

NR: 35  
Date: 24 October 2007



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Scheme to cut bureaucracy goes live**

Doing business with local authorities will now be easier with a national scheme to cut bureaucracy, reduce duplication and simplify the buying of goods and services.

Four Regional Centres of Excellence have worked together to produce simpler procurement documents, which should encourage more small and medium sized firms to compete for contracts.

The North West, North East, Yorkshire and Humber and East Midlands Centres of Excellence have collaborated to develop the set of standard documents available to all authorities across the country, which will make tendering and contracting quicker and fairer for both buyers and suppliers.

The documents provide councils with a one-stop-shop to better buying and are located on the web via The Docking Station at [www.nwce.gov.uk/docking-station](http://www.nwce.gov.uk/docking-station).

Rosemary Cowgill, programme manager at the North West Centre of Excellence, which led the project says:

*"The harmonisation of documents across regions is a ground-breaking project. The existing paperwork can be a bureaucratic nightmare and a barrier to many potential smaller suppliers. The new standardised documents will save time and money, and increase the diversity and competitiveness of the supply market."*

*"This work also overcomes the problems of older contract procedure rules which do not allow for modern procurement methods such as procurement portals or e-tendering to be used or for authorities to share services. It is a huge help, in particular, to district authorities who may otherwise have struggled in terms of time and resources to undertake such work."*

And she added: *"It was good to work with colleagues, both from authorities across the region, and in three other regional centres to share our learning and best practice. It's also good to know that the project is being adopted in all nine regions."*

Jane Hewitt, procurement and projects officer for Darlington Borough Council, says:

*"I often receive queries on how documentation should be completed, why certain questions were being asked and why the documentation was different for every local authority.*

*This project has standardised and simplified the process, enabling people from local authorities and small medium sized enterprises, including the Third Sector, to come together to discuss the documentation at length. We have eliminated the 'jargon' and made the documentation much less onerous for suppliers to complete. We are very happy with the outcome and feel that the both the authority and the suppliers will benefit from this process."*

Rob McMullen Head of Member Relations with the North East Chamber of Commerce says:

*"The project will have a major impact on the way that small to medium sized businesses do business with local authorities in the region. It's reassuring to see local authorities working together to make the business environment easier for our members to take advantage of the available opportunities."*

Ends

Editor's notes:

- The documents are available at [www.nwce.gov.uk/docking-station](http://www.nwce.gov.uk/docking-station).
- Funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government, the nine Regional Centres of Excellence are the change agents for local government efficiency. Uniquely placed to bring councils together, they are run by local government, bring additional capacity and are results focused. They are supporting councils to secure millions of pounds in efficiencies that are being re-invested to improve frontline services.

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