



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Procurement reform: transparency

The Procurement Bill will require changes to existing processes and systems.

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Contents

System changes

Potential impacts and opportunities

Contracting authorities

Indicative timescales

Training

Further information and support

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Welsh Government system changes

Many of the changes contained in the Procurement Bill (the Bill) will require changes to existing processes and systems.

The procurement digital action plan being taken forward by the Welsh Government will seek to improve Welsh Government funded procurement systems and processes in preparation for the Bill being implemented.

This project has been initiated to implement the Open Contracting Data Standards (OCDS) throughout Welsh procurement systems. OCDS is a free, non-proprietary open data standard for public contracting, implemented by governments around the world. It describes how to publish data and documents about contracting processes for goods, works and services.

The move to these standards will allow better use of procurement data in commercial decision making, ensure compliance and improve supplier management, in line with Goal 9 of the Wales Procurement Policy Statement.

For the new Procurement Bill OCDS notice types, the key assumptions for the digital action plan are that systems will:

- Utilise the UK government's (UKG) Proposed Transparency System (the Central Platform).
- Generate procurement lifecycle notices within Welsh Government's procurement systems and send to the central platform via Sell2Wales.
- Use the UKG system for management of the non-procurement lifecycle notices (Debarment Register, complaints, etc.)

These activities support the Digital Strategy for Wales.

A new **transparency WPPN** (WPPN 02/22) has been issued to start to prepare

to WPS contracting authorities for the new transparency notices that they will be required to publish as a result of procurement reform. The WPPN relates to the current PCR 2015 regulations and sets out Welsh Government's commitment to publish information about awards over certain low value thresholds on Sell2Wales (S2W) and to promote this approach as best practice to WPS contracting authorities in Wales. It is hoped that this approach will encourage organisations to start to think about their own system, people and process changes that will be required as part of introducing procurement reform.

Potential impacts and opportunities

The aim of the Procurement Bill is to improve transparency in public sector procurement and provides for several additional notices to be created. More transparent procurement data will support analysis of how Welsh public money is spent and will strengthen WCA's accountability and potential collaboration opportunities.

It is envisaged that any additional resource obligations arising from the changes to transparency requirements will be largely mitigated by the enhanced automation of procurement systems and platforms. Welsh Government is working to develop its own platforms and is working closely with UKG to ensure that any resource impacts from the Bill are minimised as far as possible.

Welsh Government have also secured certain derogations within the Bill to make it easier for WCAs without reducing the level of transparency within the procurement process. For example, whereas English and Northern Irish Contracting Authorities will be required to publish redacted copies of contracts valued over £2 million, or modified contracts with a value over £2 million on the Central Platform, there is no such requirement for WCAs. This is a good example of where the Welsh Government has taken a pragmatic approach to the legislation, as most of the information contained in the redacted contract

would be in the public domain in any case.

Welsh contracting authorities system changes

Further changes to procurement systems may be required by WCAs to ensure they are interoperable with the new systems infrastructure. The Welsh Government will be taking these aspects forward and further detail on required changes to systems will be provided in due course.

Indicative timescales for the Procurement Bill

The UK government have indicated that the Procurement Bill is unlikely to be implemented before late 2023 at the earliest. However, it should be noted that this may be subject to change. Secondary legislation, which includes legislation that is relevant to the proposed transparency regime, is also currently being developed by the Welsh Government. It is our intention to engage with stakeholders on the draft legislation prior to its introduction to the Senedd.

Training

UKG are currently developing a programme of learning for contracting authorities. Over the coming months we will engage with stakeholders to help inform this programme and ensure that it reflects Welsh policy priorities and incorporates both the Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill. The format of this training is still being developed and further information will be provided in due course.

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Technical training in the use of the Welsh Government funded systems, will also be provided once the changes to the systems have been completed and tested.

Further information and support

Further updates will be provided as this work progresses.

If you require any further information or support in relation these changes, please direct any queries to ProcurementReformTeam@gov.wales.

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