



SELLING TO CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

This guide aims to help potential suppliers and contractors understand how Ceredigion Council currently buys goods, services and works and help them to increase their chances of finding out about opportunities and bidding for work.

*A guide for
Suppliers & Contractors*



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How is Procurement organised?

Ceredigion Council spends over £60 million per year on the procurement of a diverse range of goods, services and works from external organisations in the private and third sector.

This spend must be managed efficiently and effectively and the Council has a robust set of Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations that must be followed. In addition the Council has a Procurement Strategy that is aligned with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the wider aims and objectives of the Council. The Procurement Strategy is available to view and download from the Council's website at the following address:

<http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/media/2066/procurement-strategy-2018-2022-v8.pdf>

“Ceredigion Council aims to increase the number of lower value opportunities advertised on Sell2Wales”

Where can I find out about contract opportunities?

Ceredigion Council publishes contract opportunities via one of two systems:

- **Sell2Wales** is the National Procurement website for Wales; this includes all widely advertised contract opportunities valued both below and above the EU thresholds. Sell2Wales has a direct link to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) where contracts above the EU thresholds must be published.
- The www.ceredigion.gov.uk website. There is a link directly from the Procurement page on the Council's website into the Contract Notices on Sell2wales

The Council encourages suppliers to register on Sell2Wales. Registration is free of charge and allows suppliers to receive automated tender notifications by email, view opportunities via the Bulletin Boards, update and maintain their profile, receive instructions on how to access tender documents and view details of awarded contracts.

To access Sell2Wales click on the icon below



N.B. It is important to only register against the categories which are relevant to the goods/services/works you supply. This will ensure that you only receive notifications about contract opportunities relevant to your field of work.

Assistance and support is available from a number of organisations; for further information please see the **'Further Support'** section.

“We strongly advise suppliers to register on Sell2Wales for free to access opportunities”

What rules, regulations & procurement procedures does the Council follow?

The way in which the Council purchases goods, services and works is governed by European Union (EU), UK law and by the Council's own internal Contract Procedure Rules.

Ceredigion Council has a legal requirement to comply with EU Procurement Directives, which govern the way in which public sector procurement is conducted for contracts over the thresholds set out below.

Goods	Services	Works
£181,302	£181,302	£4,551,413

Fig 2: EU Thresholds (values effective from 1st January 2018 for two years)

The purpose of the EU Directives is to encourage open and transparent competition which is delivered through competitive tendering throughout the European Union. All public sector procurement, including below EU thresholds, must abide by the EU Treaty Principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, mutual recognition, proportionality and transparency.

The Council's Contract Procedure Rules provide the framework for ensuring that public money is spent with demonstrable probity and accountability regardless of value.

Before sourcing external suppliers the Council will identify whether the need can be met through an existing contract or framework agreement (see [Why Do We Use Framework Agreements?](#)). If the need cannot be met through an existing contract or framework agreement, a Request for Quotation (RFQ) or Tender process will be carried out depending on the value of the contract, as set out in the table in Figure 3 on the next page.



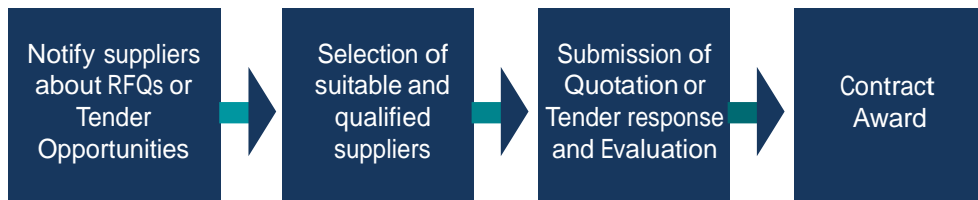
RFQ or Tender	Value	Process	Advertisement
RFQs Carried out by buyers within service areas who will usually send a request for quotation by email to supplier(s).	Less than £5k	Best Value	Discretion of the buyer as to whether the opportunity requires advertising.
	£5k to less than £25k	Request at least 4 quotes (minimum of 2 received)	
Tenders The majority of tenders valued above £100k follow a Restricted or Open Procedure. Restricted = 2 stages Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) & Invitation to Tender (ITT). Open = 1 stage Tender document made up of selection questions (equivalent to PQQ) and award questions (equivalent to ITT).	£25k to less than £100k	A minimum of 5 invited to quote/tender (minimum of 3 quotes/bids) must be received	Advertising is discretionary subject to the type of procurement. Adverts may be placed on Sell2Wales.
	£100k to below EU Threshold	A minimum of 5 tenders must be invited (minimum of 3 bids received)	Adverts are placed on Sell2wales
	Over EU Threshold	EU Procurement Directives apply	Adverts must be published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) for which Sell2Wales has a direct link to.

Fig 3: Procurement Processes

EU procurement processes must follow **minimum timescales** as set out in the EU Procurement Directives; these vary according to the procurement process chosen and whether a Prior Information Notice (PIN) was issued. The actual timescales will also vary according to the scale and complexity of the procurement.

“The Council needs to buy in a way that is legal, manages risk and delivers value for money”

Although the exact process followed for selecting and appointing suppliers will depend on the value of the goods, services or works being procured it will essentially contain the following steps which are explained in more detail below.



Notify suppliers about RFQs or Tender Opportunities

The Council can notify suppliers about an RFQ or Tender opportunity in one of three ways.

Buyers will either:

- Consult the supplier directory on Sell2Wales and select appropriate suppliers to invite to quote or tender in accordance with the minimum number required (as shown in the table above), or;
- **Issue** a contract notification by email to all suppliers registered under the relevant category of goods, services or works on Sell2Wales, or;
- **Place** an advert on Sell2Wales which any supplier can view. The advert will provide instructions to suppliers on how to obtain the tender documents and submit a response. Contracts advertised on Sell2Wales which are above the EU thresholds will automatically be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

When a contract is advertised for which an e-tender exercise is being conducted, prospective bidders will be directed to eTenderWales to **express an interest**. Simply registering on eTenderWales is not regarded as an expression of interest; if a supplier sees an opportunity they are interested in they will need to select that opportunity and click 'Express Interest' to express an interest. Tender documents for **advertised** contracts will not be sent to suppliers by email; suppliers must download the documents from eTenderwales when an e-tender exercise is being conducted.

Selection of suitable and qualified suppliers

Where opportunities are advertised the Council must ensure that suppliers are suitable and are qualified to deliver the specified requirements against an agreed contract.

In order to assess the supplier's suitability, the Council will either:

- **Issue** a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (for a restricted procedure).
- Use selection questions as part of the tender process (for an open procedure).
- **Issue** a Self-Certification Form.
- **Rely** on supplier data already held by the Council.

To ensure the Council does this in a way which is consistent and proportionate to the value, risk and complexity of the contract, the Council has adopted the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD) together with Welsh Government's **Supplier Qualification Information Database (SQuID)**. This provides a standard set of questions and guidance in respect of their application and use for the following areas:

- **Supplier Acceptability:** discretionary grounds for excluding a bidder on the basis of offences such as conspiracy, corruption, fraud, bribery, bankruptcy and insolvency.
- **Economic / Financial Standing:** in some cases, potential suppliers may need to be registered with Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) and/or provide the last 2 years profit and loss figures. This will depend on the type of services being tendered.
- **Insurances:** potential suppliers may be asked to provide evidence of minimum levels of Employer's & Public Liability & Professional Indemnity.
- **Technical Competencies and Qualifications:** provide evidence of contract specific competencies or qualifications e.g. Gas Safe.
- **Capacity and Capability:** detail about previous experience & Contracts delivered.

- **Management:** information on quality-assurance techniques & Performance review.
- **Equal Opportunities:** confirm suppliers' commitment to equal opportunities.
- **Sustainability:** confirm suppliers' commitment to economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- **Health & Safety:** the extent of the assessment will be appropriate to the nature of the contract, depending on the goods, services or works provided. Where the Council identifies that Health & Safety must be assessed, contractors must be accredited by a Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) member (or equivalent) before any contract is awarded.

If the supplier meets the requirements above, they will progress to the tender/award stage of the procurement process.

It must be noted that the Council will not tolerate fraudulent or unethical behaviour by any of its suppliers.

“The Council is committed to the use of SQuID in order to simplify & standardise the selection process whilst improving transparency”

Submission of Quotation or Tender response and Evaluation

Dependent on the value of the contract, selected suppliers will either be issued with a Request for Quotation (RFQ) or an Invitation to Tender (ITT).

Request for Quote- is a much simpler process compared to a tender. At present, quotes will typically be requested by email and suppliers may receive all or some of the following:

- **I n s t r u c t i o n s** for submitting the quote.
- **S p e c i f i c a t i o n** of Requirements (on which suppliers must base their quote).
- **M e t h o d** Statements (questions asking how the requirements will be delivered).
- Evaluation criteria & scoring methodology (if there is an element of quality that must also be assessed).

Suppliers will usually be required to return the quote by email.

Tender- is a much more comprehensive process. Suppliers who express an interest in the opportunity will receive a tender pack which consists of a range of tender documents. These documents will either be issued by post or downloaded from eTenderWales. The tender pack typically consists of the following:

- **I n s t r u c t i o n s** to Tenderers /Bidders.
- **S p e c i f i c a t i o n** of Requirements.
- **M e t h o d** Statements (questions asking how the requirements will be delivered).
- **E v a l u a t i o n** criteria & scoring methodology.
- **P r i c i n g** schedule.
- **C o n t r a c t** Terms and Conditions (Ts&Cs).
- **F o r m** of Tender.
- **T e n d e r** Return Instructions.

At the tender/award stage, the Council will evaluate the supplier's proposal of how they intend to deliver the specified requirements and at what cost. This differs to the *selection stage which* qualifies the supplier based on capability and capacity derived from *past experience*.

Tender responses will either be assessed on a pass/fail basis or scored. Everything a tenderer needs to know about how they will be evaluated will be clearly stated in the tender document pack.

Tender evaluation will be based on one of the following:

1. **Price and Quality**, used for the majority (if not all) services and works. Known as the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) with weightings assigned, for example, 40% price and 60% quality.
2. **Price only** (lowest cost).

In order to assess the quality criteria, suppliers will be asked to submit a written tender response. Where appropriate they may also be invited to an interview and/or presentation.

Contract Award

Request for Quote – typically the supplier who submitted the lowest price will be awarded the contract. However, if there is a quality element as part of the evaluation, then the supplier who submitted the lowest quote may not necessarily be the one who wins the contract.

Tenders- for those evaluated on the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT), the contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose overall score is the highest. For those based on price only, the supplier who submitted the lowest price will be awarded the contract.

Community Benefits

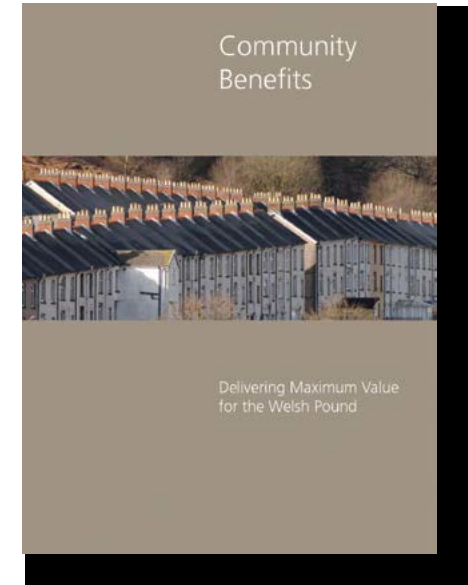
Where appropriate, the Council aims to include community benefits in its procurement activities to ensure that wider social and economic issues are addressed. We aim to encourage suppliers and contractors to consider ways in which they can add value to local communities, for example:

- Provide training and employment opportunities to economically inactive persons.
- Work with local schools and communities to help unemployed young persons gain experience through apprenticeships or voluntary work.
- Requiring main contractors to open up their subcontracting opportunities to local businesses, Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the Third Sector, i.e. through 'Meet the Buyer' events.

For larger value contracts tenderers may be asked to submit a Community Benefits Plan or Method Statement setting out how they will deliver community benefits through the contract.

N.B. Community benefits can only be evaluated and scored (i.e. make up part of the award criteria) if they are **core** to the contract activity. Community benefits which are non-core to the contract activity will not form part of the evaluation; however they will be contractually binding.

For further information on the inclusion of Community Benefits, please click on the image 'Community Benefits, Delivering Maximum Value for the Welsh Pound'.



“The Council aims to maximise the social, economic & environmental wellbeing of people in Wales derived from the inclusion of community benefits in its procurement activity”

Why do we use framework agreements?

Where appropriate, the Council will establish a framework agreement for categories of common spend, where goods, services or works are bought on a recurring basis.

Framework agreements set out the broad terms and conditions on which the buying organisation will purchase goods, services or works from those suppliers in the future. Framework agreements can have a single supplier or multiple suppliers and last up to 4 Years.

Before going out for quotations or tender, the Council will first establish whether there is an existing framework in place which can meet the requirements. This will also include a consideration of frameworks let by collaborative purchasing organisations such as the National Procurement Service, Crown Commercial Services and other collaborative groups such as the East Shires Purchasing Organisation. The following types of frameworks are available:

- Regional: Ceredigion Procurement Forum, e.g. Ceredigion Minor Works Framework
- **National** Frameworks (Wales): Welsh Government National Procurement Service e.g. stationery.
- Other National Frameworks, e.g. Crown Commercial Services (CCS), Eastern Shires Purchasing Consortium (ESPO), North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO).

In order to prepare in advance for upcoming opportunities, we advise suppliers to find out when frameworks are due to expire.

Consortia and Collaborative bids

Ceredigion Council encourages suppliers and contractors to submit consortia or collaborative bids for Council work, particularly for larger value or complex contracts. Consortia bids may help to increase the chance of winning work and in particular benefit SMEs and the Third Sector who may not have the skills or capacity to submit bids for larger contracts alone. The Council acknowledges the challenge consortia or collaborative bidding creates at the early stage of a tender process. Therefore, in order to allow time to prepare consortia or collaborative submissions the Council will aim to provide sufficient information to suppliers prior to the tender process commencing.

As well as working collaboratively or through consortia we encourage SMEs and the Third Sector to seek subcontracting opportunities and build relationships with main contractors. Main contractors can help make supply chain opportunities visible by advertising on Sell2Wales or through Meet the Buyer events.

Assistance and support is available from a number of organisations. For further information please see the 'Further Support' section.

Can tendering organisations receive debriefing (feedback)?

Ceredigion County Council will provide feedback to successful and unsuccessful tenderers to help them improve for future opportunities. Where appropriate, debriefing is likely to be given in writing as part of the letter which informs the tenderer that they were unsuccessful. Further information can be provided via telephone or face to face as long as the debriefing request is submitted **in writing** (by email).

How does the Council pay their suppliers?

Payment terms should be set out in the contract documents and unless otherwise agreed the Council aims to pay all invoices within 30 days of receipt. In the event of invoice queries and disputes, the Council aims to pay invoices within 30 days of the query or dispute being resolved.

To ensure prompt payment please ensure that you quote a valid order number on **all** your invoices. Suppliers who do not submit an invoice with a valid Purchase Order number may experience a delay in receiving payment. Therefore, we encourage suppliers to insist on receiving a valid purchase order from the person within the Council who placed the order.

Contract Monitoring and Management

Suppliers and contractors will be expected to meet their obligations to provide the goods, services or works in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract documentation and demonstrate value for money. The Council will strive to ensure that there is a good open and constructive working relationship with its suppliers and contractors, which will also help to identify and resolve any problems at the earliest possible juncture.

Tendering Dos & Don'ts

DO

Check the deadline time and date for return of tenders. Ensure you put enough time aside to complete the documentation.

Follow the instructions issued to return your completed tender to the Council.

Make sure you answer the questions as set giving details of the specified requirements and provide evidence as indicated in the guidance.

Ask for clarification if you are unsure on any part of the specification or have general queries in relation to tender documents, including contract terms and conditions. Queries can be submitted by eTenderWales (if the portal has been used for the tender process) or by email.

Respond promptly to any requests for further information from the Council.

DO NOT

Do not return your tender after the date or time as **late tenders will not be considered unless in exceptional circumstances.**

Do not mark the envelope with your name / company name or anything else that can indicate who the sender is. **Your tender will not be considered.**
(Not applicable to e-tenders)

Don't 'make up' the questions so you can include what you want in your response, we can only evaluate information that we have asked for.

Don't be put off by the documents, seek support, e.g. from tender advisors, attending meet the buyer events (See 'Further Support on the next page).

Don't submit prices which are so low that if awarded the contract you cannot supply the goods/services at that price to the quality specified. The Council has the right not to accept any tender we think will be unviable.

Further Support

Business Wales is a service run by the Welsh Government which provides businesses of all sizes from the private, public and third sectors with information, guidance, support and one to one mentoring. The service can be accessed by phone, online and through a network of eleven one stop shops located around Wales.

Business Wales also offers contract and tender support specifically for SMEs via '**Business Wales - Tendering**'. Prior to January 2013, similar support was given via the Supplier Development Service (SDS); however the SDS is no longer in existence. **Tender advisors** (formerly known as Supplier Development Champions) are based throughout Wales and work with SMEs and the Third Sector to develop their capacity, run workshops and help complete tender documents. For further information on 'Business Wales - Tendering' please see the 'Growing a Business' section on the Business Wales Website. (The weblink and contact details for tender advisors can be found at the end of this guide).

Meet the Buyer Events are run by the Council and Business Wales to provide suppliers with information on contract opportunities and the tender process. They can also provide an opportunity for suppliers to meet with main contractors to find out about potential supply chain/sub-contracting opportunities.

The Wales Co-operative Centre has a specialist team that can help organisations develop consortia. The team can provide support on how to structure your consortium, and can provide advice on governance and legal issues that might affect you.

Contact details for the above organisations can be found at the end of this guide.

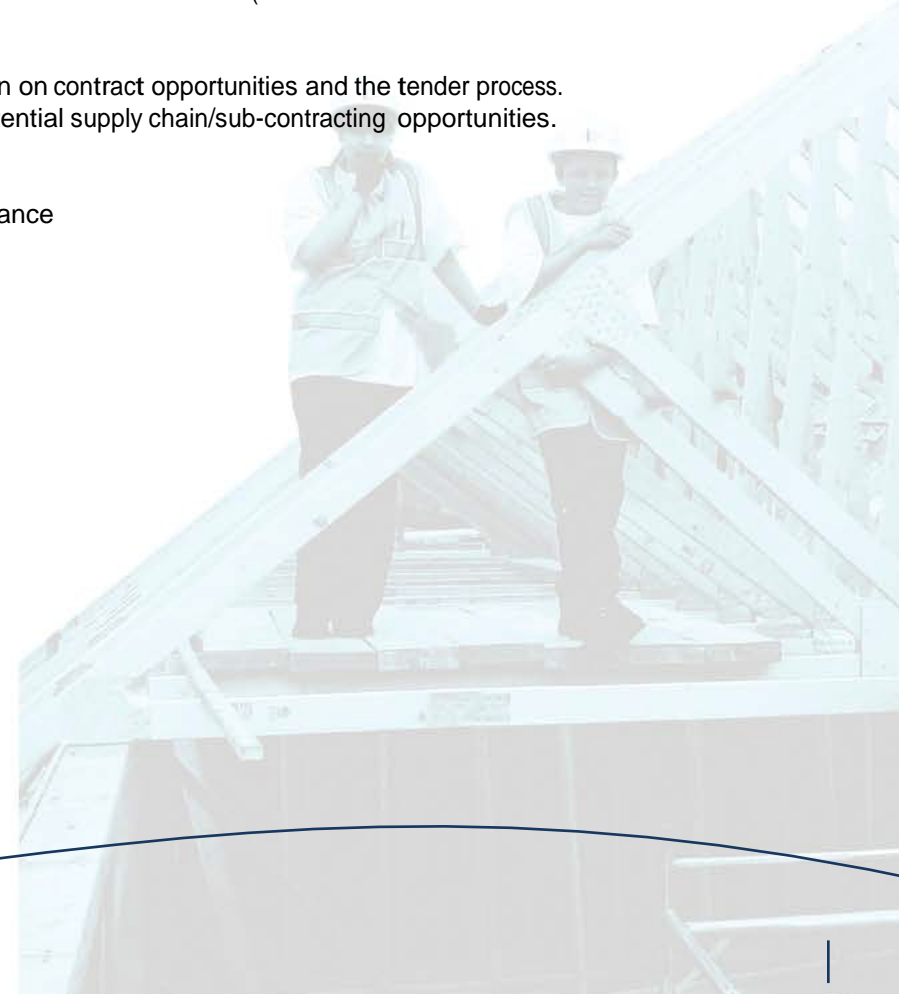
We would like to hear from you

This guide aims to help provide organisations who want to work with Ceredigion Council with a clearer understanding of how to bid for work and what may be asked of them as a supplier or contractor.

We would like to receive your feedback on how we could improve this guide, what information you feel is missing and whether there is anything you would like to see included in the future.

We would also like to receive your feedback with regards to your experience of doing business with the Council, the service provided by Procurement team and any issues or problems you have encountered.

Please send your comments to caffael@ceredigion.gov.uk



Useful Websites

ORGANISATION

Ceredigion Council- Procurement	https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/business/procurement/
Sell2Wales	www.sell2wales.gov.wales
Constructionline	www.constructionline.co.uk
SSIP (Health & Safety)	www.ssip.org.uk
Tenders Electronic Daily (TED)	http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do
United Kingdom Public Sector Information Website	www.gov.uk
EU Legislation Public Contracts Regulations PDF	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/102/contents/made http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/102/pdfs/uksi_20150102_en.pdf
Standard & Light Touch Service (EU tenders)	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/102/schedule/3/made
Crown Commercial Service (CCS)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/become-a-crown-commercial-service-supplier
Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO)	https://www.espo.org/Suppliers/Becoming-An-ESPO-Supplier
Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO)	https://www.ypo.co.uk/about/supplier-information

Useful Contacts

ORGANISATION	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	E-MAIL	WEBLINK
Ceredigion Council Procurement	Procurement	01970 633051	caffael@ceredigion.gov.uk	www.ceredigion.gov.uk
Business Wales		030 0060 3000		http://business.wales.gov.uk
Tender Advisor (Business Wales)	Guto Carrod	07800 587066	Guto.Carrod@businesswales.org.uk	
Wales Council for Voluntary Action	Customer Services	0800 2888 329	help@wcva.org.uk	www.wcva.org.uk
Wales Co-operative Centre		0300 111 5050	info@walescooperative.org	www.walescooperative.org
Business In Focus	Customer Services	0870 950 90 90	enquiries@businessinfocus.co.uk	www.businessinfocus.co.uk/en/home.aspx
Federation of Small Businesses	Customer Services	0292 077 06	wales.policy@fsb.org.uk	www.fsb.org.uk
Federation of Master Builders	Wales Office	01656 7509 55	richardjenkins@fmb.org.uk	www.fmb.org.uk/about-fmb/fmb-regions/
	Head Office	020 722 7583		devolved-countries/welsh/
	Join the FMB	08000 965 765		

Ceredigion Public Sector Procurement Contacts

ORGANISATION	CONTACT	TELEPHONE	E-MAIL	WEBLINK
Aberystwyth University	Mike Smith	01970 628611	mks@aber.ac.uk	www.aber.ac.uk
Hywel Dda Health Board	Alun James	01970 635837	alun.james@wales.nhs.uk	www.hywelddahb.wales.nhs.uk
National Library of Wales	Karen Deakin	01970 632993	karen.deakin@llgc.org.uk	www.llgc.org.uk
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	Sian Poyer	01267 676779	s.poyer@tsd.ac.uk	www.uwtsd.ac.uk
Tai Ceredigion	Llyr Edwards	01570 424330	llyr.edwards@taicedigion.org.uk	www.taicedigion.org.uk
Natural Resources Wales	Amy Turner	0300 0680300	procurementserviceswales@forestry.gsi.gov.uk	http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/splash?orig=/
Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service	Helen Rees	01267 226849/01792 705255	h.rees@mawwfire.gov.uk	www.mawwfire.gov.uk/Pages/Welcome.aspx
Dyfed Powys Police	Faye Ryan	01267 226540	faye.ryan@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk	www.dyfed-powys.police.uk