

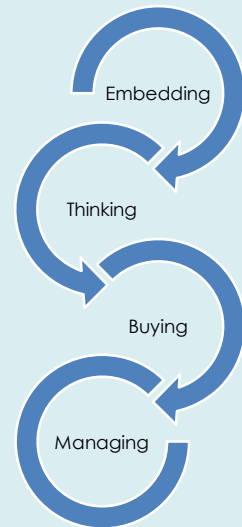
Delivering Social Value in Northern Ireland

Information session for Brokers

This is an information session for organisations in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise or VCSE Sector and will cover the opportunities that the inclusion of social value in public contracts presents for these organisations and how they can get involved.

Agenda

- > PPN 01/21: Social Value in Procurement
- > Social Value model
- > Social Value themes
- > Social Value indicators and initiatives
- > Case studies
- > How to get involved



In this session, we will cover:

- The Social Value policy, as set out in Procurement Policy Note 01/21
- How the social value model for public procurement works in Northern Ireland
- The types of initiatives organisations that win public contracts are being asked to deliver
- What this looks like in practice
- How you can hear about any relevant opportunities and get involved

PPN 01/21 – Social Value in Procurement

- > From 24 February 2025, tenders must allocate a **minimum of 10% of the award criteria to Social Value**
- > Applies to works contracts above the UK Procurement Threshold and contracts for services above £500,000 (inclusive of VAT).
 - For Construction contracts, the threshold is £5,372,609*

Where appropriate, public bodies can also:

- > score for social value on contracts outside of these thresholds.
- > give greater weight to social value than the 10% minimum.

**figures correct as at January 2025.*



Procurement Policy Note 01/21 was approved by the Executive in December 2024 and has the status of government policy.

The PPN mandates that from 24 February 2025, public sector tenders must allocate a minimum of 10% of the award criteria to Social Value in works contracts above the UK Procurement Threshold and in services contracts above £500,000 (inclusive of VAT). The current threshold for Construction works contracts £5,372,609.

It is not currently mandatory to score social value in supplies contracts although some Contracting Authorities may opt to do this.

Where appropriate, public bodies can also:

- score for social value on contracts outside of these thresholds and/or
- give greater weight to social value than the 10% minimum.

PPN 01/21 – Social Value in Procurement

- > Requirement to consider grant funding and reserving contracts
- > Considering ways of reducing consumption and including end-of-life requirements
- > Specifying minimum sustainable requirements
- > Policy will be reviewed in 2027



The PPN also states that it is now a requirement to consider if grant funding would be a more appropriate way of delivering the service OR if the contract could be reserved. Reserving a contract means that only certain types of suppliers can bid for the contract. PPN 01/21 focuses on reserving a contract for 'supported employment providers', which are organisations that employ or provide employment related support to disabled or disadvantaged people.

PPN 01/21 states that Departments must ensure opportunities for social value are maximised for all contracts. For example, through:

- Considering ways of reducing consumption and end-of-life requirements in order to reduce carbon emissions and promote a circular economy.
- Specifying the minimum sustainable requirements relevant to the work, supply or service being purchased in the specification to deliver the intended outcomes

The PPN goes on to state that Social value will be scored based on 4 themes – which we will cover in a couple of slides time – and that The policy will be reviewed ahead of 2027.

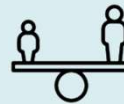
Those are the main headlines from the PPN but, of course, if you would like to read the policy note in more details, the PPN is available to download from the Department of Finance's website.

Benefits of including social value



By including social value in procurement, we can:

- > Invest in skills and employability
- > Support social enterprises and micro enterprises
- > Support voluntary and community organisations
- > Promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- > Build ethical, diverse and resilient supply chains
- > Reduce our carbon footprint and promote biodiversity
- > Improve mental health and wellbeing



By including social value in procurement, the public, private and VCSE sectors can work together to:

- Invest in skills development and employability, to support a more resource efficient, greener and low carbon economy
- Support social enterprises and micro enterprises
- Support voluntary and community organisations
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Build ethical, diverse and resilient supply chains
- Reduce our carbon footprint and promote biodiversity
- Improve mental health and wellbeing

Approaches

The social value model sets out **three options for scoring social value** depending on the size and nature of the contract:

1. Social value points;
2. Fixed social value indicator; and
3. Hybrid approach

All approaches are based on the 4 social value themes set out in the policy and both evaluate Tenderers' qualitative responses to the award criterion.

The social value model sets out three options for scoring social value depending on the size and nature of the contract. These are:

- social value points;
- fixed social value indicator; and
- A hybrid approach.

All approaches are based on the 4 social value themes and both evaluate Tenderers' qualitative responses to the award criterion. Therefore the response is evaluated based on a methodology setting out how the tenderer will deliver the required social value against the particular themes/indicators set out.

We will now look at the 4 social value themes.

Social Value Themes and Indicators

Having a set of themes helps contracting authorities and suppliers to have a shared understanding of social value requirements.



An indicator is the substance behind each theme that outlines in more detail how the theme can be addressed. There are multiple indicators for each theme.

PPN 01/21 provides a framework of social value themes and indicators. A common framework enables suppliers to develop a shared understanding of the social value requirements of public contracts and how they will be scored.

There are 4 themes:

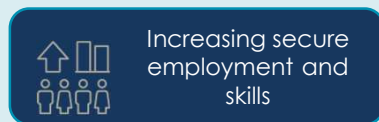
- Increasing secure employment and skills
- Building ethical and resilient supply chains
- Delivering climate action and
- Promoting wellbeing

Each theme is broken down into a set of indicators.

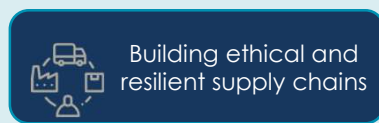
Contracting Authorities may select one or multiple themes for inclusion in the social value requirements of the contract, in order to reflect the Authority's strategic priorities.

We will now look at each theme in a little more detail.

Social Value themes



This theme aims to **create employment and training opportunities** and support **in-work progression and skills development**, both for those who face barriers to work and to support a more resource efficient, greener, low carbon economy.



This theme aims to **tackle employment inequality, reduce the risk of modern slavery and human rights abuses** within the supply chain, promote **diverse and secure supply chains**, and support **entrepreneurship and social enterprises**.

Each theme aims to address risks and maximise opportunities to deliver social value in relation to the area in question.

Increasing secure employment and skills aims to create employment and training opportunities and support in-work progression and skills development, both for those who face barriers to work and to support a more resource efficient, greener, low carbon economy.

Building ethical and resilient supply chains aims to tackle employment inequality, reduce the risk of modern slavery and human rights abuses within the supply chain, promote diverse and secure supply chains, and support entrepreneurship and social enterprises.

Social Value themes



Delivering climate action



This theme aims to support **climate adaptation and mitigation** measures, promote **biodiversity and resilient ecosystems**, stimulate the **circular economy** and work towards net zero by **minimising carbon emissions**.



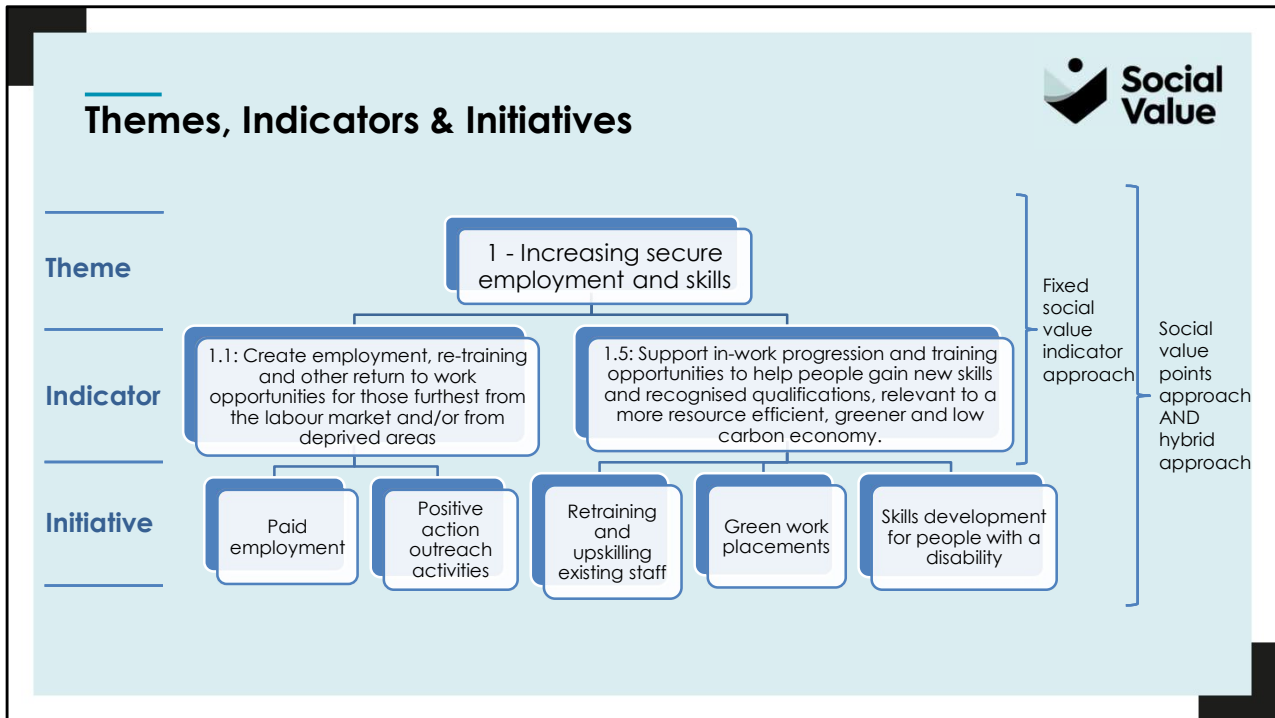
Promoting wellbeing



This theme aims to support **wellbeing**, improve **equality, diversity and inclusion**, and promote **community cohesion**.

Delivering climate action aims to support climate adaptation and mitigation measures, promote biodiversity and resilient ecosystems, stimulate the circular economy and work towards net zero by minimising carbon emissions.

Promoting wellbeing aims to support wellbeing, improve equality, diversity and inclusion, and promote community cohesion.



Each theme is broken down into indicators – here you can see theme 1 – increasing secure employment and skills.

Indicators outline in more detail how the theme can be addressed. There are 8 indicators under theme 1, but we've only pulled out indicator 1.1 and 1.5 to illustrate how themes and indicators work on this slide.

The Social value Points approach, fixed social value indicator approach and the hybrid approach all use the same themes and indicators.

When the social value points approach or the hybrid approach is used, each indicator is aligned to Social Value Initiatives, which are the practical things that a contractor can deliver in order to achieve social value points on a contract. You can see a selection of initiatives that fall under theme 1 at the bottom of the slide. This is how it works across all 4 themes.

If you would like to look at all of the themes, indicators and initiatives in more detail, you can download a Social Value Delivery Plan from the Procurement section of our website.

Example initiatives

- Pro-bono professional advice to organisations in the VCSE sector
- Employment opportunities
- Modern slavery and human rights due diligence
- Including social and micro enterprises in the supply chain
- Measuring and minimising the contract's carbon emissions
- Supporting the wellbeing of people impacted by the contract
- Initiatives to improve equality, diversity and inclusion
- Offering training and work experience
- Ensuring in-work progression for staff
- Enhancing biodiversity and promoting resilient ecosystems



Here is a list of some of those initiatives. Some are quite broad, e.g. professional advice to VCSE organisation, but they will become more tailored because they are always linked to the subject matter of the specific contract. So, for example, if it was a Marketing and Design contract and the supplier chose to deliver that initiative it would be related to their specialism, whereas if it was for legal services or an auditing contract, of course that professional advice would look quite different.

Initiatives can also be tailored to specific priority groups – that is groups of people that the Contracting Authority has a strategic responsibility for or that are service users of the contract for example. So the Contracting Authority may include, for example, people with a disability or care leavers as a priority group to encourage the supplier to deliver for example employment, work experience or skills development initiatives to those people.

IT contract

Elite Training and Consultancy Limited were required to deliver Business Development and Knowledge Sharing with a VCSE organisation.

Results

- > Online calculator to enable NIACRO's participants to determine when their criminal record becomes 'spent'.
- > The tool is now available, free of charge, via NIACRO's DisclosureNI website.

Social Value is an excellent idea - it inspires collaboration that would otherwise not exist. In our case, we sought out a partner that we would otherwise not have found, conducted work we would otherwise not have done and made a positive social contribution we would otherwise not have made."

The Supplier had a unique combination of skills and experience, and we were able to maximise this with a project that both met our needs and fitted their brief, giving us the freedom to think creatively about a project that we may not have contemplated were we not afforded the gift of the Supplier's time."

elite | training (NI) ltd



We will now look at two examples of how this works in practice. The first partnership is between the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) and Elite Training and Consultancy Limited, which is a local IT company contracted to deliver a large public sector IT contract. NIACRO is a voluntary organisation committed to reducing crime and its impact on people and communities through working with children and young people, families affected by imprisonment and adults in prison and the community.

This collaboration involved designing and building an online calculator which would enable NIACRO's participants to determine when their criminal record becomes 'spent'. The supplier worked closely with NIACRO to understand the legislative framework, design and build the tool, and undertake extensive user testing to ensure the calculator met the needs of their participants. This tool is now available, free of charge, via NIACRO's DisclosureNI website.

The Programme Manager from NIACRO commented that: "The time and expertise Elite Training and Consultancy Limited gave NIACRO to develop a new online tool has been invaluable. The impact of the work is set to have far reaching positive consequences for the people NIACRO support, and help us to unlock the potential they have by de-mystifying the disclosure process. The Supplier had a unique combination of skills and experience, and we were able to maximise this with a project that both met our needs and fitted their brief, giving us the freedom to think creatively about a project that we may not have contemplated were we not afforded the gift of the Supplier's time."

Sean Walsh from Elite Training and Consultancy Services Ltd who led on the delivery commented that: "Social Value is an excellent idea. It inspires collaboration that would otherwise not exist. In our case, we sought out a partner that we would otherwise not have found, conducted work we would otherwise not have done and made a positive social contribution we would otherwise not have made."

Grounds Maintenance

- Idverde subcontracts The Turnaround Project's social enterprise, Outwork.
- Outwork has 3 or 4 people working on Idverde contracts for 4.5 days per week.
- Over 4 years, a trusted relationship has been built between the supplier and social enterprise.

Good communication and flexibility are vital. Idverde goes beyond obligations by also providing staff training and equipment for us. Some people we work with have gone onto become Idverde employees."

CEO at The Turnaround Project

"Our partnership is win-win. It addresses our recruitment challenges while delivering our social value requirements by offering opportunities to people who face barriers to employment."

Sustainability Manager at Idverde



The second example is a partnership between Idverde and The Turnaround Project. Idverde is contracted to deliver ground maintenance services for the NI Housing Executive and some Housing Associations. The Turnaround Project's mission is 'to work with society to enable people who have served sentences to turn around their futures'.

Idverde subcontracts some of the work to The Turnaround Project's social enterprise, Outwork. Outwork offer a range of grounds maintenance and cleaning services for companies, organisations and domestic clients. Outwork currently has a team of 3 or 4 people working on Idverde contracts 4.5 days per week.

The nature of ground maintenance means that the work is seasonal which presents recruitment challenges for Idverde. "Our partnership with The Turnaround Project is win-win. It addresses our recruitment challenges while delivering our social value requirements by offering opportunities to people who face barriers to employment," said Gemma Fawcett, Sustainability Manager at Idverde.

Over the past 4 years, a trusted relationship has been built between the supplier and social enterprise. Richard Good, CEO of The Turnaround Project, explains, "Good communication and flexibility are vital. Idverde goes beyond obligations by also providing staff training and equipment for us. Some of the people we work with have gone onto become Idverde employees when their time with us has ended."

This partnership is helping people who have been through the justice system to overcome barriers to employment.

Find a Broker



Brokers are organisations in Northern Ireland who:

- > can benefit from the social value initiatives public sector suppliers deliver;
- > work with people who can benefit from the social value initiatives; or,
- > Have knowledge and skills to support suppliers to deliver social value initiatives.

So, how can you make sure that you are ready to hear about these types of opportunities and start working with suppliers? Many of you will already be aware of our Find a Broker system on our website and this is one of the ways we try to make it as easy as possible for suppliers and brokers to work together. You can see the link highlighted in yellow on the screen.

As you know, Brokers are organisations in Northern Ireland who:

- can benefit from the social value initiatives public sector suppliers deliver;
- work with people who can benefit from the social value initiatives; or,
- Have knowledge and skills to support suppliers to deliver social value initiatives.

The 'Find a Broker' section on the Social Value website (<https://buysocialni.org/contractors/find-a-broker/>) helps suppliers who win public contracts find brokers who can assist them in delivering their social value requirements.

Brokers have the skills, expertise and connections to help suppliers deliver their social value requirements by:

- linking them with people who are eligible for employment, work placement or skills development opportunities
- Sharing their knowledge to help suppliers deliver training or action plans
- being a Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise which is eligible to receive business development and knowledge sharing support, or be included in the supply chain

It is really important that, first of all, you are registered on the Find a Broker system and also very importantly that the contact details on your profile are up to date. We know that sometimes people can move on or change roles and it can be frustrating for suppliers to reach out and get no reply. To register or to update your details, you can go to the Broker resources section of our website where there is a registration form you can send us with your current details.

Find a Contract

The screenshot shows the 'Find a Contract' page on the Social Value website. The page has a navigation bar with the Social Value logo and menu items: 'About', 'Suppliers', 'Brokers', 'Contract Managers', and 'Procurement'. Below the navigation is a red banner with the text 'Current Contracts' and a breadcrumb 'Home > Brokers'. A search icon is in the top right. A filter section below the banner allows users to filter results by 'Social Consideration', 'Priority Group', 'Location', and 'Industry'. Each filter has a dropdown menu with 'All' as the default selection. A 'FILTER RESULTS' button is at the bottom of the filter section.

The second thing we do to try and help suppliers and brokers to work together is the Find a Contract section of the website. This section provides a list of current public sector contracts which include social value requirements. So, as we talked through earlier, these social value requirements could include:

- paid employment or work experience opportunities for people disadvantaged in the labour market;
- support for VCSE sector organisations;
- biodiversity initiatives;
- digital inclusion activities;
- wellbeing initiatives;
- opportunities for VCSE organisations in the supply chain.

We provide Broker organisations with this network of suppliers, in order for you to reach out and connect with suppliers about opportunities relevant to your organisation. We update the information regularly as new contracts are awarded and others finish. On there, you will find contact information for the supplier. We try to get a person's contact details including telephone number and email but if we are still waiting for that, it will have the company's information for you.

How to get involved

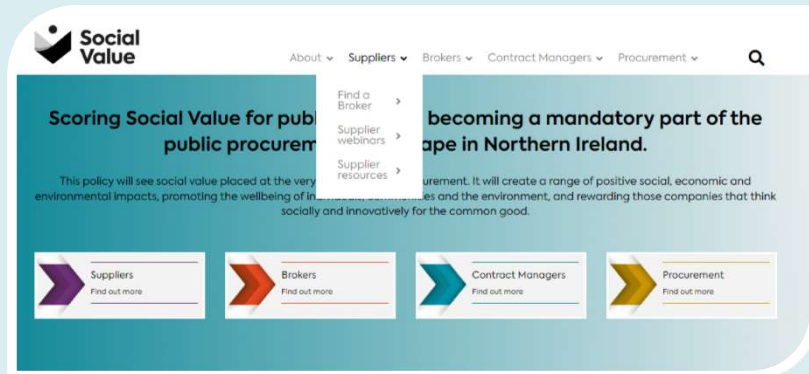
- > Register for Find a Broker *(form available in Broker resources)*
- > Keep your details up to date on Find a Broker *(form available in Broker resources)*
- > Sign up to our newsletter *(form available in About section)*
- > If you are a social enterprise, register for Social Enterprise NI's directory:
www.socialenterpriseni.org/
- > Be proactive – search the Current Contracts

To round up – these are the action points for you to make sure your organisation is ready to work with suppliers as they deliver their social value requirements.

- Register for Find a Broker *(form available in Broker resources)*
- Keep your details up to date on Find a Broker *(form available in Broker resources)*
- Sign up to newsletter *(form available in About section)*
- If you are a social enterprise, register for SENI Directory
- Be proactive – search the Current Contracts

Supplier resources

- > Webinars and written guidance for suppliers is available at socialvalueni.org



And finally, if you are also an organisation that will also be bidding for public contracts, you can access various webinars and written guidance on the Suppliers section of our website, which you can see how to access on screen now.

Thank you.