



Protecting local
communities

**How to do Business
With
Cleveland Fire Brigade**

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1. Introduction

This guide will help you if you have not previously done business with Cleveland Fire Brigade or if you are an existing supplier and you want to expand your trade with us.

We are keen to encourage our suppliers to reflect the regions diversity and will encourage as many businesses as possible to apply for our contracts. We hope that this guide will give community businesses in particular the awareness and knowledge of Cleveland Fire Brigade's procurement processes they need to build effective business relationships with us.

Cleveland Fire Brigade's approach is to advertise their requirement to the market and obtain a competitive price therefore working towards our priority of Excellence and Value for Money. We recognise that it may be difficult for some individuals or companies to compete successfully, so we need to provide the information, access and opportunities necessary for potential suppliers to compete for Cleveland Fire Brigade business.

2. Cleveland Fire Brigade

The Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) procurement department is based at Brigade Headquarters in Hartlepool and controls purchasing on behalf of all departments within the Brigade.

Cleveland Fire Brigade also participates in National and Regional procurement activities as appropriate.

Cleveland Fire Brigade also promotes an Equality and Diversity programme and strives towards sustainable procurement in line with environmental issues. The Brigade also recognises the importance of Health and Safety within the workplace. All potential suppliers would, as a minimum, be expected to recognise the above and have procedures in place throughout their organisation confirming their compliance.

3. The products and services we buy

Listed below are some of the typical purchases that Cleveland Fire Brigade makes:

Supplies

Stationery

Office equipment

Furniture

IT hardware, software and consumables

Printing

Clothing & Equipment

Uniforms

Boots

Shoes

Socks

Gloves
Breathing apparatus
Kitbags

Services

Consultancy services
Catering
Cleaning of buildings
Building works
Building accessories
External training

Transport

Various appliances
Appliance spares
Specialist vehicles
Fleet cars
Fuel

Misc

Specialist Operation Equipment
Medical Equipment

4. Supplier Selection Policy

Supplier selection is based on overall value for money. Whilst price is important we will always consider among other factors quality, reliability, safety, good design, timely delivery, maintenance and after sales support before arriving at a decision which is the most economically advantageous.

The Brigade is required to undertake different procurement processes determined by the potential value of any contract and promotes competitive purchasing in line with all public procurement. If the potential value of a contract justifies competitive procurement then tenders or quotations will be sought. As a public sector organisation CFB is required to comply to all EU Procurement regulations.

Potential suppliers must demonstrate their financial, commercial and technical capability to fully meet the contractual requirements under tender. We will also take account of a company's past performance with reference to contracts of a similar nature, both with other fire services and other organisations. We may ask for references from previous customers, audited accounts and, in some cases, arrange inspection visits to the company.

5. Procedures

The Brigade's Contract Procedure Rules are designed to ensure that we achieve best value from all the money we spend.

The procedures are intended to ensure that officers comply with the law, maintain strict impartiality, achieve value for money and protect the Brigade's interests.

The value of a contract determines the procedures that officers must follow with respect to how many quotes they need to obtain, or whether a tender process must be entered into.

6. Current Contracts

In accordance with the National Procurement Strategy for the Fire & Rescue Service in England 2009-12, CFB will use, where appropriate, contracts awarded and implemented by various agencies established on behalf of public sector organisations. The benefit of this is the reduction in process costs of initiating and completing procurement processes and from competitive pricing obtained from the larger economies of scale collaborative procurement provides.

Cleveland Fire Brigade currently use national contracts awarded and advertised by Buying Solutions, Firebuy from the Consortium, YPO, NEPO and ESPO.

7. Advertising of contracts

CFB advertise quotations and tenders in a number of locations:

CFB use the Contracts Finder portal at <http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk> which is a method of advertising nationally. Suppliers can register for free and be notified automatically of any tender opportunities that might be of interest to them.

The Brigade has also recently switched to electronic tendering. This means all tender or quotation documentation is now available on-line to download so that suppliers can fill in the necessary documentation and submit their bids electronically also. Suppliers can register for free at <https://in-tendhost.co.uk/clevelandfire>

In addition to the above, if the contract CFB are looking to award exceeds the EU Thresholds then the contract will be advertised within the Official Journal of the European Union. Visit <http://ted.europa.eu> to register.

8. Tendering procedures

Where the value of the contract exceeds the EU threshold there are 4 main ways of tendering:

Open procedure

Under an open tender procedure all suppliers who respond to an advertisement are supplied with tender documentation which they can return as appropriate.

Restricted procedure

The restricted procedure can best be described as a two-stage approach in which the Authority invites interested suppliers to undergo a pre-qualification assessment to draw up a shortlist before inviting those on the list to tender.

Competitive Dialogue

This involves the authority entering into dialogue with bidders, following an OJEU notice and a selection process, to develop one or more suitable solutions for its requirements and on which chosen bidders will be invited to tender.

Negotiated procedure

This is when the Authority, under certain limited circumstances, negotiates with one or more suppliers of our choice. For example it may be used in cases of extreme urgency that could not be foreseen by the Authority or where irregular or unsuitable tenders were received under the open or restricted procedures.

9. Tender submission – tips

Always read the advertisement or tender documents carefully and submit or request the information required by the dates stipulated.

Submit your tender application in the format requested.

The documents may also cover information about when you started business or when your organisation/company was formed, what experience you have in providing the goods/services/works being tendered for in terms of other fire and rescue services or other public sector organisations, details of where references may be obtained, and details of your company's finances.

Sometimes the information received from suppliers is unclear or in need of further clarification. Once again you should provide any additional information sought by the closing date set.

The tender documents sent out to suppliers contain details of the Brigade's requirements. The documents, particularly the specification, should be read carefully and all information completed fully and accurately. If you do not understand any part of the tender documents you should contact the Procurement Officer named in the tender documentation and request further information. This must be done before the last date for clarifications which is usually a week before the closing date.

10. Evaluation of tenders

In order to preserve the integrity of the competitive process, it is imperative that the evaluation of proposals is undertaken objectively, consistently and without bias towards particular suppliers. Accordingly evaluation of tenders is undertaken by an evaluation panel to ensure a fair and objective decision is reached. Because of the nature of our contracts it is unlikely that they will be awarded on the basis of price alone.

Cleveland Fire Brigade will award the contract to the supplier it considers offers value for money. For this reason our main evaluation criterion will be the 'most economically advantageous tender'. The award criteria will vary depending on the type of contract. Examples of award criteria are experience, ability to conform to specification, quality assurance, warranty and cost. Please note is by no means exhaustive and the evaluation criteria will differ from purchase to purchase.

11. Where to go for help

Debriefing

If your tender/quotation is unsuccessful you can ask for feedback. You should ask the procurement officer responsible for the specific contract for which you have applied for – his/her name will be in the tender documents along with contact details. Where such requests are made we will endeavour to provide information that will help you to improve your next tender submission.

General

Requests for general information on procurement issues at CFB may be made to:

The Procurement Department
Cleveland Fire Brigade HQ
Endeavour House
Stockton Road
Hartlepool
TS25 5TB

Alternatively, email procurement@clevelandfire.gov.uk

Problems with in-tend

For any technical problems with in-tend please contact the Support Department on 0844 2728810.