into consideration. Remember that "adequate time" is required regardless of the minimum timescales. If the minimum timescales allowed are not considered to be adequate for a supplier to submit a tender then they are too short even if they are above the "minimum allowed". You must take national holidays into consideration when determining your timescales.

If this is an above threshold notice then the system will alert you if the amount of time you have specified is less than the "minimum timescales". This is an alert only and you can ignore the warning if you wish to proceed with the shorter time. The system will not take holidays or the time of day into consideration. Your timescales commence from the point that the notice is published by the support desk. If you send the notice for publication outside the support desks working hours (Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 5pm) then the notice will not be published until the next working day and your timescales will not commence until this time.

Further guidance on the timescales that you should allow can be found on the Procurement Journey website.

Estimated contract award date

View Chapter 35 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

This is an estimated date. This date will not be detailed in the notice text but is used to send you a website reminder to publish the results of the procurement as an award notice.

VI.3) Additional information

This is a free text section where you can provide further clarification and further information.

VI.4) Procedures for review

View Chapter 36 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

This should be the name and address of your local Sheriff Court or the Court of Session.

If this is an OJEU notice (EU funded) then the notice will be rejected by the publication office if it details anything other than your local Sheriff Court or the Court of Session.

PCS-Tender System

View Chapter 37 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

This question only applies if you are using PCS-Tender (PCS-T). You cannot use the additional option on Public Contracts Scotland if you are using PCS-T.

When using PCS-T select "yes", then select the project type which will be either a PQQ or an ITT.

Please enter the PCS-Tender Project Code here.

Important, please do not enter the PCS-Tender PQQ or ITT code here.

Project Codes contain the word Project followed by numbers, for example "project_12345".

Only enter the Project numbers in this field, for example "12345".

Completing this section correctly allows the supplier to search for and find your PCS-Tender Project. The PCS-Tender Project contains your PQQ or ITT.

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Additional Notice Options

If you intend to use the Postbox or question and answer facility you must select them at this point. You cannot activate them after a notice has been published.

Further information on the use of the additional options available on Public Contracts Scotland can be found in the Additional Notice Options video.

You cannot use the additional options on Public Contracts Scotland if you are using PCS-T.

Notice Administrators

View Chapter 38 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video for screenshots of this section.

You will see a list of Buyers registered as members of your organisation. Select who should have access to view the interest list (if applicable) and amend the published details for this notice. You will automatically be selected. You can untick your name. At least one person must be selected to proceed.

Only a Controller from within your organisation can amend the Notice Administrators after publication if required.

Notice Creation Completed

View [Chapter 39 of the Creating a Contract Notice on PCS video](#) for screenshots of this section.

Once you have completed all the questions the "Notice Creation Completed" screen will appear. You will have the following options:

Preview, print or save the notice

This will open a pop up window with the notice as it will appear to the public. You can print, view as PDF, view as HTML or close the window.

Release the notice for publication

This will send the notice to the support desk for publication.

You must have the correct access levels to be able to publish a notice. If you are unable to publish then contact a controller from within your organisation to be given the required permissions to publish. You can view your permissions and a list of controllers by selecting "U**ser List**" within the "**Buyers Area**".

The status of your notice will change from "Not Released" to "Queued" and then to "Published".

"**Queued**" means that the notice is awaiting publication by the support desk. You cannot make amendments to your notice when it is "**Queued**". Please contact the support desk to make amendments at this stage.
"**Held**" means that the support desk have identified an issue with the notice that need to be corrected before it can be published. You will receive a phone call and email to notify you of the reason. If you are unsure then please contact the support desk.

Send the notice for sign-off

This allows you to send the notice to another user within your organisation for sign off.

If you select this option then you will be provided with a list of Buyers registered to your organisation who have permissions to publish a notice. Select one Buyer from the list and then select "send". The system will send an alert to them notifying them that the notice is ready to be published. The Buyer will then need to release the notice for publication.

Return to your notice list and publish later

This will return you to your unpublished notice list. The notice will remain unpublished until it is released for publication.

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