

Annual Report on Procurement Activity in Scotland

An overview of
procurement
activity 2021-22



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Ministerial Foreword



In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to dominate the headlines and impact our day to day lives; an unprecedented, global event that brought a

vast array of challenges, of which we are still seeing the impact today.

Procurement was at the forefront of keeping Scotland's essential public services running; working with suppliers to protect the continuity of supply; managing increased demand; developing new and diversified supply chains; driving collaboration and making best use of innovation.

This report focuses on the years 2021 to 2022, a period which saw Scotland begin to emerge from the pandemic whilst facing new economic and social challenges that now faced the economy and society.

During the 12 month period outlined in this report, Scottish public bodies used their combined spending power of £16 billion to deliver a wide range of essential goods, works and services whilst also responding to the COVID-19 pandemic - procuring essential vaccinations, PPE and medical supplies, building new infrastructure to support services moving online and swiftly developing new ways of working in the hybrid world.

As we entered the next chapter in the pandemic and our recovery, we recognised this as an opportunity to introduce a bold and ambitious blueprint for Scotland's future. We want to use our significant public spending power to make Scotland a better place to live, work and do business. Procurement plays a vital role in this. Our aim is to use our considerable spending power across the public sector to foster inclusive economic growth, to generate equal opportunities for all and to support and accelerate a just transition towards a net-zero economy.

This report is structured around the four key outcomes which underpin the delivery of public procurement in Scotland. As such, it demonstrates the steps that public bodies have taken over the course of the year to deliver their procurement activity in a manner that is good for businesses and their employees, good for society, good for places and communities, and open and connected. This period saw a range of new challenges for the Scottish public sector - From the reintroduction of services across the health sector; providing universities and colleges with online learning resources, hybrid classrooms and counselling services; helping public bodies safely start to implement hybrid functionality; working with social landlords to ensure routine services and overall maintenance were reintroduced; the enabling of testing and vaccination programmes throughout Scotland; ensuring the necessary support was reaching vulnerable homes and continually protecting critical services and functions.

As many public bodies and suppliers moved their operations online, the sector remained committed to being open and connected. This report also highlights examples of how public bodies continued to operate and engage on a local, national and international scale, not just in managing supply chains, but promoting the impact that innovative public procurement can make on wider sustainable outcomes. More locally, public bodies continued to engage with SMEs, supported businesses and third sector organisations within their supply chains. These efforts resulted in a significant amount of spend with Scottish-based SMEs.

As the Nation continued to deal with the ongoing impact of COVID-19, we were faced with new challenges from external factors, including the impact of the conflict in Ukraine, Brexit and the cost of living crisis. Throughout all this, Scotland maintained its focus by using procurement initiatives to create a vast range of positive economic, social and environmental outcomes for individuals and organisations, making Scotland a better place to live, work and do business.

Tom Arthur MSP – Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance



Highlights

Overview

6,359

A total of **6,359 regulated contracts** were awarded by the **128 reporting bodies** (up from **5,421 regulated contracts** across **118 public bodies** last year), accounting for **£9.3 billion**.



£16.0bn

Total Scottish **public sector procurement spend** was **£16.0 billion**, of which **£8.9 billion** was spent in Scotland alone.



18,880

18,880 suppliers were awarded **public sector contracts** through Public Contracts Scotland. Of these suppliers, **78% were SMEs**.



Good for the economy

£13.8bn

Around **£13.8 billion** of economic activity, **130,000 full-time equivalent jobs** and **£7.5 billion to Scottish GDP** was generated from the **£16.0 billion** in public procurement spend during the year.



Good for businesses and their employees

£27.9m

Across **110 public bodies**, the total combined spend on regulated contracts awarded to supported businesses was **£27.9 million** (compared with **£13.3 million** last year).



55p

For every pound spent with suppliers in Scotland, **55 pence went to an SME** (where business size is known) (compared with **51 pence in every pound last year**).



2,016

Across **95 public bodies**, a combined total of **2,016 suppliers** committed to paying the real Living Wage in delivering regulated contracts (compared with **2,049 suppliers** from **85 public bodies** last year).



Good for places and communities

£4.3bn



48.9% of all public procurement spend in Scotland, totalling **£4.3 billion**, was with suppliers based in the **60% most deprived areas in Scotland** (where SIMD classification is known) (compared with **48.7%** and **£3.9 billion last year**).

78%



78% of all contracts valued at or above **£4 million** included community benefit requirements (**compared to 65% last year**).

£3.8bn



£3.8 billion (or 43.3%) of spend in Scotland was with suppliers based within **the local area** of the purchasing body.

£1.1bn



Approximately **£1.1 billion** of Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland was with **third sector organisations**.

Good for society

80%

80% of public bodies **provided evidence of carrying out their procurement activity** with regard to equal treatment and non-discrimination (compared to **81%** last year).



71%

71% of reporting bodies provided evidence of how they were **addressing environmental wellbeing and climate change** through procurement (the same rate as last year).



Open and connected

84%

84% of public bodies provided evidence in their reports that they had **carried out their procurements in a transparent manner** (compared with **89%** last year).



1. Introduction



1.1 Background

Published in fulfilment of the requirements of Section 21 of the [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) ('the 2014 Act'), this report provides a summary of Scottish public body procurement activity during the 2021 to 2022 reporting year.

The 2021 to 2022 reporting year was a period in which Scotland began to gradually emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown, while also confronting the economic and social challenges it posed to the economy and to society in both the medium- and longer-term. Additionally, the reporting year also encompassed the beginning of the cost of living crisis – a crisis which was soon intensified by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

While there is a clear legislative underpinning to this report, it also presents an opportunity to gain an understanding of the scale of public procurement activity, which took place over the course of the year despite the myriad of challenges described above, and the impact of that activity on businesses, organisations and communities across Scotland.

As part of the 2014 Act, any public body which expects to have significant procurement expenditure in a given financial year must prepare a procurement strategy, setting out how it intends to carry out its regulated procurements.¹ After the end of that financial year, the public body must then publish an annual report on their regulated procurement activities, demonstrating how they have conducted their procurements in a manner which is compliant with their procurement strategy. They must publish this report as soon as is practicable. Additionally, a group of two or more public bodies may publish a joint procurement strategy and annual report.

While the legislation does not require lower-spending public bodies to produce a procurement strategy and an annual procurement report, some nevertheless do so as a matter of good practice.

However, due to some public bodies' procurement spend not meeting the threshold for reporting, or submission of annual reports coming after the deadline for analysis within this report, or submission of a joint report with another public body, there are fewer reports analysed herein than public bodies across Scotland.

In line with the 2014 Act, this report, which is laid before the Scottish Parliament, must be prepared based on information contained in the annual procurement reports. It must include information on:

- the regulated procurements that were completed during the reporting year;
- any community benefit requirements that were fulfilled during the year;
- any steps taken to facilitate the involvement of supported businesses in regulated procurement, and
- any other information that the Scottish Ministers may consider to be appropriate.

As in previous years, this report is structured around the four key outcomes, which underpin the delivery of public procurement in Scotland.² As such, it demonstrates the steps that public bodies have taken over the course of the year to deliver their procurement activity in a manner that is good for businesses and their employees, good for society, good for places and communities, and open and connected.

1 For the purposes of the Act, procurement expenditure is deemed to be significant if it equates to at least £5 million of regulated procurement spend. A regulated procurement is any procurement carried out by a public body in relation to the award of a contract with an estimated value of £50,000 excluding VAT and above for goods and services and of £2 million and above excluding VAT for works.

2 These four categories are identified and defined in more detail in the [2023 to 2028 Public procurement strategy](#).

1.2 Methodology

While this report is informed by quantitative and qualitative data obtained from a range of sources, two particular data sources are imperative to its production.

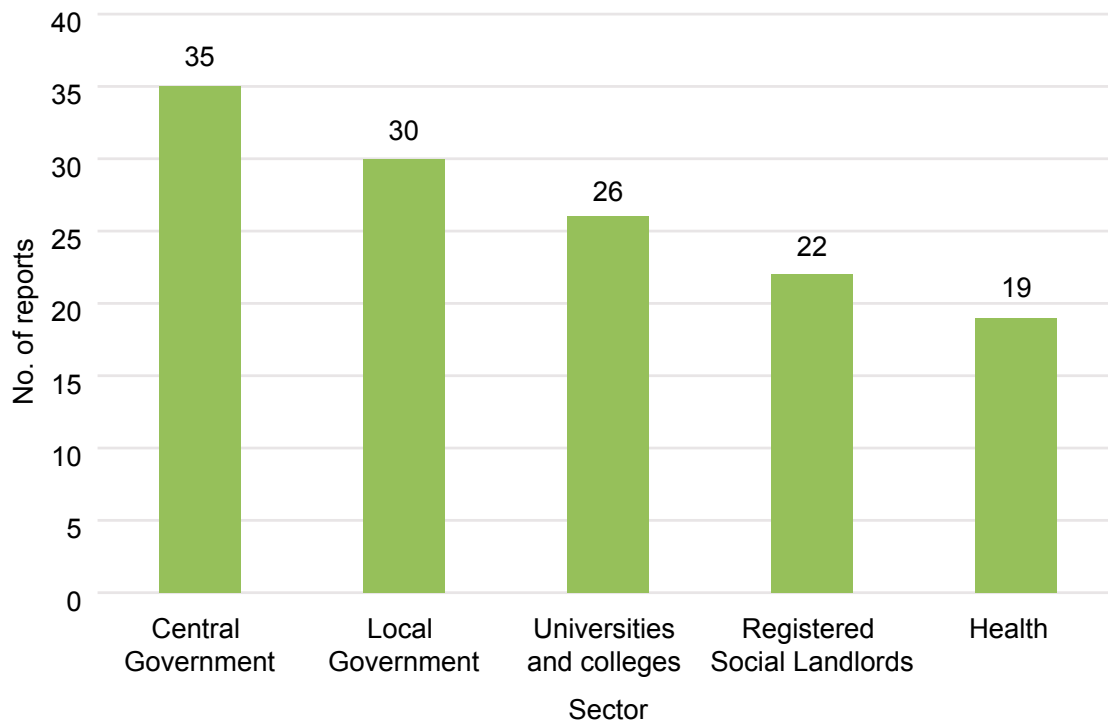
Firstly, each year, an analysis of all of the public body annual procurement reports published for the most recent reporting cycle is carried out, and this report contains some of the most pertinent aspects of that analysis.

For the 2021 to 2022 reporting cycle, a total of 132 annual procurement reports were included in the analysis – an increase on the 120 reports analysed for the [last report](#) which covered the year 2020 to 2021. A full list of the public bodies whose reports were included in the analysis this year is provided at Appendix 1.

This year, the largest proportion of reports analysed were from central government organisations and other significant bodies. As shown in Figure 1, this sector accounted for 35 (or 26.5%) of all 132 reports analysed.

Figure 1:

Number of annual procurement reports analysed by sector (2021 to 2022) (n=132)



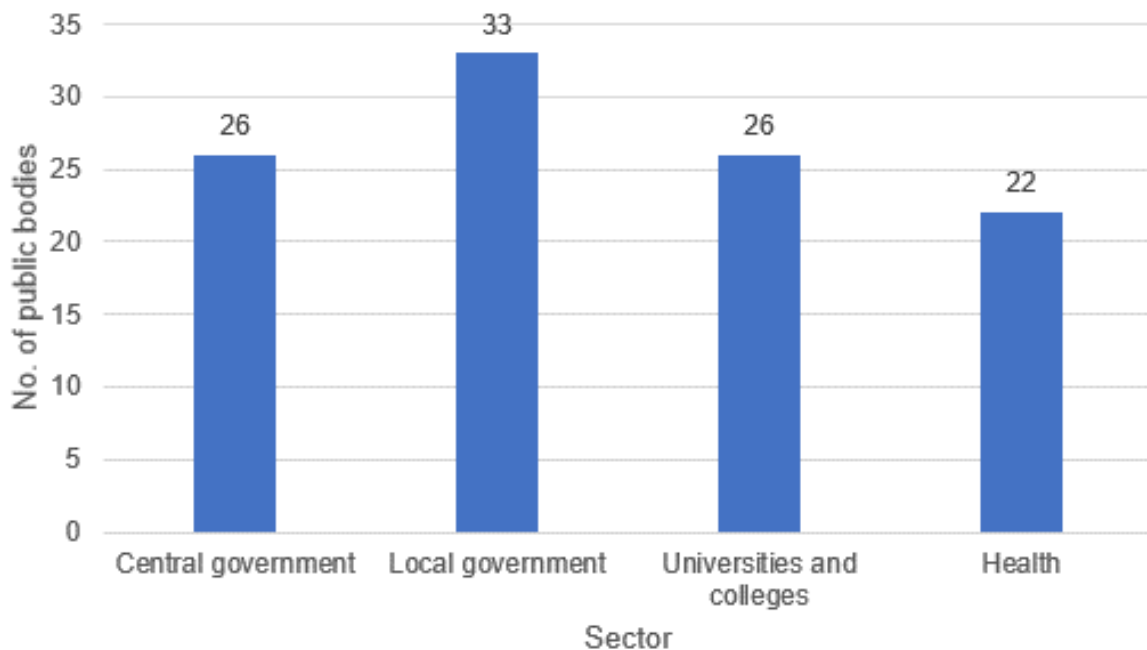
Secondly, public procurement spend data, which is made available each year through the Scottish Procurement Information Hub ('the Hub'), is the other key source used in the preparation of this report. Each year, the Scottish Government requests raw accounts payable data from bodies across the Scottish public sector. This data is enhanced by a third-party supplier using publicly available data in order to classify suppliers by size, location, area of business, charity status and other characteristics, where this information is known. Thereafter, the data is uploaded to the Hub and made available to participating public bodies for analysis.

Note that the information on the Hub relates to procurement spend with suppliers that were classed as commercial organisations or as non-trade social care providers, and with whom individual public bodies spent £1,000 or more in aggregate in any given year.

During the year 2021 to 2022, 107 public bodies provided procurement spend data for publication on the Hub. As shown in Figure 2, the largest share of public bodies providing procurement spend data were from the local government sector (33, or 30.8%).

Figure 2:

Number of public bodies submitting data to the Hub by sector (2021 to 2022) (n=107)



2. Overview of procurement activity



2.1 Summary of procurement activity

The use of the Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) portal is mandatory for all public contracts that are regulated by the 2014 Act. While public bodies are not required to use PCS to advertise contracts that fall below the thresholds set out in the Act, many still do so. In 2021 to 2022, there were 5,682 new registrations to the PCS website of new users, which include buyers and supplier users and organisations. In terms of the numbers of contracts advertised on the portal, according to the [PCS usage report](#) for 2021 to 2022, during the year, a total of 15,634 new public sector business opportunities were advertised. Of these, 14,351 (92%) were for low value contracts and, more specifically, 12,275 (79%) were for Quick Quotes. Moreover, some 18,880 suppliers were awarded public sector contracts through PCS. Of these suppliers, 78% were Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), 74% were Scottish-based, and 62% were Scottish-based SMEs.



6,359

6,359 regulated contracts were awarded by the 128 reporting bodies during the reporting period.

The annual procurement reports give further insight into levels of contracting activity in relation to the number of regulated contracts awarded during the year. Across 128 public bodies providing the relevant information, a total of 6,359 regulated contracts were awarded during the year. Across 127 public bodies, the total combined value of regulated contracts awarded was £9.3 billion.

The annual procurement reports also provide a wide variety of examples of the types of goods, services and works procured through regulated contracts awarded during the year. The nature of these examples suggest that, during 2021 to 2022, public bodies were continuing to deal with the impact of COVID-19 while also moving towards a 'new normal'. Examples included, but were not limited to:

- across central government organisations and other significant bodies – telecommunication and conferencing services, HR recruitment services, media services, hybrid events, and IT development and support services;
- within the local government sector – health and social care provision, blended employability services, environment improvement works, the remote processing of revenues and benefits, and wellbeing and counselling services;
- across the health sector – call centre resources for the COVID-19 National Contact Centre, agency locums and nurses, patient transport, drug and alcohol recovery services, and influenza vaccines;
- within the universities and colleges sector – online learning resources, hybrid classrooms, student counselling services, personal protective equipment, mobile client devices, and student accommodation and cleaning;
- across registered social landlords – landscape maintenance, cleaning services, new build housing developments, and lift servicing.

Indeed, NHS National Services Scotland (NHS NSS) commented on their gradual movement towards more business-as-usual procurement activity over the course of the year:



Following the initial emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic in financial year 2020-21, in the reporting period NSS reverted to more business-as-usual procurement processes with the number of direct awards under extreme urgency (Regulation 33(1)(C) and 33(3)) reducing significantly. As we emerge from the pandemic there is a renewed focus on financial sustainability, the climate emergency and providing solutions that improve the wider health and wellbeing of the people of Scotland.”³

Such a high volume of procurement activity was also reflected in significant amounts of procurement spend. The Hub data shows that, during the reporting year, total Scottish public body procurement spend (with suppliers based in Scotland and elsewhere) was £16.0 billion.⁴ Total procurement spend with suppliers in Scotland alone was £8.9 billion (56%).



£16.0 billion

Scottish public sector procurement spend totalled £16.0 billion, of which £8.9 billion was spent in Scotland alone.

Local government bodies accounted for most of the procurement spend in Scotland. Indeed, of the £8.9 billion of spend in Scotland, £5.4 billion (60.6%) resulted from local government spend. Central government bodies accounted for £2.1 billion (or 23.4%) of spend in Scotland.

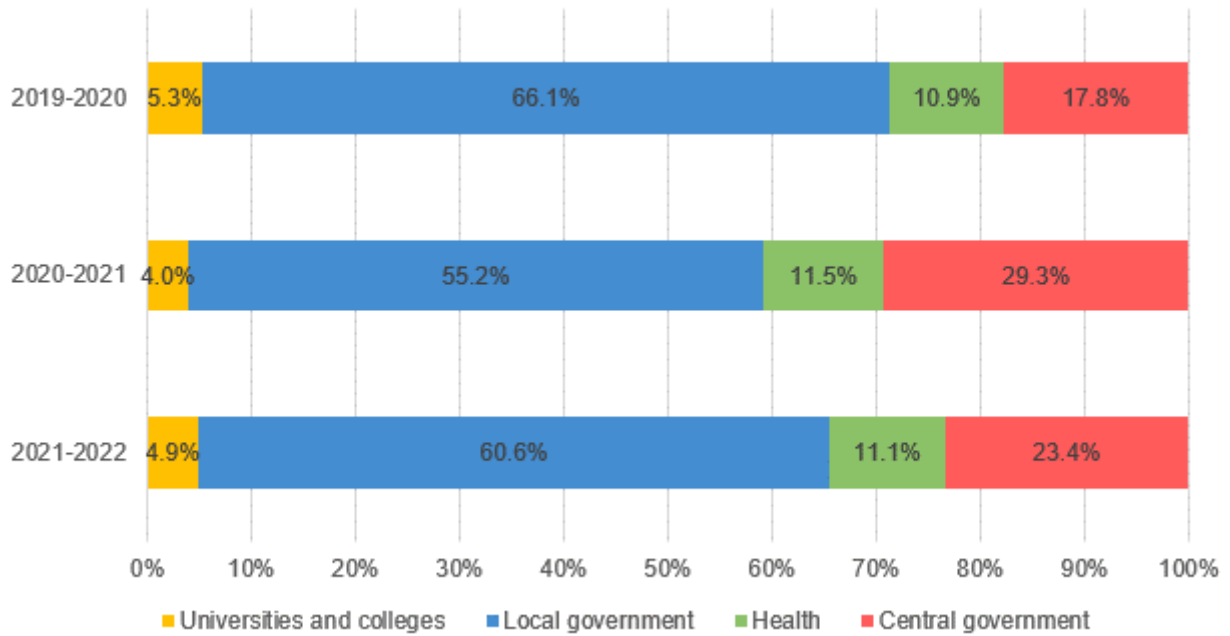
When compared with the data for the previous two reporting years, Figure 1 shows that broadly, patterns of procurement spend within different parts of the public sector remain relatively stable. The [last report](#) (covering 2020 to 2021) highlighted the sharp increase in the proportion of spend within central government which resulted at least partly from the sector’s efforts in coordinating the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. That the proportion of spend within this sector has since decreased from 29.3% to 23.4% indicates a return to ‘business as usual’ as the Scottish public sector continued to emerge from the pandemic.

³ [NHS National Services Scotland](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.

⁴ This figure excludes spend with suppliers that were not classed as commercial organisations or as non-trade social care providers, and with whom individual public bodies spent less than £1,000 in aggregate during the year.

Figure 1:

Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland by sector, 2019-2020 to 2021-2022



2.2 Good for the economy

The [2023 to 2028 Public procurement strategy for Scotland](#) sets out the vision and ambition for public procurement in Scotland in respect to wider policy objectives. In anticipation of the Strategy coming into full effect through 2024, the following sections are defined under the Strategy's four main objectives. The vision statement of the strategy is "putting public procurement at the heart of a sustainable economy to maximise value for the people of Scotland."

The Strategy's objectives are:

1. Good for Businesses and their Employees
2. Good for Places and Communities
3. Good for Society
4. Open and Connected

Using the latest Scottish Government Input-Output model of the economy, it is estimated that £16.0 billion of procurement spending in 2021 to 2022 supported around £13.8 billion of activity, around 130,000 full-time equivalent jobs and contributed around £7.5 billion to Scottish GDP within the wider domestic economy when taking into account supply chain and re-spending of wage effects. This represents around 5% of the Scottish economy. It should be noted that these effects are estimated using a pre Covid model of the Scottish economy.⁵

⁵ For more information about the development and use of Scottish Government Input-Output tables please see [the Scottish Government website](#).



2.3 Good for businesses and their employees

The [2023 to 2028 Public procurement strategy for Scotland](#) defines 'good for businesses and their employees' as aligning the public sector to maximise the impact of procurement to boost a green, inclusive and wellbeing economy, promoting and enabling innovation in procurement.

2.3.1 SMEs

Over the course of the year, the Scottish public sector continued to do much of its business with SMEs from Scotland, elsewhere in the UK, and further afield. In 2021 to 2022, total Scottish public body procurement spend with SMEs, regardless of location, was £6.4 billion. This amounts to 44.2% of all spend (where business size is known).⁶

More specifically, when we consider the procurement spend that took place with suppliers based in Scotland, we learn that SMEs accounted for over half (54.9%, or £4.2 billion) of this spend – and this £4.2 billion of spend can be accounted for by some 16,828 SME suppliers. The largest share (£2.6 billion) of SME spend was with medium-sized businesses, followed by small businesses (£1.2 billion) and micro businesses (£449.2 million).



£4.2 billion

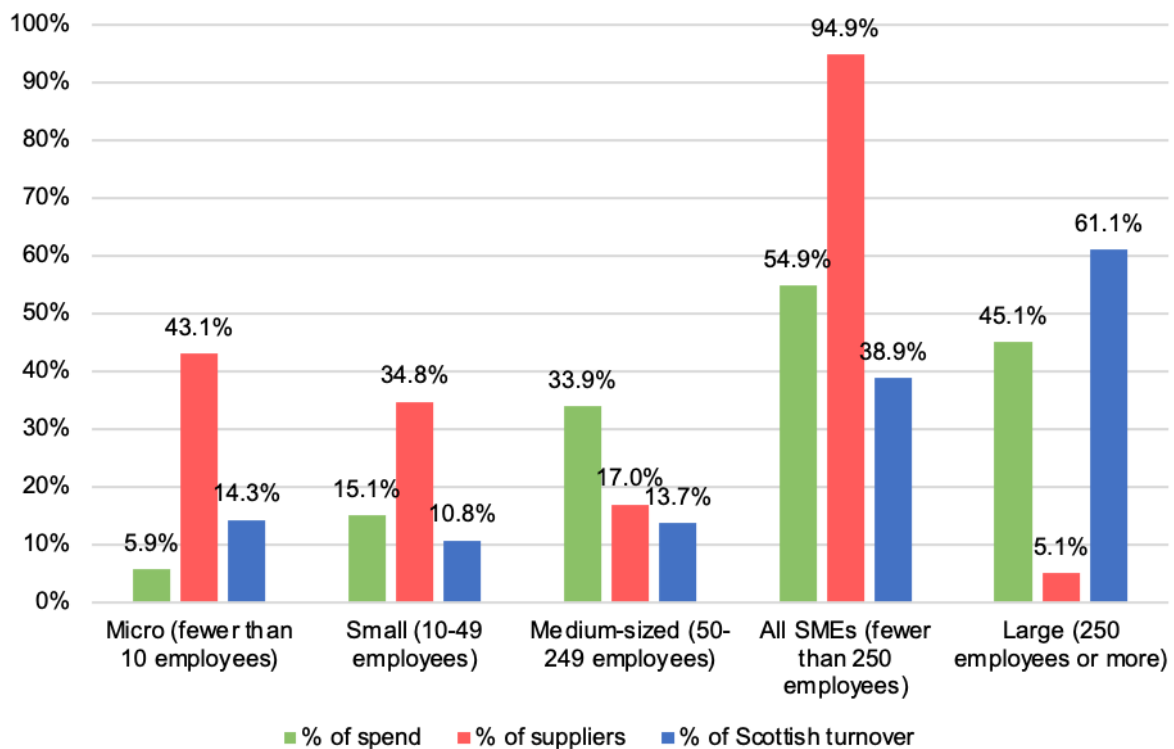
SMEs received £4.2 billion (or 54.9%) of procurement spend in Scotland.

Figure 2 provides a full breakdown of the proportions of procurement spend that went to suppliers of different sizes, as well as the numbers of suppliers represented by each size category. It shows that while micro businesses made up the smallest proportion of spend in Scotland (5.9%), these organisations nevertheless represented the largest proportion of suppliers; indeed, 43.1% of all suppliers in receipt of spend in Scotland were micro businesses.

⁶ Business size is a self-reported figure within the Hub, which is why the size of some businesses is not known.

Figure 2:

Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland by supplier size (where supplier size is known), 2021 to 2022

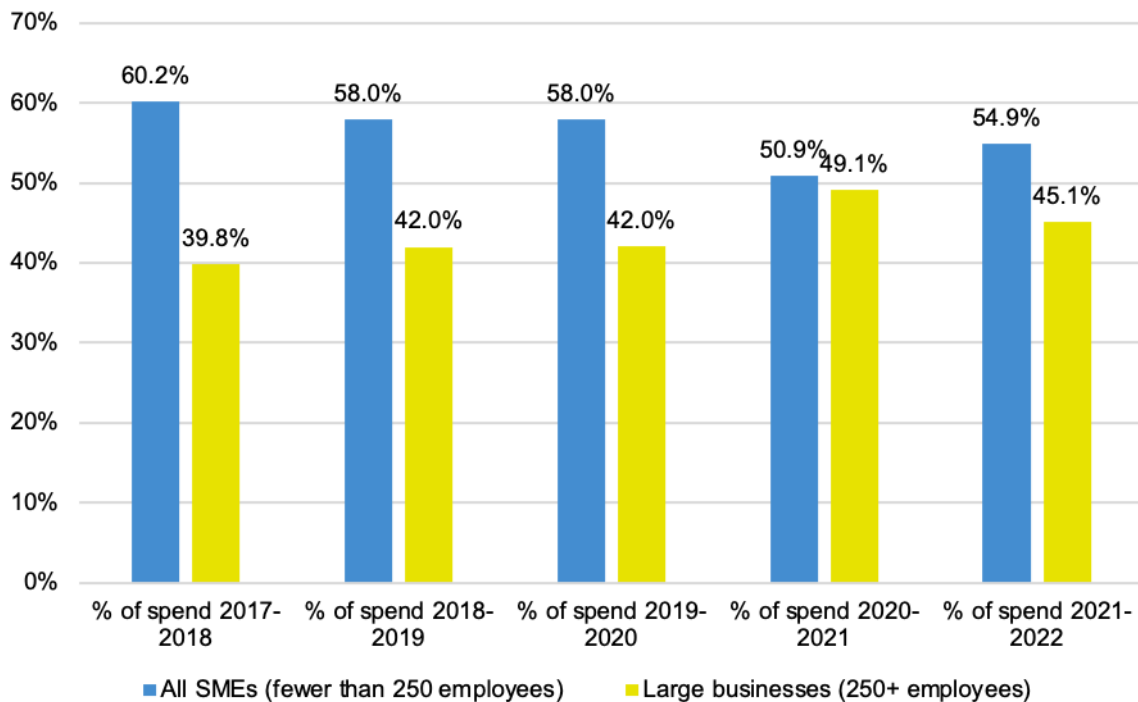


Given the longer-term picture over the last five years, as indicated in Figure 3, the data suggest that levels of procurement spend with SMEs may be gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels. When compared with the figures for 2020 to 2021, as highlighted in the [last report](#), the share of spend with Scottish-based SMEs increased from 50.9% to 54.9%. Meanwhile, the value of spend with Scottish-based SMEs increased from £3.5 billion to £4.2 billion during the same period.

The Scottish Government recognises the importance of ensuring that businesses of all sizes are able to do business with the public sector, given the significant contribution that both SMEs and larger firms alike make to the Scottish economy. When the procurement spend data is compared with data on turnover (as provided in the [Businesses in Scotland data for 2022](#)), we learn that, despite receiving 54.9% of procurement spend in Scotland, SMEs accounted for 38.9% of total Scottish turnover amongst registered private businesses. Conversely, large businesses received 45.1% of procurement spend while accounting for 61.1% of turnover.

**Figure 3:**

Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland by supplier size, 2017-2018 to 2021-2022 (where supplier size is known)



Sub-contracting opportunities are an important means by which public bodies can involve SMEs in the delivery of public contracts. Sixty-two public bodies provided information in their annual procurement reports about the value of contracts sub-contracted to SMEs during the year. Across these 62 bodies, the total combined value of contracts sub-contracted to SMEs was £166.2 million.

During the reporting year, the Scottish Government also continued to provide a funding contribution to the [Supplier Development Programme](#) (SDP). The SDP provides advice, guidance and training to Scottish-based SMEs and third sector organisations which are interested in contracting with the public sector, through a combination of online and in-person support. The SDP [annual report](#) for 2021 to 2022 shows that, during the year, 1,623 new registrations were made to the programme, bringing the total number of registrations to 19,595.

2.3.2 Third sector organisations

Third sector organisations play an important role in supporting local communities and also in stimulating local economic growth. For the purposes of this report, the third sector includes charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups.

In preparing this report, significant work was undertaken to gain an accurate understanding of how much the Scottish public sector spends with third sector organisations through its procurement activity each year. By linking the list of suppliers in receipt of procurement spend (as noted in the Hub data) with data on all of the known social enterprises in Scotland (gathered as part of the [Social Enterprise Census](#)), and by also drawing on information on the Hub about the registered charity status of individual suppliers in receipt of spend, it was possible to establish how much Scottish public bodies spent with social enterprises and, separately,



with registered charities during the reporting year. These two figures were then combined to establish a figure for total spend with the third sector during the reporting year.

As a result of this exercise, it is estimated that, during 2021 to 2022, the Scottish public sector spent around £1.1 billion with third sector organisations in Scotland. This equates to around 12.5% of all Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland and is an increase from the £944 million spent last year.



£1.1 billion

Third sector organisations received £1.1 billion (or 12.5% of public procurement spend) during the reporting year.

It is important to note that the third sector is not limited to charities and social enterprises; it also includes voluntary groups and, at present, the Hub does not verify whether a supplier in receipt of procurement spend is a voluntary group. It is also likely that there are some social enterprises operating in Scotland that are yet to be identified by – and included in – the Social Enterprise Census. As such, the above figure is presented as an estimate. Indeed, the real level of spend with the third sector is likely to be greater than the figure quoted.

Public bodies also continued to use their annual procurement reports as a means of demonstrating the steps taken to involve third sector organisations in their procurement activity during the year. The following example, taken from the City of Edinburgh Council’s annual procurement report, shows how the Council engaged with third sector organisations:



In addition to contracting activity, the Council continued to engage with suppliers and stakeholders through virtual meetings and events, including presenting and facilitating at the national Meet the Buyer event where the Commercial and Procurement Services (CPS) team engaged with over 160 suppliers in one day, presenting at the Edinburgh Social Enterprise (ESE) Climate Action Fringe, providing an open invitation to engage directly with CPS each month and publishing a quarterly supplier newsletter on the Council website.”⁷

2.3.3 Supported businesses

Supported businesses are defined as organisations whose main aim is to integrate disabled or disadvantaged people, both socially and professionally, and whose workforce comprises at least 30% disabled or disadvantaged people.

The Scottish public sector continues to engage with supported businesses through its contracting activity. The analysis of annual procurement reports shows that, across the 113 public bodies providing the relevant information, a total of 35 regulated contracts were awarded to supported businesses during the reporting year; moreover, across 110 public bodies, the total combined spend on regulated contracts awarded to supported businesses was £27.9 million, a significant increase from the £13.3 million awarded a year before.

⁷ [City of Edinburgh Council](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.



£27.9 million

Across 110 public bodies, £27.9 million in regulated contracted was awarded to supported businesses.

Taken from the University of Strathclyde's annual procurement report, the following example highlights the importance of the Scottish Government's framework agreement for supported businesses in enabling these organisations to engage in public contracts:



University Procurement utilised the Scottish Government's Framework Agreement for supported factories and businesses for the replacement of 1,300 mattresses and bedframes across our student residences. The total value of this contract is in the region of £437,000 over the duration of the contract. The contract with Dovetail continues to deliver high quality products to the University whilst supporting the achievement of Dovetail's goals of providing more meaningful employment for disabled and disadvantaged members of the community.”⁸

2.3.4 Spend in Scotland by supplier business sector

Each year, the Scottish Government carries out an analysis of Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland, broken down by the business sectors of the suppliers in receipt of procurement spend. This year, steps were taken to re-classify the sectoral spend data in line with the [Standard Industrial Classification](#), replacing the vCode classification that was used in previous years of the analysis.⁹ This was done to align the spend data with other datasets which use the same classification – for example, the [Businesses in Scotland](#) dataset – thus enabling the spend data to be interrogated further.

Table 1 provides a full breakdown of total Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland by supplier business sector (where supplier sector is known and could be matched with the Standard Industrial Classification). It shows that the largest share of spend (£2.1 billion, or 23.4% of spend) was with suppliers operating in the construction sector, followed by the human health and social work activities sector (£1.9 billion, 21.7%). Suppliers in the transportation and storage (£1.3 billion, 14.6%) and administrative and support service activities (£951.5 million, 10.7%) sectors also received relatively high shares of procurement spend.

8 [University of Strathclyde](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.

9 In previous reports, the business categories were based on the 'vCode' classification, which was developed and is owned by the third party supplier responsible for providing the Scottish Procurement Information Hub. Previous iterations of this report drew on the vCode classification to analyse spend with suppliers in different business categories. The coding of suppliers to the different business categories was based on the supplier's main area of business and not the specific goods and services purchased under any given contract.



**Table 1:**

Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland by supplier business sector (where supplier sector is known and could be matched with the Standard Industrial Classification)

Business sector	Value of spend	% of spend
Accommodation and food service activities	£88,011,511	1.0%
Administrative and support service activities	£951,451,564	10.7%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	£50,410,240	0.6%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	£96,510,771	1.1%
Construction	£2,067,334,975	23.4%
Education	£114,701,382	1.3%
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	£55,353,017	0.6%
Financial and insurance activities	£112,534,698	1.3%
Human health and social work activities	£1,919,395,251	21.7%
Information and communication	£123,921,609	1.4%
Manufacturing	£166,056,572	1.9%
Mining and quarrying	£85,142,481	1.0%
Other service activities	£24,548,565	0.3%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	£728,851,046	8.2%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	£45,439,455	0.5%
Real estate activities	£83,596,252	0.9%
Transportation and storage	£1,292,322,492	14.6%
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	£231,466,910	2.6%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	£615,670,121	7.0%
Total	£8,852,718,912	100.0%



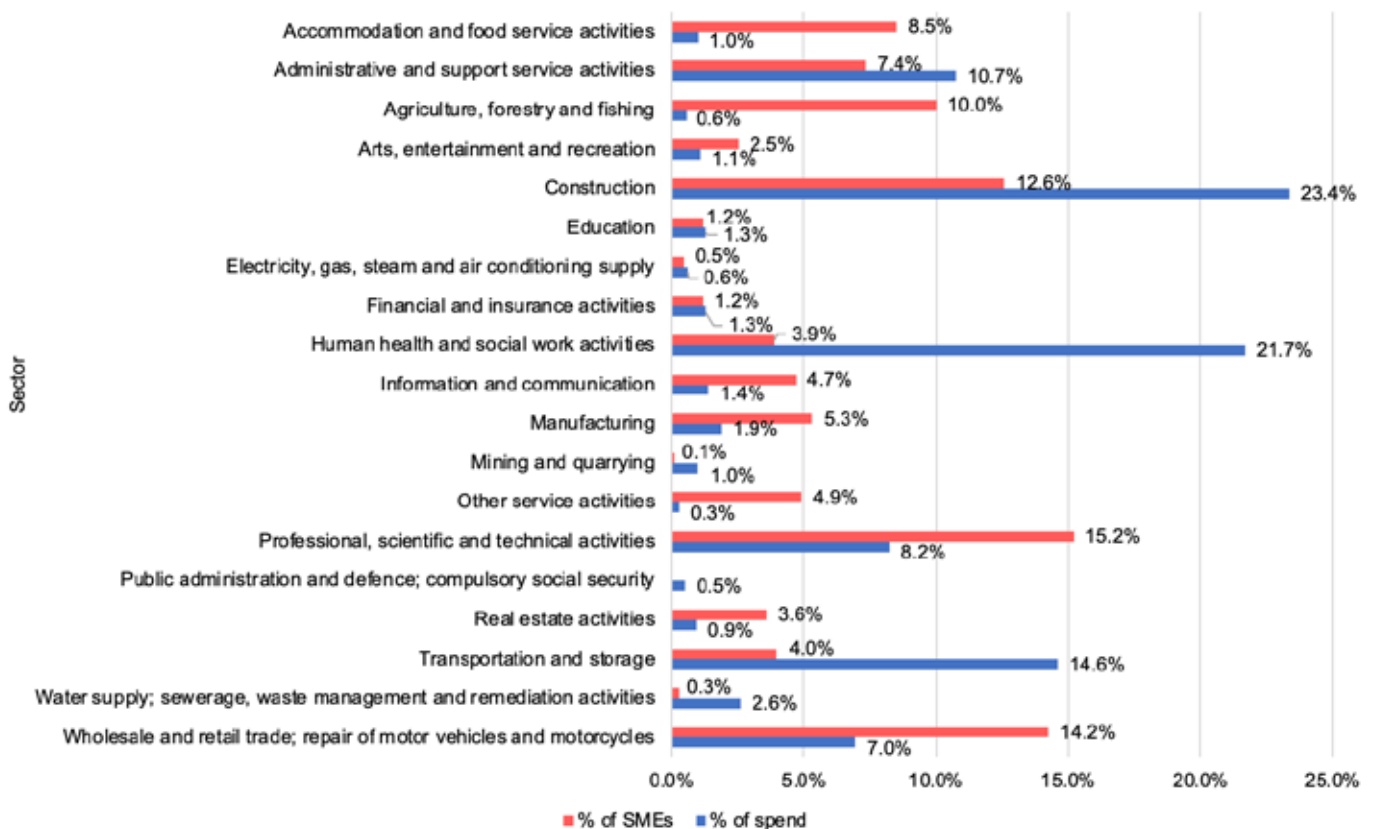
Earlier in this report, it was said that in 2021 to 2022, SMEs accounted for over half (54.9%, or £4.2 billion) of all Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland. Although this is welcome, the Scottish Government always seeks to do more to create a level playing field for SMEs when it comes to participating in public sector contracts.¹⁰ When we combine the sectoral spend data with wider SME data from the [Businesses in Scotland dataset](#), we can gain an insight into the extent to which SMEs can be found in sectors where procurement spend is concentrated. This, in

turn, enables us to pinpoint sectors where actions and initiatives around SME access should be targeted.

Figure 4 provides an overview of the proportions of all Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland that went to suppliers operating in each sector. This information is directly compared with data on the proportions of the total number of SMEs in Scotland that can be accounted for by each sector, as indicated in the [Businesses in Scotland data](#).¹¹

Figure 4:

Sectoral breakdown of SMEs in Scotland and of Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland



¹⁰ For more information on the Scottish Government’s position on SMEs, see the [Scottish Government website](#).

¹¹ Note that Figure 4 does not include information on the proportion of all SMEs in Scotland that can be accounted for by the public administration and defence/compulsory social security sector, owing to a lack of data in the [Businesses in Scotland dataset](#) about this.



The chart presents a mixed picture as to whether SMEs are found in sectors where most procurement spend takes place. Indeed, it is clear that while SMEs are more prevalent in some sectors than in others, they can be found in all sectors of the economy. This includes areas of relatively high procurement spend, as well as areas of relatively low spend. On a practical level, this means that efforts designed to encourage SME participation in public procurement should be cognisant of the rich diversity that exists within the Scottish SME landscape.

For example, the chart shows that in 2021 to 2022, the construction sector accounted for 23.4% of Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland, while also accounting for a relatively large proportion of all SMEs in Scotland (12.6%). However, other high-spend areas such as human health and social work activities (which received 21.7% of procurement spend) and transportation and storage (14.6% of spend) accounted for relatively small shares of all SMEs (3.9% and 4.0% respectively). The largest proportions of SMEs were found in the professional, scientific and technical activities (15.2%) and wholesale and retail trade/repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (14.2%) sectors – and these sectors received relatively modest levels of procurement spend (8.2% and 7.0% of spend respectively).

2.3.5 Fair Work First

Procurement is an important means through which public bodies can promote Fair Work practices amongst the suppliers involved in the delivery of essential services.

In the 2021 to 2022 reporting year, 101 public bodies (77% of those providing an annual procurement report for that year) included information in their reports about the number of regulated contracts awarded during the period that contained a scored Fair Work criterion. Amongst these 101 bodies, a combined total of 1,645 regulated contracts containing a scored Fair Work criterion were awarded. This represents 44% of all regulated contracts awarded by these 101 bodies.

Another way that public bodies can use their procurement activity to promote Fair Work practices is by encouraging their suppliers to pay the real Living Wage when delivering public contracts. This can be done, for example, by including payment of the real Living Wage in award criteria, or by mandating it as part of the contract terms and conditions. Indeed, in October 2021, [the Scottish Government announced](#) that in order to be considered for most of its own contracts, companies must agree to pay at least the real Living Wage to workers on public contracts where it is deemed a proportionate and relevant requirement and where it does not discriminate against potential bidders.

During the reporting year, 95 public bodies (71% of those providing an annual procurement report) included information about the number of unique suppliers who committed to paying the real Living Wage in the delivery of a regulated contract awarded during the year. Across these 95 bodies, a combined total of 2,016 suppliers committed to paying the real Living Wage in the delivery of regulated contracts.¹²

¹² This figure will likely reflect an element of double counting. This is because it is likely that at least some suppliers were awarded regulated contracts by more than one public body during that year; these suppliers would therefore be counted more than once.



2,016

Across 95 public bodies, a combined total of 2,016 unique suppliers committed to paying the real Living Wage in delivering regulated contracts.

As an example of how public bodies are promoting Fair Work First in their procurement activity, the following extract was taken from the Advanced Procurement for Universities & College's (APUC) annual procurement report:



Where relevant and proportionate, APUC considers the fair work practices of suppliers in its procurements, including the application of the Living Wage through its Framework Agreement tender process. APUC has standardised wording for its tender questions on fair work practices in line with Scottish Government guidance.

APUC reports spend with living wage suppliers. This can be drawn from supplier MI and from Hunter. APUC capture Living Wage status as part of its Supply Chain Contract Management process ... and promote this functionality to the sector for institutions to embed a similar process."¹³

2.3.6 Prompt payment

The Scottish Government recognises the importance of ensuring that those who supply goods, works and services to the public sector are paid on time. The timely payment of businesses and organisations across the supply chain is key in ensuring the continued viability of Scotland's supplier base and, in turn, the ongoing delivery of everyday, essential public services. While prompt payment has been a key focus for Scottish public procurement for a number of years, the issue was particularly crucial during the 2021 to 2022 reporting year, as public bodies and their suppliers gradually emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic and transitioned into a phase of economic recovery.

The annual procurement reports provide an insight into public bodies' performance in relation to supplier prompt payment during the year 2021 to 2022. Ninety-nine public bodies (75%) provided analysable data on the percentage of invoices paid on time.¹⁴ Amongst these 99 bodies, the average percentage of invoices paid on time was 86%.

Public bodies can ensure the timely payment of businesses and organisations across the supply chain by including contract terms which require the prompt payment of invoices. Ninety-six public bodies (73% of those submitting an annual procurement report for the year) provided data on the number of regulated contracts awarded during 2021 to 2022 which contained a contract term requiring the prompt payment of invoices in public contract supply chains. Across these 96 bodies, 2,978 regulated contracts containing such a contract term were awarded.

¹³ [APUC](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.

¹⁴ By "on time", we mean within the time period set out in the contract terms.



2,978

Across 96 public bodies, 2,978 regulated contracts were awarded including contract terms requiring the prompt payment of invoices.

In its own annual procurement report, the Scottish Government sets out how the organisation ensures the prompt payment of suppliers across all tiers of the supply chain through good contract management and through the use of Project Bank Accounts.



Through our contract management arrangements, we monitor the percentage of our valid invoices paid on time, our average payment performance, any complaints from contractors and subcontractors about late payment and we take action where appropriate.

Recognising the construction sector in particular can suffer from late and extended payment terms from business to business, we required the use of project bank accounts, from which a public body can pay firms in the supply chain directly as well as making payments to the main contractor. Project bank accounts improve cash flow and help businesses stay solvent, particularly smaller firms which can be more vulnerable to the effects of late payments.”¹⁵

15 [Scottish Government](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.



2.4 Good for places and communities

The [2023 to 2028 Public procurement strategy for Scotland](#) defines 'good for places and communities' as aligning the public sector to maximise the impact of procurement with strong community engagement and development to deliver social and economic outcomes as a means to drive wellbeing by creating quality employment and skills.

2.4.1 Spend in Scotland by supplier location

Through their procurement activity, Scottish public bodies continue to spend with suppliers in communities across the length and breadth of Scotland.

Figure 5 contains information about the proportions of Scottish public body procurement spend that can be accounted for by suppliers based in each of Scotland's 32 local authority areas (where local authority is known). It shows that suppliers based in Glasgow City received the largest share (22.5%, or £2.0 billion) of all procurement spend in Scotland. Thereafter, suppliers based in City of Edinburgh received the second-largest proportion (15.2%, or £1.3 billion) of procurement spend, followed by North Lanarkshire (9.1%, or £806.6 million). This is a similar pattern to that which was reported in the [last report](#). However, since 2020 to 2021, the proportion of spend with suppliers based in Glasgow City has decreased from 25.4% of all spend to 22.5%.

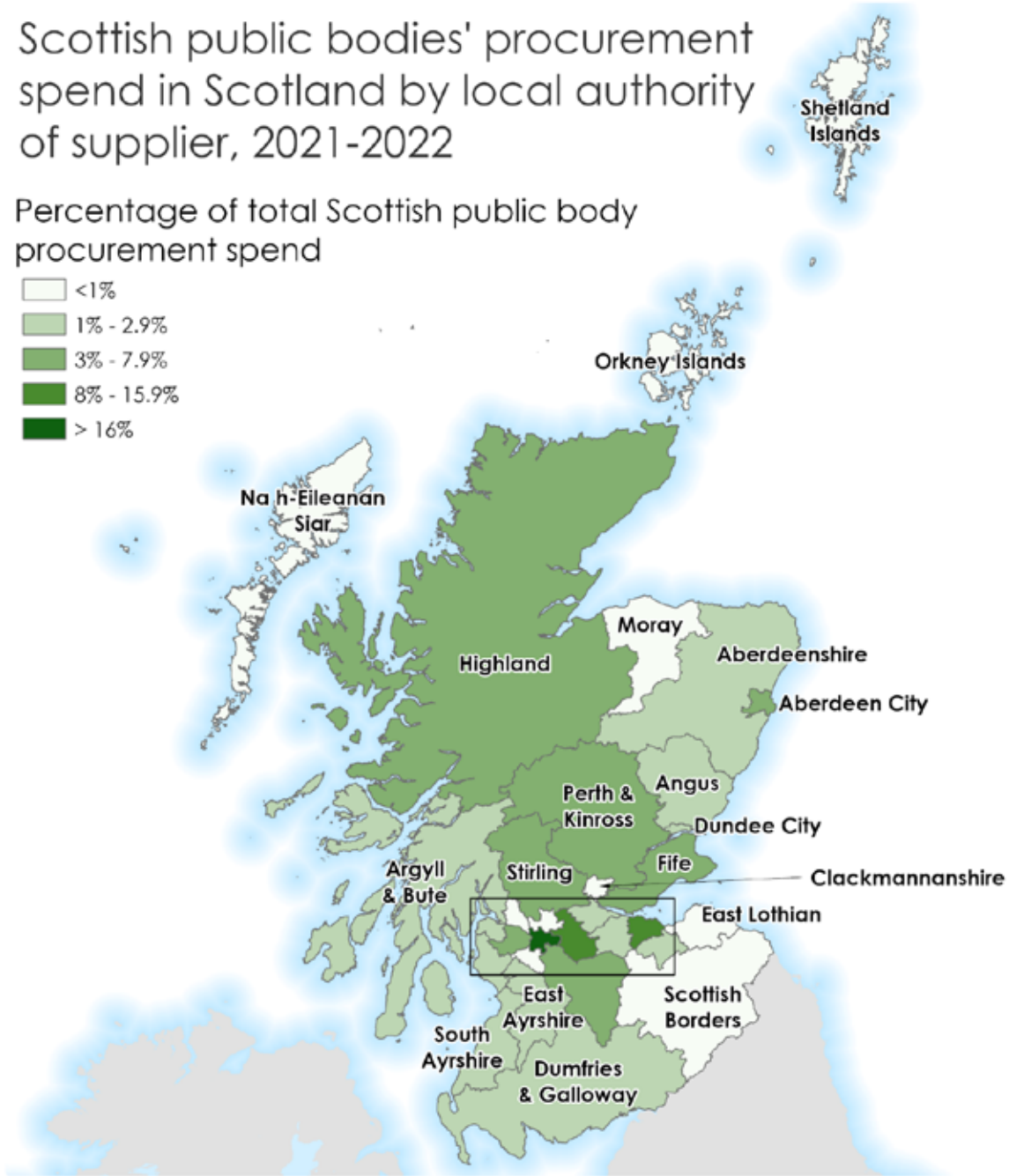


Figure 5: Scottish public bodies' procurement spend in Scotland by local authority of supplier

Scottish public bodies' procurement spend in Scotland by local authority of supplier, 2021-2022

Percentage of total Scottish public body procurement spend

- <1%
- 1% - 2.9%
- 3% - 7.9%
- 8% - 15.9%
- > 16%



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Scottish Government Geographic Information Science & Analysis Team, July 2023, job6322s.



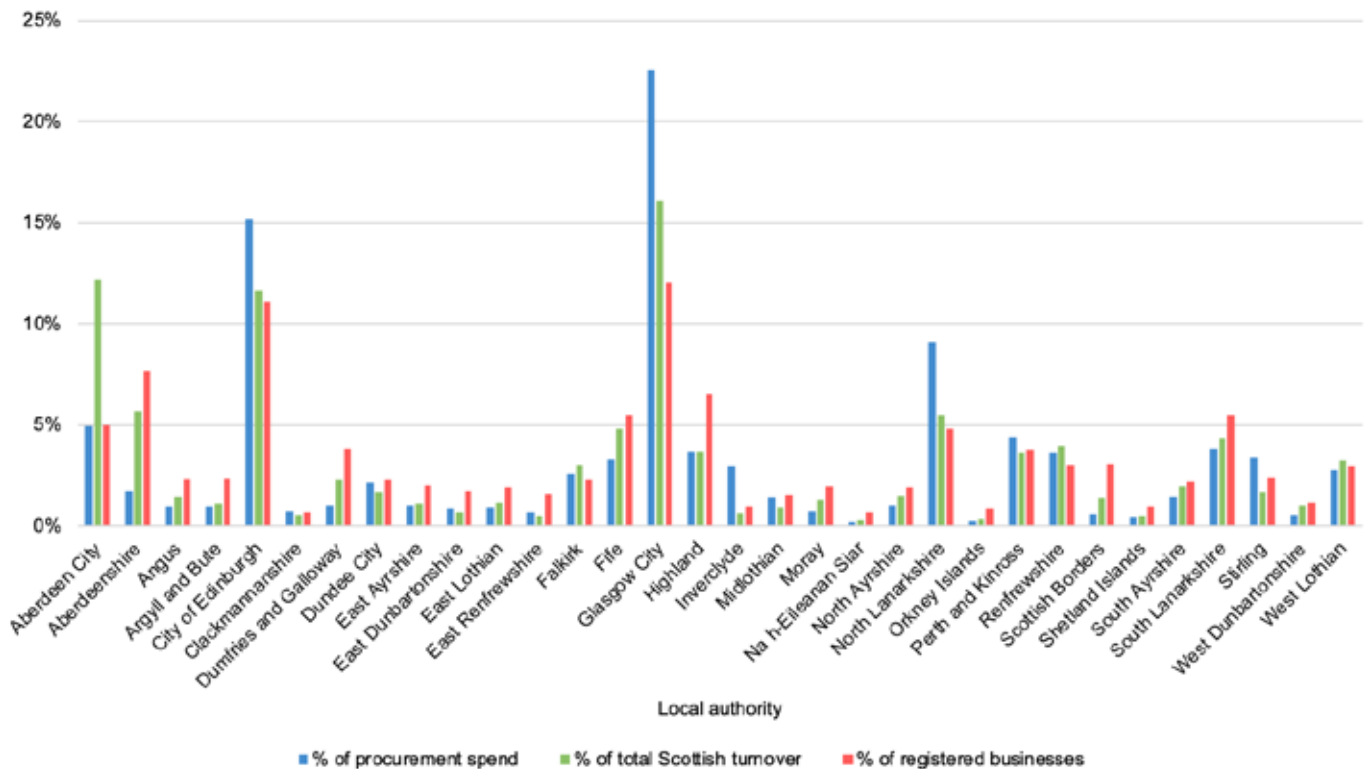


The continued dominance of Glasgow City, City of Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire within the procurement spend figures is perhaps not surprising when we consider the levels of turnover generated by the businesses operating in these areas, as well as the numbers of businesses operating there. According to the [Businesses in Scotland data for 2022](#), in most local authority areas, procurement spend was broadly in line with the level of turnover generated by registered private sector businesses in each

area, and also with business numbers. This is reflected in Figure 6. While the data shows that Glasgow City, City of Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire received a high amount of procurement spend relative to their turnover, these areas nevertheless accounted for some of the highest levels of turnover in Scotland (16.1%, 11.6% and 5.5% of all turnover, respectively). They also accounted for some of the largest shares of the total number of businesses in Scotland (12.0%, 11.1% and 4.8% respectively).

Figure 6:

Total Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland, total turnover of registered private sector businesses, and number of registered private sector businesses, by local authority (where local authority is known)



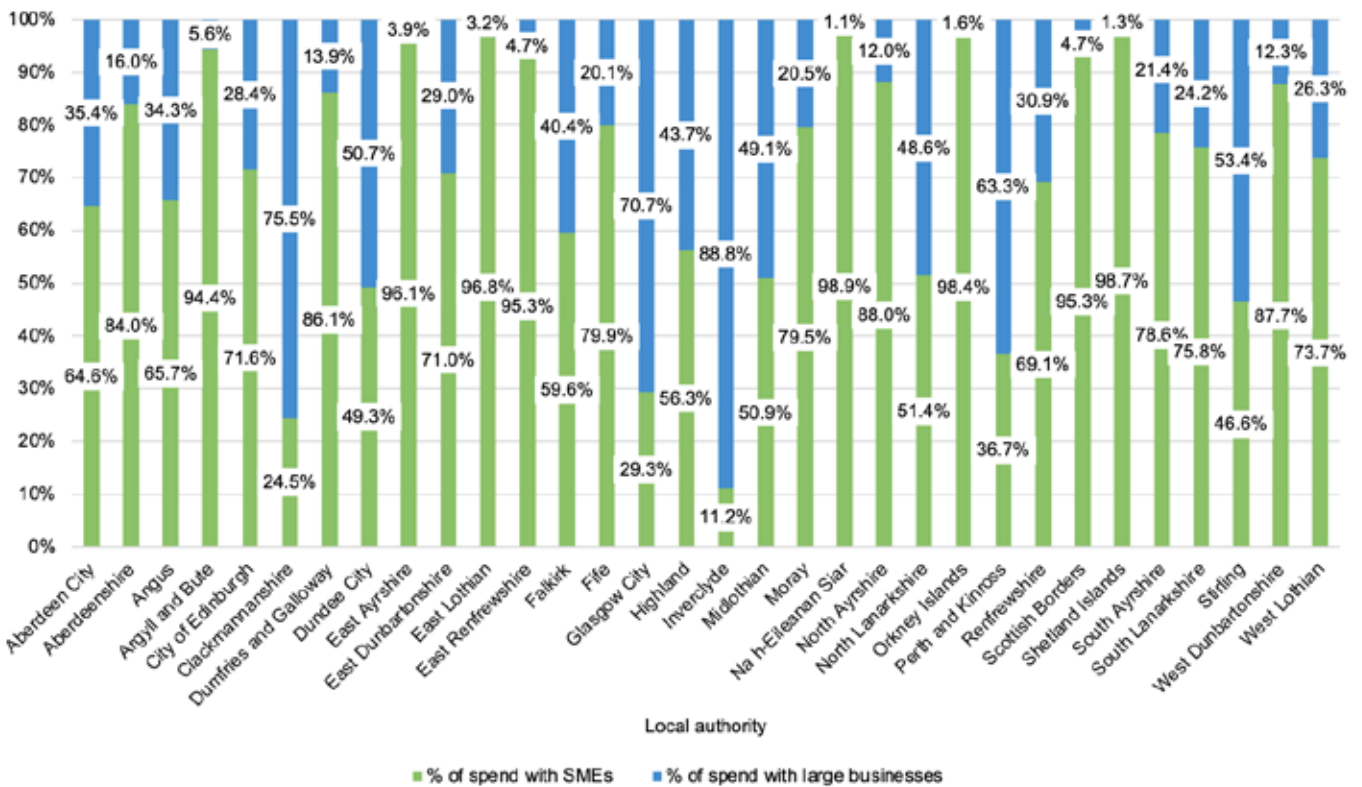


The patterns of procurement spend across different local authority areas also at least partly relates to the size of the suppliers receiving spend in these areas. In particular, the predominance of SMEs in the island local authority areas may explain why these areas received lower levels of procurement spend – this is because SMEs are, by their nature, less likely to win large contracts and therefore less likely to receive large amounts of spend as a result of those contracts. As shown previously, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney Islands

and Shetland Islands received 0.2%, 0.3% and 0.4% of spend respectively. Figure 7 provides information on the proportion of spend that went to SMEs and to large businesses, in each local authority area. It shows that the proportions of spend that went to SMEs was greatest in these three areas. For example, in Na h-Eileanan Siar, 98.9% of spend was with SMEs, while the corresponding figures for Shetland Islands and Orkney Islands were 98.7% and 98.4% respectively.

Figure 7:

Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland by local authority area and supplier size (where known)





2.4.2 Spend in Scotland by SIMD quintile

The [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\) classification](#) allows us to gauge the extent to which suppliers based in communities across the socio-economic spectrum are participating in public contracts and benefiting from public sector procurement spend.¹⁶

Figure 8 provides a breakdown of public body procurement spend in Scotland across each of the five SIMD quintiles. This information is displayed alongside information on the proportion of all registered private sector businesses in Scotland that were operating in each quintile, and the amount of total Scottish turnover generated by businesses in each quintile.¹⁷

The chart indicates a good spread of public procurement spend across all SIMD quintiles; it shows that in 2021 to 2022, one third of Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland (where SIMD classification is known) was with suppliers based in the fourth SIMD quintile, with suppliers based in these areas receiving 33.2% (or £2.9 billion) of all spend in Scotland. Suppliers in the first three quintiles – or, in other words, in the 60% most disadvantaged areas in Scotland – received almost half (48.9%, or £4.3 billion) of all spend.



£4.3bn

Almost half of all public procurement spend, totalling £4.3 billion, was with suppliers based in the 60% most deprived areas in Scotland (where SIMD classification is known).

Figure 8 also shows that levels of procurement spend in each of the five SIMD quintiles was broadly in line with the proportions of businesses operating in – and turnover generated in – each quintile. That suppliers based in the fourth SIMD quintile received the largest share (33.2%) of procurement spend largely reflects the fact that this quintile also accounted for the greatest shares in the proportions of registered businesses operating in Scotland (27.9%) and of total Scottish turnover (31.3%).

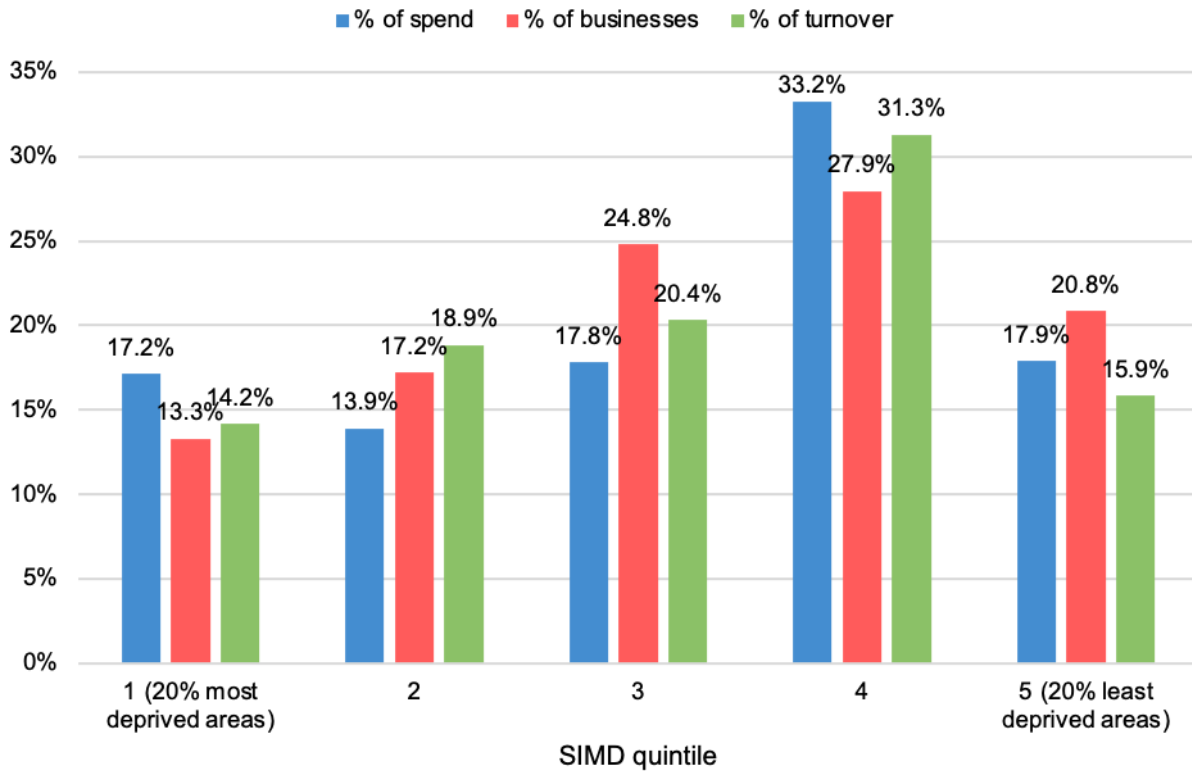
¹⁶ Note that the analysis draws on the postcodes of where suppliers are registered as based, and therefore does not uncover the onward impacts of the spend itself. Therefore, what is being measured is the extent to which public procurement suppliers are based in areas of greater or lesser deprivation.

¹⁷ The data on both the proportions of registered private sector businesses operating in Scotland and of total turnover in each of the five SIMD quintiles was accurate as at March 2022.



Figure 8:

Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland by SIMD quintile of suppliers (where SIMD classification is known), compared with business numbers and turnover in each quintile



2.4.3 Spend in Scotland by urban/rural classification

The Scottish Government’s [urban/rural classification](#) is useful in building an understanding of the extent to which Scottish public bodies are using their procurement spend to help drive economic growth in all kinds of communities.

As shown in Figure 9, in 2021 to 2022, a combined 91.1% of Scottish public body procurement spend (where urban/rural

classification is known) took place with suppliers based in urban areas.¹⁸ This is the equivalent of £8.0 billion of all spend and is consistent with the 91.4% of spend reported in these areas in [2020 to 2021](#).

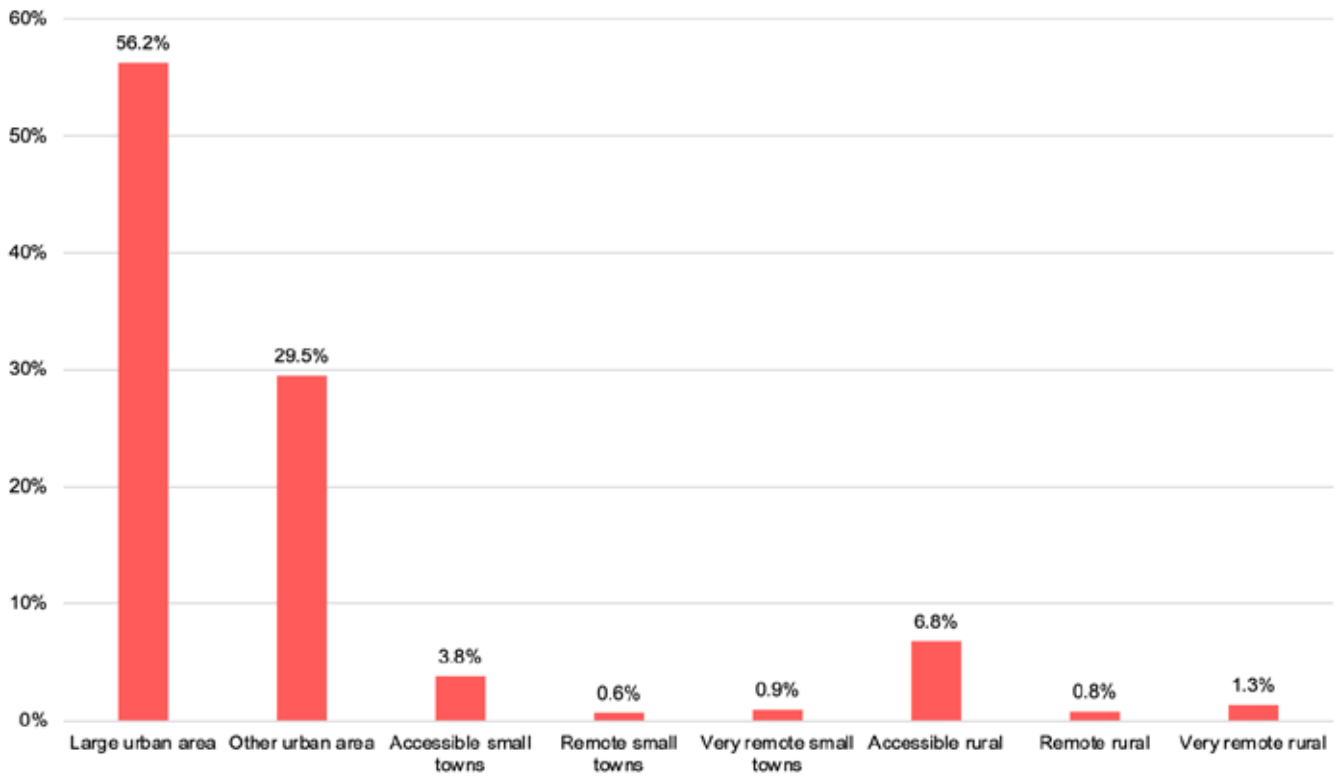
In more detail, the largest proportion (56.2%, or £5.0 billion) of procurement spend in Scotland took place with suppliers based in large urban areas. This was followed by suppliers based in other urban areas (29.5%, or £2.6 billion).

¹⁸ Note that in Figure 9, urban areas include large urban areas, other urban areas, accessible small towns, remote small towns and very remote small towns. Rural areas comprise accessible rural areas, remote rural areas and very remote rural areas.



Figure 9:

Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland by urban/rural eight-fold classification (where urban/rural classification is known)



2.4.4 Proximity of spend in Scotland

Using the Hub data, it is possible to assess the extent to which Scottish public bodies are using their procurement spending power to stimulate economic activity at the local level by contracting with suppliers in their local area.

During the reporting year, 43.3% of all Scottish public body procurement spend in Scotland was with suppliers based within the local area of the purchasing body. In value

terms, this amounts to some £3.8 billion of spend.¹⁹ This is consistent with the figures obtained for [2020 to 2021](#), when local spend amounted to 43.7% of all spend in Scotland.



£3.8bn

£3.8 billion (or 43.3%) of spend in Scotland was with suppliers based within the local area of the purchasing body

¹⁹ Spend is classed as local if the purchasing authority is based in the same local authority area as the supplier, whereas it is classed as elsewhere if they are in different local authorities. The analysis is dependent on known supplier postcodes, which are matched to the list of postcodes in the local authority area in which the customer is based. The local authority area is defined by the ONS.

2.4.5 Community benefits

Community benefit requirements are an important means through which Scottish public bodies can use their procurement activity to deliver a wide range of economic, social and environmental benefits to communities across Scotland. Under the 2014 Act, public bodies must consider whether to include community benefit requirements in all contracts with an estimated value of £4 million or more, where it is relevant and proportionate to do so.

In their annual procurement reports, public bodies were asked to provide information on the number of regulated contracts awarded during 2021 to 2022 with a value of £4 million or greater that also contained community benefit requirements. One hundred and twelve bodies provided this information (85% of the 132 bodies providing a report for the year). Amongst these 112 bodies, a total of 336 regulated contracts valued at or above £4 million were awarded with community benefit requirements included. This figure represents 78% of all contracts valued at or above the £4 million threshold which were awarded by these public bodies during the year.



336

Across 112 public bodies, 336 regulated contracts worth £4 million or more included community benefit requirements.

Ninety-three public bodies (71%) also provided information in their annual procurement reports about the types of community benefits delivered during the year. An overview of the types of community benefits delivered is provided in Figure 10. It shows that the most common types of community benefits delivered were work placements (as reported by 73% of the 93 public bodies providing the relevant information), followed by apprenticeships (67%) and job creation (63%).



Figure 10:

Types of community benefits delivered during 2021 to 2022 (n=93)





As a more detailed example of the types of community benefits delivered during the year, Transport Scotland noted that one of its suppliers provided employability skills training and work experience to disadvantaged young people across Scotland:

Case study: using community benefit requirements to deliver employability skills training and work experience

“Ernst & Young (EY) are providing financial advisory services [...]. In 2022 EY performed mock interviews for students, attending as a ‘Dragon’ on the panel for their Dragon’s Den assignment. They carried out a presentation to the students about EY, which included what it is like to work there and how to apply.

The Smart Futures programme provides disadvantaged young people (eligible for free school meals or education maintenance allowance) in S5 with five days employability skills training followed by three days of work experience with EY. Participants are paid for these days and are then paired up with a volunteer mentor to provide ongoing employability support over the following 10 months. As various restrictions were still in place due to Covid-19, the programme was delivered entirely virtually and young people were provided with EY laptops, headsets and, where necessary, 4G dongles in order to provide them with all of the technology they would need to participate and connect to the programme. As the programme was delivered online it allowed participants to apply from across Scotland.

The EY Foundation provides opportunities for young people across Scotland. EY delivered short (half-day) employability workshops to young people in S3-S6 in multiple secondary schools in the Perth & Kinross region. In the period, this included working with 487 young people in those school year groups. These workshops were delivered in some cases virtually and in others face-to-face, depending on what Covid-19 restrictions were in place at the time of each workshop.

EY engaged with a further six young people in the Perth and Kinross region via the Foundation’s ‘Our Future’ programme, working with young people who are at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment education or training), giving them five days paid employability skills training followed by six days paid work experience with local employers. Again, this was all done virtually given the various Covid-19 restrictions that remained in place at the time.

EY worked with 20 young people from the greater Glasgow area in the Beyond Your Limits programme, which is aimed at young people in care. This two-year programme provided bite size segments of various types of support to the cohort, including six days of employability skills training, two days of financial literacy training and six days of work experience.”²⁰

²⁰ [Transport Scotland](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.



2.5 Good for society

The [2023 to 2028 Public procurement strategy for Scotland](#) defines 'good for society' as aligning the public sector to ensure that we are efficient, effective and forward thinking through continuous improvement to help achieve a fairer and more equal society.

2.5.1 Equal treatment and non-discrimination

The 2014 Act requires that public bodies carry out their regulated procurement activity in line with the general duties of equal treatment and non-discrimination. This helps to encourage competition by ensuring that a wide range of potential suppliers are able to bid for public contracts – and this, in turn, enables the Scottish public sector to deliver better value for public money.

It is important to note that there are no legislative requirements for public bodies to provide evidence in their annual procurement reports of how they have conducted their regulated procurement activity in line with the duties of equal treatment and non-discrimination. Nevertheless, many still do so. In 2021 to 2022, 80% of public bodies provided evidence of carrying out their regulated procurement activity in accordance with these duties.



80%

Evidence on equal treatment and non-discrimination duties were included in 80% of public bodies' annual reporting.

The annual procurement reports provided a range of examples of how public bodies are conducting their procurement activity with regard to the general duties of equal treatment and non-discrimination. For example, in their report, the Southside Housing Association highlight the importance of ensuring that all bidders have the same level of information when it comes to tendering for public contracts:



For all regulated procurement activities undertaken where possible, the Association advertised contracts at each relevant stage on the Public Contracts Scotland Portal and, when required, in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

All questions raised in procurement exercises were dealt with through the portal so that all bidders had the same information.”²¹

²¹ [Southside Housing Association](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.



2.5.2 Climate change

In line with the Sustainable Procurement Duty, prior to carrying out a regulated procurement, public bodies are required to consider how they can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area. Public bodies should also use their annual procurement reports to report on how they have used their procurement activity to help address climate issues.

In 2021 to 2022, 94 public bodies provided evidence of having addressed environmental wellbeing and climate change through their procurement activity. This equates to 71% of all bodies submitting an annual procurement report for the year.

As an example of how public bodies are using their procurement activity to contribute positively to environmental wellbeing and to address climate change, NHS NSS noted undertaking a range of actions in their annual procurement report during the year, including utilising the Scottish Government's Climate Literacy training, which is hosted on the [sustainable procurement tools](#):



We have created a brand new Climate Change and Circular Economy supply lead role and at the end of the reporting period advertised this role. This is a vital step for us to accelerate our delivery ambitions for de-carbonising our supply chains.

We have measured and established a baseline for our transport and delivery services ... [and] our emissions in the period were 25 thousand tCO₂e. We now will use this figure to measure future reductions against.

Through the SPSG we have mandated all NHS Scotland direct procurement staff pass through the Scottish Government's Climate Literacy training to establish a knowledge base of the subject matter.

We have drafted a map of our ambitions to move towards a net zero supply chain by 2035. These ambitions will in 2022 form the basis of annual action plans to meet our goals. Work is underway on achieving 100% sustainable haddock, caught, landed and processed in Scotland for all of NHSS, which will also bring us the MSC certification...

Our medicines procurement team continue to safeguard our precious medicinal resources and keep waste down; sales from recycling short-dated stock from the national medicines stockpile exceeded £2m in the 2021 calendar year. The funds have been used to replenish the stockpile with longer dated stock of Covid-19 supportive care medicines to helping ensure stock continues to be available to meet any sudden spikes in demand. In addition to the financial benefits of avoiding waste through product expiry. Recycling is estimated to have delivered a manufacturing greenhouse gas emission reduction equivalent to 335 tCO₂e.²²

²² [NHS National Services Scotland](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.



2.6 Open and connected

The [2023 to 2028 Public procurement strategy for Scotland](#) defines 'open and connected' as aligning the public sector to ensure procurement in Scotland is open, transparent and connected at local, national and international levels.

2.6.1 Openness and transparency

Another way that public bodies can encourage greater levels of competition within public contracts and achieve value for money is by ensuring that they conduct their procurement activity in a manner that is open and transparent.

Again, there is no legislative requirement for public bodies to use their annual procurement reports to document how they have acted in line with these principles. Nevertheless, these reports continue to provide an insight into how openness and transparency is being achieved in practice.

In 2021 to 2022, in their reports, 111 public bodies (84% of the 132 bodies submitting a report for the year) provided evidence of having carried out their regulated procurements in accordance with the duty of transparency. For example, in their annual procurement report, Manor Estates Housing Association highlighted their endeavours to ensure transparency in the spending of their funds through the use of the PCS portal:



Manor Estates follow a procurement process when purchasing goods, services or works from external suppliers and strive to achieve value for money whilst balancing cost, quality and management of risk. Manor Estates advertises regulated tender opportunities on the Scottish Government's Public Contracts Scotland [website], in line with Public Procurement legislation. Manor Estates does not therefore use lists of preferred suppliers.

Manor Estates encourage prospective contractors, consultants or suppliers to sign up to this online portal to receive notifications about any Scottish Public Sector contract opportunities. If any contract advertised is of interest to your company, you should follow the instructions given in the Contract Notice or advert.

For further information on individual regulated contracts, please see our contracts register on the Public Contract Scotland website.”²³

²³ [Manor Estates Housing Association](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.

2.6.2 International influence of Scottish public procurement

Over the reporting period, the Scottish Government continued to engage with the global commercial and procurement community. For example, in October 2021, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) asked the Scottish Government to participate in an international conference, to share its insights on the wellbeing framework developed in Scotland, its explicit links with public procurement activities and how it supports Scotland in enhancing and 'greening' public spending. This was followed up by an approach from the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO), who were keen to leverage learnings from Scotland, marking the start of an important partnership between the Scottish Government and the US.

Throughout the reporting year, the Scottish Government was approached by governments across Europe and further afield, to learn about its [Procurement People of Tomorrow \(PPoT\)](#) programme. This led to the Scottish Government being encouraged by procurement leaders to submit a case study on its professionalisation approach in January 2022.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Government continues to support the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) with membership on their Fellowship Committee, leading a survey of their international fellowship community to ascertain opportunities and interest in driving greater global engagement, and producing a recommendations report for CIPS in November 2021. Work also continued in support the CIPS Foundation and their partnership with ActionAid in Africa, helping to raise awareness of the social and economic impact that can be driven through thoughtful and progressive procurement and supply chain development.

2.6.3 Improving procurement capability and professional development

The Scottish public sector continues to take forward work to professionalise its public procurement activity. Cross-sectoral initiatives under the national professionalisation strategy target improving both current and future professional practice and talent creation within public procurement.

The [Procurement People of Tomorrow \(PPoT\)](#) programme addresses the challenges in attracting, developing and retaining future talent for the profession. In the reporting period, the programme launched the [PPoT Pledge](#) and a [PPoT placement pack](#). The Pledge allows organisations to signal their commitment towards new entrants in procurement, while the placement pack provides a consistent and valuable five-day plan for students to follow when undertaking a one-week procurement placement. Early 2022 also saw aligned graduate programmes across the sectors, with APUC, NHS NSS, Scotland Excel and the Scottish Government going to market for new talent, with the commitment to connecting the graduates on these cohorts.

Scotland's national [Procurement and Commercial Training Framework](#) was re-let in the reporting period with two Lots awarded in December 2021 on Procurement and Sustainable Procurement. For the first time, in response to demand from the procurement community, this offered 'cost-per-place' open training programmes nationally. Furthermore, Lot One is now delivered by a public sector partner – the [Scotland Excel Academy](#).



To further build capability, the [Sustainable Procurement Tools](#) website continued to provide tools, guidance and training on how procurement professionals can optimise the economic, social and environmental impact of their procurement activity. The Scottish Government launched its Climate Literacy eLearning for Procurers in March 2021 – by the end of March 2022, out of the 1,209 users registered on the tools at that point in time, 853 had completed the eLearning.



853

Between March 2021 and March 2022, 853 users had completed the Scottish Government's new Climate Literacy eLearning for Procurers.

The national standards for public procurement in Scotland are embedded in the [National Procurement Development Framework](#). This free-to-use online tool was nearing the end of its first generation implementation in 2022, with over 1,400 user evaluations completed. These evaluations linked to learning interventions available from the national training frameworks. To build upon this success, a re-let for a second-generation tool was undertaken in the following reporting year of 2022 to 2023.

Finally, the reporting period also saw a growing investment and focus on developing commercial skills across the public sector in Scotland, with the Scottish Government's Commercial Week (May 2021) delivering over 700 hours of continuous professional development improving commercial acumen and expertise.

2.6.4 Innovation

The Sustainable Procurement Duty mandates that before a public body carries out a regulated procurement, it must consider how, in conducting the procurement process, it can promote innovation. By 'innovation' in public procurement, we mean a contracting authority's ability to influence the market towards innovative solutions; innovation may take the form of innovation in the design and delivery of public services, the procurement of innovative goods and services, or innovative procurement processes and models.²⁴

The annual procurement reports enable us to understand the extent to which public bodies are complying with this element of the Sustainable Procurement Duty, while also providing some concrete examples of the ways in which public bodies are encouraging innovation through their procurement activity. Of the 132 bodies submitting an annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022, 83 (63%) provided evidence in their reports of promoting innovation.



63%

Evidence of reports promoting innovation was provided in 63% of public bodies' annual procurement reports.

Taken from their annual procurement report, the following case study provides an insight into how Social Security Scotland adopted an innovative approach to staff recruitment. This was key in ensuring the organisation was well-resourced ahead of the implementation of a variety of social security benefits, with the organisation being the first in Scotland to undertake such a large recruitment process entirely online.

²⁴ For more information, see the statutory guidance underpinning the 2014 Act, which is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).



Case study: innovative approaches to workforce recruitment

“In order to deliver the next wave of benefits implementation, most notably Child Disability Payment, Adult Disability Payment and Scottish Child Payment years 6-16, [Social Security Scotland] made a commitment to increase our headcount significantly (recruitment of around 2500 full time equivalents) within an 18-24 month period.

To support this significant growth, Social Security Scotland required support from a supplier to ensure that sufficient resource would be available to assess applicants and to manage the administration of recruitment from attraction through to conditional offer stage.

The systems and service provided were required to be inclusive and accessible to support Social Security Scotland to recruit a workforce which is representative of the diversity of Scotland. The service also had to be provided virtually to allow the entire recruitment process to be delivered online.

The requirement was developed at significant scale and pace with 10 weeks available for the full design and launching. There was a significant political imperative to complete on time.

A substantial implementation team was set up... This was supported by a clear specification which focussed on a values-based recruitment process and an approach that would support diversity and inclusion so that the process wouldn't negatively impact people from diverse groups.

The service had to be fully digital but still accessible. The recruitment process was re-designed to improve the quality and diversity of hires and also to manage organisational capacity so that hiring teams wouldn't be taken away from delivering for our clients.

As we would be the first in Scotland to do this in a completely digital way, best practice was sought from the wider civil service with learning taken from Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. The process was also reviewed by the Civil Service Commission to ensure compliance.

The process leveraged stakeholder partnerships with Dundee City Council, Glasgow City Council and Clyde Gateway as well as social media and more than 1,500 new offers of employment have now been made.

The diversity of our new staff was a key aim for this recruitment and analysis has shown that the make-up of the group joining us better reflects wider Scottish society.”²⁵

²⁵ [Social Security Scotland](#) annual procurement report for 2021 to 2022.



The following case study, taken from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) annual procurement report, is a strong example of how the organisation has used its procurement activity to foster innovation – in this case, in aiding the development of a new solution designed to improve the mobilisation of firefighters during periods of high demand for fire services.

Case study: using innovative solutions to improve firefighter mobility

“The SFRS is heavily reliant on full time and part time fighters, to provide services to the rural and urban communities of Scotland. The majority of these part time fire fighters have full-time employment, serving the local community, but who respond to emergency calls within their local area as and when required. It is critical to the operations of the SFRS to be able to quickly alert these firefighters to operational incidents within the local community. A resilient paging network is currently used to facilitate this. Changes within existing paging technology which will soon become redundant meant that the SFRS required a new solution to maintain operational resilience.

Through the support provided by the Can Do Innovation Fund, the SFRS undertook a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition, run over two phases, with the aim of developing 2 x GD92 complaint mobilising bearers ... which are not reliant of the Airwave or SFRS Wide Area Network to provide resilience to mobilisation of firefighters in the communities of Scotland to operational incidents.

Phase 1 involved research and development together with a feasibility study to prove design of concept has been completed. The SFRS is now about to move on to Phase 2 which will further develop the solution in order to a prototype stage and undertake field testing.

The benefits in developing a successful solution is a high level of resilience to the SFRS mobilisation of resources, when demands for the Fire Service are greatest during poor weather, and during major civil emergencies. It is expected that the successful supplier may be able to provide the solution developed to emergency services and the public sector throughout the UK and potentially worldwide. Providing similar services to remote communities, and ensuring resilience of these critical mobilisation services is preserved.”²⁶

Elsewhere, due to the success of the NHS NSS Health Innovation Assessment Portal (HIAP), a decision was made to expand the supplier-led innovation service to the entire Scottish public sector. A cross-sectoral project commenced to develop the new Scotland Innovates service, with the aim of providing a centralised route for suppliers to submit innovative ideas in addition to providing helpful innovation guidance, news and details of relevant events through a new website. System development took place throughout the reporting year, with a planned release in summer 2022. The project also developed innovation guidance, initial triage and assessment processes and established a new cross-sectoral Triage and Delivery Board for the wider public sector.²⁷

²⁶ [SFRS annual procurement report](#) for 2021 to 2022.

²⁷ For more information, see the [Scotland Innovates](#) website.

3.

Future procurement activity



As part of the 2014 Act, public bodies must, in their annual procurement reports, provide a summary of the regulated procurements expected to commence over the next two financial years. This is important in providing suppliers with advanced notice of upcoming contract opportunities, enabling those who are interested in bidding to plan ahead.

In their annual procurement reports for 2021 to 2022, 116 public bodies (87%) included information on the total number of regulated procurements they expected to commence in the next two years (i.e. 2022-2023 and 2023-2024). The total combined number of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years is 6,656.



6,656

The total combined number of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two financial years is 6,656.

One hundred and four public bodies (79%) provided information about the total estimated value of regulated procurements expected to commence in the next two years. The combined total estimated value across all bodies reporting this information is £18.1 billion.

Public bodies detailed a wide range of expected future procurements, some examples of which are provided below:

- In the local government sector – young carers support, school transport, flood protection, mobile CCTV, waste and recycling services, school counselling services and electric vehicle leasing

- across central government and other significant bodies – temporary and interim staff, digital marketing, facilities management services, cleaning services and cyber resilience assurance
- within the universities and colleges sector – supply of office, computer and library supplies, campus extensions, student and staff online wellbeing services, digital marketing and software licences
- in the health sector – mental health services, drug and alcohol services, patient transport services and provision of GP services
- across registered social landlords – medical adaptations, repairs programmes, utilities procurement, affordable housing construction and facilities management.

In addition to providing an overview of upcoming contracts, some public bodies also noted the challenges that lay ahead for their organisation in terms of their ability to conduct their procurements. The West of Scotland Housing Association was one such organisation, with this body stressing the importance of collaboration with its supplier base in overcoming these challenges:



“The year ahead is likely to be the one of the most challenging years so far in respect of being able to procure effectively as a result of external factors such as Brexit, impact of the pandemic, rise in costs and shortage in labour and the war in Ukraine. It is important that we try and develop a partnership approach with key suppliers.”²⁸

²⁸ [West of Scotland Housing Association](#) annual procurement report.

4.

Conclusion



The 2021 to 2022 reporting year was one during which people, communities and organisations across Scotland continued to deal with the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic while also navigating the cost crisis. Despite this testing backdrop, over the year, the Scottish public sector continued to harness its procurement activity to generate a range of positive economic, social and environmental benefits for individuals and organisations across the country.

The nature of the contracts procured during the year suggests that public bodies were beginning to adjust to the 'new normal'. This was evident in the procuring of various contracts focusing on, for example, the online delivery of public services, with these contracts being procured alongside the more routine kinds of contracts that this report has typically highlighted in previous reporting years.

At the same time, the procurement spend data showed that businesses of all sizes, sectors and locations continued to benefit from the spend arising from public contracts. For example, public bodies carried out much of their procurement activity with suppliers in their local area, with around 43 pence in every pound being spent with suppliers based within the local area of the purchasing body. Levels of spend with micro, small and medium-sized businesses showed early indications of gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels. Meanwhile, third sector organisations and supported businesses continued to deliver public contracts as a means of generating an income.

This report represents another step forward in relation to data collection and analysis. Firstly, it is encouraging that a record number of public bodies provided an annual procurement on time for analysis, with 132 bodies doing so for the 2021 to 2022 reporting year. A higher number of reports means a more robust sample and this, in turn, enables a deeper understanding of the impact of public procurement activity.

Second, the additional work undertaken on the procurement spend data this year – in particular, the efforts to bring the spend data in line with the Standard Industrial Classification and, separately, to link it to the Social Enterprise Census – have enabled a more detailed and deeper understanding of the types of businesses and organisations that benefit from public procurement spend, and to consider these findings within a wider business context.

In [April 2023](#), the First Minister announced three new 'missions' for the Scottish Government to help shape its decision-making until the end of the current parliamentary term in 2026. These missions centred on the following three areas:

- equality – tackling poverty and protecting people from harm
- opportunity – a fair, green and growing economy
- community – prioritising our public services.

Public procurement will play an important role in helping the Scottish Government and the wider public sector to deliver in each of these three interdependent areas – for example, by using public contracts as an opportunity to engage and spend with businesses in Scotland's most deprived communities, by embedding climate and Fair Work considerations into public contracts, and by imposing community benefit requirements in contracts, as a means of achieving a wide variety of impacts within local communities.

It is therefore important that public bodies continue to use all of the levers at their disposal to extract maximum economic, social and environmental value from their procurement processes. It is hoped that continued progress in this regard will be demonstrated in future reporting years.

I Glossary

Term	Description
Annual procurement report	A report published by an individual public body, which provides information about the public body's regulated procurement activities over the course of a given financial year. It also provides details of upcoming procurement projects.
Community benefit requirements	A contractual requirement imposed by a contracting authority relating to training and improvement, or to the availability of sub-contracting opportunities, or which is otherwise intended to improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the authority's area.
Fair Work First	Scottish Government policy which encourages businesses bidding for a public contract to commit to: adopting appropriate channels for effective voice such as trade union recognition; investment in workforce development; no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts; action to tackle the gender pay gap; providing fair pay for workers, for example through payment of the real Living Wage; offer flexible and family-friendly working practices; and oppose the use of fire and rehire practices.
Framework agreement	An agreement between one or more public bodies and one or more economic operators, the purpose of which is to establish the terms governing contracts to be awarded during a given period, in particular terms with regards to price and, where appropriate, the quantity envisaged. A contract is only established when a "call off" from the framework is made.
Large businesses	Businesses with 250 employees or more.
Medium-sized businesses	Businesses with between 50 and 249 employees.
Micro businesses	Businesses with fewer than 10 employees.
Procurement	The process leading to the award of a public contract or framework agreement or establishment of a dynamic purchasing system for the acquisition of works, supplies or services from an economic operator.
Procurement spend	The amount paid by a public body for the acquisition of works, supplies or services from an economic operator, in line with the established procurement process.
Prompt payment	The timely payment of all suppliers involved in the delivery of public contracts, in accordance with the terms of the contract.

Term	Description
Public Contracts Scotland (PCS)	Advertising portal for Scottish public sector contracts, where contract notices and award notices are published.
Real Living Wage	A voluntary rate of pay that is enough to ensure that those receiving it can have an acceptable standard of living.
Regulated procurements	Procurements seeking offers regarding contracts which are regulated by the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. Contracts are regulated by the Act if their estimated value is equal to or greater than £50,000 excluding VAT for goods and services, and £2 million excluding VAT for works.
Small businesses	Businesses with between 10 and 49 employees.
Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)	All businesses with fewer than 250 employees.
Supply chains	The network of suppliers involved in the delivery of any given public contract. This includes the main contractor(s) and any sub-contractors involved in contract delivery.
Supported businesses	Businesses whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons, and where at least 30% of the employees are disabled or disadvantaged persons.
Third sector organisations	Organisations that exist wholly or mainly to provide benefits for society or the environment. These organisations include charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups.
Value for money	The optimum combination of whole-life cost and quality (or fitness for purpose) to meet the user's requirement.

Appendix 1:

List of the 132 public bodies submitting an annual procurement report

Organisation name	Sector
Aberdeen City Council	Local government
Aberdeenshire Council	Local government
Abertay University	Universities and colleges
Accountant in Bankruptcy	Central government & other significant bodies
Advanced Procurement for Universities & Colleges (APUC)	Universities and colleges
Almond Housing Association	Registered social landlords
Angus Housing Association	Registered social landlords
Argyll and Bute Council	Local government
Atrium Homes	Registered social landlords
Ayrshire College	Universities and colleges
Ayrshire Housing Association	Registered social landlords
Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd.	Central government & other significant bodies
Cassiltoun Housing Association Ltd.	Registered social landlords
City of Edinburgh Council	Local government
City of Glasgow College	Universities and colleges
Clackmannanshire Council	Local government
Clyde Gateway	Central government & other significant bodies
Clyde Valley Housing Association	Registered social landlords
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Local government
Crown Estates Office	Central government & other significant bodies
Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service	Central government & other significant bodies
David MacBrayne Ltd.	Central government & other significant bodies
Disclosure Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies
Dumfries & Galloway Council	Local government
Dundee and Angus College	Universities and colleges
East Ayrshire Council	Local government
East Dunbartonshire Council	Local government
East Lothian Council	Local government
East Renfrewshire Council	Local government
Edinburgh College	Universities and colleges
Edinburgh Napier University	Universities and colleges
Education Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies

Organisation name	Sector
Eildon Housing Association Ltd.	Registered social landlords
Falkirk Council	Local government
Fife College	Universities and colleges
Fife Council	Local government
Forestry and Land Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies
Forth Valley College	Universities and colleges
Glasgow Caledonian University	Universities and colleges
Glasgow City Council	Local government
Glasgow Clyde College	Universities and colleges
Glasgow Kelvin College	Universities and colleges
Glasgow Life	Central government & other significant bodies
Heriot-Watt University	Universities and colleges
Highlands and Islands Airports Limited	Central government & other significant bodies
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Central government & other significant bodies
Hillcrest Housing Association Ltd.	Registered social landlords
Inverclyde Council	Local government
Kingdom Housing Association	Registered social landlords
Link Group	Registered social landlords
Linthouse Housing Association	Registered social landlords
Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association's	Registered social landlords
Loreburn Housing Association	Registered social landlords
Manor Estates Housing Association Ltd.	Registered social landlords
Midlothian Council	Local government
Moray Council	Local government
National Museums Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies
National Records of Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies
New College Lanarkshire	Universities and colleges
NHS 24	Health
NHS Ayrshire & Arran	Health
NHS Dumfries & Galloway	Health
NHS Education for Scotland	Health
NHS Fife	Health
NHS Forth Valley	Health
NHS Golden Jubilee	Health

Organisation name	Sector
NHS Grampian	Health
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Health
NHS Highland	Health
NHS Lanarkshire	Health
NHS Lothian	Health
NHS National Procurement	Health
NHS National Service Scotland	Health
NHS Orkney	Health
NHS Shetland	Health
NHS Tayside	Health
North Ayrshire Council	Local government
North East Scotland College	Universities and colleges
North Lanarkshire Council	Local government
Orkney Islands Council	Local government
Perth & Kinross Council	Local government
Queen Margaret University	Universities and colleges
Registers of Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies
Renfrewshire Council	Local government
River Clyde Homes	Registered social landlords
Robert Gordon University	Universities and colleges
Rural Stirling Housing Association	Registered social landlords
Scotland Excel	Local government
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)	Universities and colleges
Scottish Ambulance Service	Health
Scottish Borders Council	Local government
Scottish Borders Housing Association Ltd.	Registered social landlords
Scottish Canals	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Children's Report Administration	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Courts and Tribunal Services	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Enterprise	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Government	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Parliament	Central government & other significant bodies

Organisation name	Sector
Scottish Police Authority	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Prison Service	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Public Pensions Agency	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Qualifications Authority	Central government & other significant bodies
Scottish Social Services Council	Central government & other significant bodies
Shettleston Housing Association	Registered social landlords
Skills Development Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies
Social Security Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies
South Ayrshire Council	Local government
South Lanarkshire Council	Local government
Southside Housing Association Ltd.	Registered social landlords
Sportscotland	Central government & other significant bodies
Stirling Council	Local government
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport	Central government & other significant bodies
The Care Inspectorate	Central government & other significant bodies
The Highland Council	Local government
The State Hospitals Board for Scotland	Health
The University of Edinburgh	Universities and colleges
Thenue Housing Association Ltd.	Registered social landlords
Transport Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies
University of Aberdeen	Universities and colleges
University of Dundee	Universities and colleges
University of Glasgow	Universities and colleges
University of Stirling	Universities and colleges
University of Strathclyde	Universities and colleges
University of the West of Scotland	Universities and colleges
Visit Scotland	Central government & other significant bodies
West College Scotland	Universities and colleges
West Dunbartonshire	Local government
West Lothian Council	Local government
West of Scotland Housing Association Ltd.	Registered social landlords
Wheatley Group	Registered social landlords

Appendix 2:

List of the 107 public bodies submitting procurement spend data

Organisation name	Sector
Aberdeen City Council	Local government
Aberdeenshire Council	Local government
Abertay University	Universities and colleges
Accountant in Bankruptcy	Central government
Angus Council	Local government
Argyll and Bute Council	Local government
Borders College	Universities and colleges
Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd.	Central government
City of Edinburgh Council	Local government
City of Glasgow College	Universities and colleges
Clackmannanshire Council	Local government
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Local government
Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service	Central government
Disclosure Scotland	Central government
Dumfries & Galloway Council	Local government
Dumfries and Galloway College	Universities and colleges
Dundee City Council	Local government
East Ayrshire Council	Local government
East Dunbartonshire Council	Local government
East Lothian Council	Local government
East Renfrewshire Council	Local government
Edinburgh College	Universities and colleges
Edinburgh Napier University	Universities and colleges
Education Scotland	Central government
Falkirk Council	Local government
Fife College	Universities and colleges
Fife Council	Local government
Forestry and Land Scotland	Central government
Forth Valley College	Universities and colleges
Glasgow Caledonian University	Universities and colleges
Glasgow City Council	Local government

Organisation name	Sector
Glasgow Clyde College	Universities and colleges
Golden Jubilee Hospital	Health
Healthcare Improvement Scotland	Health
Heriot-Watt University	Universities and colleges
Highland Council	Local government
Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Central government
Historic Environment Scotland	Central government
Inverclyde Council	Local government
Midlothian Council	Local government
National Records of Scotland	Central government
New College Lanarkshire	Universities and colleges
NHS 24	Health
NHS Ayrshire & Arran	Health
NHS Borders	Health
NHS Dumfries & Galloway	Health
NHS Education for Scotland	Health
NHS Fife	Health
NHS Forth Valley	Health
NHS Grampian	Health
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Health
NHS Highland	Health
NHS Lanarkshire	Health
NHS Lothian	Health
NHS National Services Scotland	Health
NHS Orkney	Health
NHS Shetland	Health
NHS Tayside	Health
NHS Western Isles	Health
North Ayrshire Council	Local government
North East Scotland College	Universities and colleges
North Lanarkshire Council	Local government
Orkney Islands Council	Local government
Perth & Kinross Council	Local government
Police Scotland	Central government

Organisation name	Sector
Public Health Scotland	Health
Queen Margaret University	Universities and colleges
Registers of Scotland	Central government
Renfrewshire Council	Local government
Robert Gordon University	Universities and colleges
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)	Universities and colleges
Scottish Ambulance Service	Health
Scottish Borders Council	Local government
Scottish Canals	Central government
Scottish Children's Reporter Administration	Central government
Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service	Central government
Scottish Enterprise	Central government
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	Central government
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Central government
Scottish Government	Central government
Scottish Legal Aid Board	Central government
Scottish Natural Heritage	Central government
Scottish Prison Service	Central government
Scottish Qualifications Authority	Central government
Shetland Islands Council	Local government
Skills Development Scotland	Central government
Social Security Scotland	Central government
South Ayrshire Council	Local government
South Lanarkshire Council	Local government
Stirling Council	Local government
Tayside Contracts	Local government
The Moray Council	Local government
The State Hospitals Board for Scotland	Health
Transport Scotland	Central government
University of Aberdeen	Universities and colleges
University of Dundee	Universities and colleges
University of Edinburgh	Universities and colleges
University of Glasgow	Universities and colleges
University of St Andrews	Universities and colleges

Organisation name	Sector
University of Stirling	Universities and colleges
University of Strathclyde	Universities and colleges
University of the Highlands and Islands	Universities and colleges
University of the West of Scotland	Universities and colleges
Visit Scotland	Central government
West College Scotland	Universities and colleges
West Dunbartonshire Council	Local government
West Lothian Council	Local government



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