**Suppliers - Frequently Asked Questions**

**Note: suppliers should check the individual contract documentation for specific details of the social value requirements for that particular contract as the requirements will vary.**

**What is Social Value?**

Social value refers to wider financial and non-financial impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the environment. Public procurement is an important source of expenditure in Northern Ireland, with central and local government spending upwards of £3 billion annually on supplies, services and construction works. This expenditure offers significant potential to contribute to the economic, environmental and social outcomes contained in the Executive’s Programme for Government.

**What contracts does PPN 01/21 apply to?**

There are elements of PPN 01/21 that apply to all contracts. See Annex A for details. The requirement to allocate a minimum of 10% of the tender score to social value applies to contracts for works above the UK Procurement Threshold[[1]](#footnote-1) and contracts for services above £500,000, (inclusive of VAT).

Where appropriate, Departments can also score for social value on contracts outside of these thresholds. Departments can also give greater weight to social value than the 10% minimum.

**Does PPN 01/21 apply to Utilities Contracts?**

Yes, PPN 01/21 will apply to Utilities Contracts

**Does PPN 01/21 apply when the contract is likely to be delivered from outside of Northern Ireland?**

Yes, PPN 01/21 still applies. You are encouraged to participate in any pre-market engagement activities to ensure that appropriate themes/indicators are selected. Remote delivery is an option for some of the social value initiatives, while other initiatives deliver social value by improving conditions for the employees working on the contract or reducing the environmental impact of the contract, regardless of location.

**Will social value be included in contracts that are below threshold?**

Whilst the PPN mandates that social value must be included as award criteria in contracts above threshold, there is no barrier to contracting authorities including it on smaller contracts. It is mandatory on construction contracts over £500k but below threshold to include social value as a condition of contract.

**What will social value look like on contracts in Northern Ireland?**

There are many different approaches to including social value in government contracts. Suppliers may be used to delivering social value under different models in other parts of the world. In Northern Ireland the main approach that has been adopted is a ‘Points Based’ approach where suppliers will be given a target based on 100 social value points for every £1m of contract value and pro-rata. Points are accrued by delivering initiatives relevant to the contract and set out in the tender documentation which have each been given a points value. This approach ensures that the social value delivered on each contract is relevant to the contract and proportionate to the value. Where the points based approach is not a good fit Contracting Authorities may use the Fixed Social Value Indicator approach which focuses on delivering social value against a small number of indicators in the PPN. Information on both approaches can be found in the Supplier Guidance on our website <https://socialvalueni.org/contractors/>

**Are there organisations that can help me to deliver social value?**

Yes. There are many organisations established throughout Northern Ireland who are already working with people who are looking for employment, work placement opportunities, skills development and/or employment support. On our website these organisations can register as ‘brokers’ which means they are able to help you to find opportunities to deliver social value. Brokers can help suppliers meet their Social Value requirements by:

* linking them with people who are eligible for employment and/or work placement opportunities
* supporting/mentoring people who are eligible for paid employment opportunities as they begin employment with a supplier
* facilitating a supplier’s business in education initiatives that may be a requirement of the contract
* being a Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise or microbusiness which is eligible to receive support as part of a supplier’s social consideration requirements

You can use our interactive database to find a Broker who may be able to assist you to find the right individual or solution to support your organisation deliver social value. <https://socialvalueni.org/contractors/find-a-broker/>

**Does the supplier get to choose which organisation they work with to deliver the social value requirements?**

Yes, in most cases the supplier can chose which organisations they work with to deliver the social value requirements; however, in some cases, the Contracting Authority may specify a particular organisation.

For some of the initiatives the Supplier will be required to notify the social value opportunities to one or more of [the brokers registered on the Social Value website](https://buysocialni.org/contractors/find-a-broker/). In relation to paid employment opportunities, the Supplier must also notify the job opportunities to [www.jobapplyni.com](http://www.jobapplyni.com)

**Where can I find information to help me respond to the social value award criteria in a tender?**

There is specific supplier guidance available to download at <https://socialvalueni.org/contractors#supplier-resources>. You can watch supplier information webinars on demand at <https://socialvalueni.org/contractors#supplier-videos>.

**Can part-time hours be considered for paid employment or work experience?**

Yes. If the contract uses the social value points based approach, the points gained will be prorated. If the contract uses the fixed social value indicator approach, report the total number of hours which will be delivered.

**Is it enough for the supplier to set out that they will comply with legal requirements in relation to the social value indicators e.g., Fair Work, Human Rights? Is this considered social value?**

The social value asked for and delivered must be additional to the legal requirements. Social value is about going beyond the minimum legal requirements.

**Can I count social value delivered by sub-contractors?**

Yes. The main contractor has responsibility for ensuring that the social value is delivered on the contract and the points target met where applicable. However, you can ask sub-contractors to help deliver social value initiatives. For example, a sub-contractor may employ an apprentice specifically to work on the contract or include a Social Enterprise in their own supply chain when delivering their element of the contact. The main contactor will have access to the on-line monitoring portal, so it is important that you have business processes in place to allow your sub-contractors to report their delivery of social value up to you.

**Can a bidder’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) statements, policies and/or case studies be accepted as proof of how they intend to deliver the social value indicators?**

No CSR refers to how the organisation performs corporately. It is not contract-specific and therefore will not adequately address the social value award criteria.

The bidder’s response to the social value criteria should be forward looking and relate specifically to the activities they will undertake to deliver the social value requirements on the contract.

**My organisation already delivers community/employability/environmental initiatives that match the social value requirements. Can I report those initiatives against the contract’s requirements?**

Social value is not about business as usual. The social value that you attribute to each contract needs to be generated by that contract e.g., you can’t claim the social value for eight apprentices if only four of them will be working on that project. Social value initiatives must be relevant to the specific Contract only.

For example: If you organise a careers talk at a school every year, you cannot now claim social value for this as the initiative has not been delivered specifically as a result of the Contract for which you are submitting a tender response. In order to claim social value against this type of initiative, the Supplier will need to deliver an additional careers talk(s) as a result of the specific social value requirements on the Contracting Authority’s contract.

**Under the Points Approach are the points calculated based on the number of people or number of hours?**

The points are calculated based on the number of hours spent delivering the particular initiative.

**How will the social value requirements be monitored?**

The social value requirements will be monitored using the social value monitoring system.

The Social Value monitoring system is a web-based system that works in the following way:

* The Social Value Unit will issue the Supplier with login details and guidance on how to add information relating to the delivery of their targets.
* The Supplier will receive a reminder to update the report; however, Suppliers can log in to the monitoring portal at any time.
* Suppliers record their progress to date against each indicator. (There is also a notes section which Suppliers should use to record any efforts that they have made to fulfil their targets).
* A report will be sent from the system at regular intervals to both the Supplier and Client Project Managers. This report should be regularly reviewed during progress meetings to ensure the Supplier is on track to deliver their targets.

**What happens if a Supplier does not deliver on their social value commitments?**

The social value requirements set out should be proportionate and achievable. It is the responsibility of the Client Project Manager to regularly review the Social Value Delivery Reports to monitor Supplier performance against the social value requirements.

As set out in the Department of Finance’s Sourcing Toolkit: Contract Management:

*Approximately £3bn is spent annually on public contracts across Local and Central*

*Government here. It is therefore important that contracts are actively managed to ensure*

*they deliver best value for money for the tax payer. The reputations of a contracting*

*authority and contractor can be damaged by a poorly managed contract that does not*

*deliver its expected outcomes, thereby wasting public money. […] Ensuring the delivery of social value also forms part of active contract management.*

The Contracting Authority is required to include a Key Performance Indicators for social value within the contract documents.

1. PPN 01/21 also mandates: *“To maximise the potential for social value in works contracts below the UK Threshold, Departments are required to incorporate at least one indicator in the specification or conditions of contract from the Social Value Themes at Annex A in contracts above £500,000 and below the UK threshold.”* For more information, please see: XXX [↑](#footnote-ref-1)