



UNISON Responsible Procurement Policy

Policy Statement

UNISON recognises that the purchasing decisions it makes impact on the environment and society, both locally and globally, now and for generations to come.

For UNISON, 'Responsible Procurement' means the union's commitment to acting in an ethical manner and proactively managing and minimising the environmental and social impacts of the products and services it purchases.

UNISON believes that Responsible Procurement activity is consistent with the principle of achieving value for money. The union recognises that effective and efficient purchasing will be achieved through a combination of national, regional, departmental and branch arrangements.

The scope of this policy covers all products and services purchased by UNISON at national and regional level and includes purchases made on behalf of the union by its contractors and suppliers. UNISON branches have autonomy over their own local policies but are encouraged to adopt this policy and UNISON's practices or similar.

This policy is consistent with UNISON's [Financial Standing Orders](#) (see related documents below).

Aim

The overall aim of this Policy is to actively develop best practice Responsible Procurement across the union to ensure the goods and services purchased are produced and delivered under conditions that have the least harmful effect on the environment, communities and workers, whilst obtaining value for money from UNISON's expenditure.

UNISON acknowledges that Responsible Procurement requires the cooperation and engagement of its partner organisations, contractors and suppliers and seeks to work with organisations that have principles aligned with UNISON's aims and values. UNISON actively supports the Living Wage and is an accredited Living Wage Employer. The union seeks to work with organisations that pay at least the Living Wage to its employees.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires certain organisations to provide disclosure of their efforts (if any) to address the issues of slavery and human trafficking in their business and supply chains. UNISON is committed to its obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and also to working with its suppliers to identify and eradicate human rights violations.

Responsible Procurement Strategy

To achieve the aims of its Responsible Procurement Policy UNISON will strive to:

1. Use whole life costing as a basis for making purchasing decisions (rather than just initial purchase cost);
2. Include relevant health and safety, environmental, employment and social evaluation criteria to assess supplier bids in addition to price and quality of product/service;
3. The establishment and use of preferred suppliers/list of pre-approved suppliers and centralised national agreements to obtain economies of scale and prevent duplication of effort in vetting suppliers;

4. Work with suppliers that demonstrably share UNISON's values on Responsible Procurement and work with current suppliers to educate them concerning UNISON's Responsible Procurement objectives and share best practice and improve the health and safety, environmental, employment conditions in the supply chain;
5. Maintain a central contract register to improve control of contracts and their timely renewal;
6. Disseminate Purchasing and Contract Management Guidance for personnel involved in purchasing activity;
7. Use purchasing cards for low value/low risk items to reduce administration (at national and regional level);
8. Encourage internal purchasers to adopt best practice (reduce, re-use, recycle) to review the consumption of goods and services to reduce costs and negative impacts of the items purchased;
9. Ensure goods and services are of the correct specification which will ensure quality and fitness for purpose and limit the impact of consumption of energy, production of waste and harmful emissions;
10. Specify, wherever possible and reasonably practicable, the use of fair trade products and sustainable materials and products or include the facility for suppliers to submit sustainable alternatives to the specified goods;
11. Promote transparency in the procurement process and decision making and deal fairly, responsibly, ethically with suppliers;
12. Integrate Responsible Procurement considerations into each stage of the procurement process: defining the requirement, quote/tender evaluation, supplier selection and ongoing contract management;
13. Work with other bodies to identify and learn from examples of best practice and share experiences and expertise and adopt best practice;
14. Address barriers to entry so that SME's and local suppliers are encouraged to bid for appropriate work;
15. Ensure sustainability, health and safety, equal opportunities and the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining are written into all contracts.

Delivery of the commitments made in this Policy will be supported through the implementation of the union's Environmental Strategy, Policy and Action Plan which establishes individual guidelines and policies for products and services that have a significant impact on the environment.

Supplier Code of Conduct

UNISON actively promotes the adoption of good labour standards, worker rights, equal opportunities and considers occupational health and safety a priority. Products and services must be produced and supplied under safe working conditions that do not involve abuse or exploitation of persons and in a manner that promotes sustainable practices and protects the environment.

UNISON seeks to work with suppliers that share the same values and standards for workers. As a minimum, UNISON seeks to engage suppliers that comply with all relevant legislation, including adherence to the Modern Slavery Act and have sound employment and working practices, including health and safety and environmental record.

UNISON is an accredited Living Wage Employer and seeks to work with organisations that pay a minimum of the Living Wage. UNISON will not work with suppliers (or their sub-contractors) that unlawfully discriminate against employees, or suppliers that prevent or discourage employees from joining trade unions.

UNISON expects its Suppliers to actively work towards applying the labour standards set out under the Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI) Base Code. This should include any sub-contractors. Suppliers should also have ethical audits carried out to demonstrate their commitment and identify any risks in this area. Suppliers must be able to demonstrate any corrective action/measures taken in the event of any non-compliance.

Suppliers are expected to have or be working towards having policies or statements on the following:

- Health and safety
- Environmental management (or sustainable practices/corporate social responsibility)
- Quality
- Employee policy and procedures including (but not limited to) training and development, apprenticeships, disciplinary, grievance and appeal, bullying and harassment
- Equal Opportunities – including prevention and discipline processes for discrimination against marginalised groups, such as LGBT+ workers and Black workers.
- Trade Union recognition and staff consultation
- Transparency in supply chains (TISC) statement (as required by the Modern Slavery Act 2015) or other policy/statements in this area if not covered by the Act
- Business Continuity Planning
- Anti-corruption and anti-bribery
- Ensuring as far as is practicable, the eradication of the use of conflict minerals
- Data protection and security standards (if applicable)

UNISON reserves the right to exclude any suppliers from procurement processes if it is found that the organisation:

- 1) Is bankrupt or is the subject of insolvency or winding-up proceedings
- 2) Is in breach of legislation, such as labour – including block listing of trade unionists, health and safety, environmental, social or data protection
- 3) Is found to have overstated achievements under their Modern Slavery Transparency Statement or on other publicly available material
- 4) Has attempted to unduly influence the decision-making process,
- 5) Has negligently provided misleading information, withheld information or is not able to submit supporting information
- 6) Has entered into agreements with other organisations aimed at distorting competition
- 7) Facilitates arms trading by hosting arms fairs on their premises and or develops, produces or trades indiscriminate weapons used in the violation of human rights

As well as requesting details of such policies and statements UNISON will request information on employment practices and may wish to test the information provided. Depending on the contract this may involve UNISON personnel speaking to employees and other clients and visiting supplier/client premises to test and validate information provided.

UNISON's suppliers must declare any relationship with UNISON staff that could be a potential conflict of interest.

We expect suppliers to maintain ethical controls over their business activity which ensures no risk of bribery or corruption within their personnel and their supply chain.

Suppliers must protect all sensitive information, including confidential, proprietary and personal information. Information should not be used for any purposes beyond the scope of the business arrangement.

UNISON's suppliers are required to comply with this Code of Conduct.

Purchasing Ethics

It is considered essential that those involved in the procurement process maintain a high standard of integrity to protect UNISON from any accusations of improper conduct prior to, during or after a

contract is let. It is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act for members of staff to accept corruptly any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward.

UNISON expects its supplier to maintain high standards and will not tolerate improper business practice. UNISON's standard terms and conditions contain a clause requiring suppliers to comply with these stipulations.

Simple guidelines can be followed:

Declaration of interest – any personal interest that may impinge on an individual's impartiality where they have responsibility/influence should be declared and recorded (form available from Finance).

Confidentiality of Information

Any confidential information received should be respected and not passed on to other parties. Supplier information must not be divulged to competitors.

Hospitality and gifts

Modest hospitality is an accepted courtesy of a business relationship. Gifts of small intrinsic value such as business diaries and calendars are acceptable. However, recipients should not allow themselves to reach a position where it may be perceived by others that they have been influenced in making a business decision as a consequence of receiving hospitality or gifts.

If you are about to make a decision on awarding a contract/ undergoing a competitive process you should decline all offers of gifts and hospitality. Do not hesitate to obtain advice from Purchasing.

Responsibilities

The Procurement Team is responsible for:

1. The central coordination of purchasing activity in the union.
2. Providing professional advice and guidance on purchasing and contracts for all areas of the union.
3. Ensuring compliance with UNISON's Financial Standing Orders and the union's agreed Responsible Procurement Policy
4. The dissemination of written procurement guidance and procedures
5. Communication of the union's approved list of suppliers and contracts
6. Managing the union's contracts and tendering system 'In-Tend' and supporting departments and regions through the tendering and contract renewal process.

Budget Holders are responsible for:

1. Complying with UNISON's Financial Standing Orders and the union's Responsible Procurement Policy and purchasing procedures.
2. Notifying the Procurement Manager in advance of any tendering exercise so that it can be carried out via the union's tendering system 'In-Tend'.
3. Keeping the value of any stocks held within a department/office to a minimum.
4. Complying with instructions on raising requisitions/purchase orders, the use of preferred suppliers and purchasing cards (at national and regional level).
5. Where applicable all purchases must be sourced through existing agreements promoted by the Procurement Team.

Related documents

[Financial Standing Orders](#)

Procurement Guidance

[UNISON's Transparency in Supply Chains \(TISC\) Statement](#)