RISE | Retrofit information, support & expertise

How to secure retrofit contracts and funding opportunities

Supply chain advice pack

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Overview

This guide is designed to help supply chain organisations understand and access opportunities within the growing UK retrofit market. It provides practical advice on how retrofit services are procured, where to find contract opportunities, how to prepare for bidding, and the steps needed to build the skills, accreditations and partnerships required to compete successfully for publicly funded retrofit projects.

Introduction

The UK retrofit sector is expanding rapidly as local authorities, housing associations and other organisations invest in improving the energy performance of homes. For businesses looking to enter or grow within this market, understanding how contracts are funded, procured and delivered is essential.

This guide provides a step-by-step approach to help supply chain organisations become procurement-ready, identify opportunities and position themselves for success in the retrofit market.

Step 1: Understand the retrofit market

Before pursuing opportunities, it is important to understand how the retrofit sector operates and what is driving demand.

The UK has millions of homes requiring energy efficiency improvements to meet net zero targets, reduce fuel poverty and improve housing quality. This creates substantial opportunities for suppliers involved in insulation, heating systems, ventilation, renewable energy technologies, surveying, design, project management and resident engagement.

Where demand comes from

- Local authorities delivering Warm Homes and area-based retrofit programmes.
- Housing associations upgrading housing stock.
- Social landlords accessing government retrofit funding.
- Private homeowners investing in energy efficiency improvements.
- Main contractors delivering publicly funded programmes.

What buyers are looking for

- PAS 2030 and PAS 2035 compliance.
- TrustMark registration where required.
- Quality installation and customer service.
- Effective resident engagement.

- Reliable programme delivery.
- Evidence of social value.

Why this matters

Understanding the market helps businesses target the right opportunities, develop relevant skills and invest in accreditations that will support long-term growth.

Step 2: Understand how retrofit contracts are procured

Most retrofit projects are commissioned through formal procurement processes. Understanding how organisations buy retrofit services will help you identify the most suitable route into the market[1].

Common procurement routes

- Frameworks: Frameworks are pre-approved supplier agreements that allow buyers to procure services quickly through direct awards or mini-competitions[2].
- Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPSs): Similar to frameworks, but new suppliers can apply to join throughout the life of the DPS. Dynamic markets were established through the Procurement Act 2023, providing a flexible route for buyers to procure works and services and may increasingly be used for retrofit delivery. Suppliers can monitor Pipeline Notices and procurement opportunities through the Find a Tender service.
- Open Tenders: Any eligible supplier can bid. These opportunities are typically advertised through Find a Tender and procurement portals.
- Mini-Competitions: Competitions between suppliers already appointed to a framework or DPS.

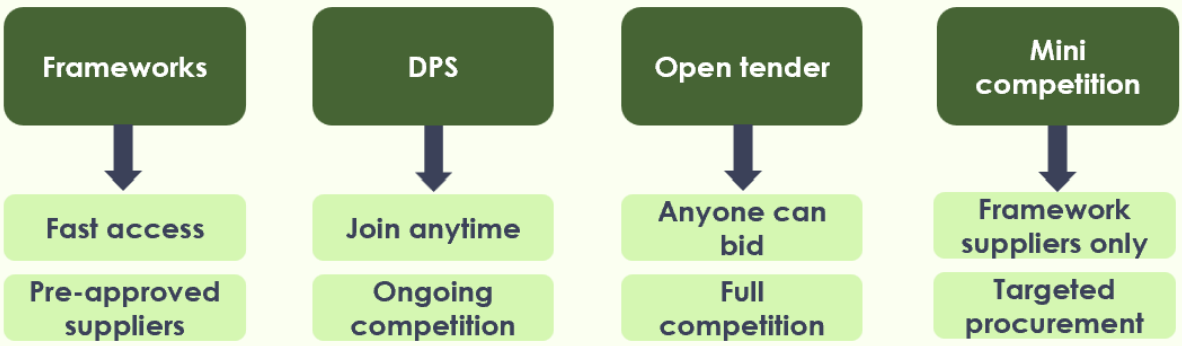

*Figure 1**Error! No text of specified style in document.**-1 Common procurement routes*

[1] https://nationalretrofithub.org.uk/cross-cutting-themes/procurement/ National Retrofit Hub – Procurement

[2] LHC Retrofit and Decarbonisation Framework Guide

What buyers assess:

- Technical competence and relevant retrofit experience.
- Compliance with PAS 2030/2035 and other quality standards.
- TrustMark registration and compliance with scheme requirements where applicable.
- Capacity and resources to deliver at scale.
- Value for money and social value.
- Resident engagement, health and safety, and risk management.

Understanding these requirements early allows businesses to prepare before opportunities arise.

Step 3: Build the skills and accreditations you need

Buyers expect suppliers to demonstrate competence, compliance and quality assurance.

Investing in workforce development and industry accreditations increases credibility and competitiveness.

Consider developing

- PAS 2030 certification.
- Knowledge of PAS 2035 requirements.
- TrustMark registration where applicable.
- Retrofit-specific installer qualifications.
- Health and safety certifications.
- Environmental management systems.
- Quality management systems.

Building organisational capability

- Train staff regularly.
- Maintain competency records.
- Develop robust quality assurance procedures.
- Establish clear customer care processes.

Why this matters

In many regions demand exceeds the supply of qualified retrofit professionals. Businesses that invest early in skills and accreditation are often better positioned to secure contracts.

Step 4: Get procurement ready

Before bidding for retrofit contracts, ensure your business can demonstrate that it is capable of delivering safely, compliantly and effectively.

Have the following in place

- Relevant certifications and accreditations.
- Insurance documentation.
- Financial accounts and evidence of stability.
- Health and safety policies.
- Environmental policies.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion policies.
- Customer complaints procedures.
- References and project examples.

Create a bid library

A bid library helps reduce tender preparation time. Include:

- Company information.
- Staff CVs.
- Policies and procedures.
- Case studies.
- Social value commitments.
- Certifications and accreditations.
- Performance data and KPIs.

Being prepared enables you to respond quickly when opportunities arise.

Step 5: Find retrofit contract opportunities

Successful suppliers actively monitor the market rather than waiting for opportunities to find them.

Where to look

- Find a Tender (FTS): The UK's main platform for public sector procurement notices, including pipeline, contract and award notices.

- Framework providers: Organisations such as LHC, PfH and other procurement consortia regularly procure retrofit suppliers through frameworks and mini-competitions[3].
- Local authorities and housing associations: Monitor procurement portals, forward pipelines and decarbonisation programme announcements.
- Industry networks and events: Engage with RISE, National Retrofit Hub and regional retrofit forums to stay informed about upcoming opportunities[4].

How to stay ahead

- Set procurement alerts.
- Monitor funding announcements.
- Review previous contract awards.
- Track organisations receiving retrofit funding.

The earlier you identify opportunities, the more time you have to prepare.

Step 6: Build strategic partnerships

Retrofit projects are rarely delivered by a single organisation. Strong partnerships can significantly improve your ability to compete.

Consider partnering with

- Main contractors.
- Specialist installers.
- Retrofit Assessors.
- Retrofit Coordinators.
- Retrofit Designers.
- Housing associations.
- Framework providers.

Benefits of partnership working

- Access larger contracts.
- Increase delivery capacity.
- Fill capability gaps.
- Share expertise.

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[3] Procurement for Housing (PfH) Decarbonisation and Retrofit Buyer's Guide
[4] RISE Programme overview

- Improve credibility during tendering.
- Access market intelligence.

Partnerships demonstrate resilience and provide buyers with confidence that delivery risks can be effectively managed.

Step 7: Prepare strong tender responses

A successful tender demonstrates that your organisation can deliver the required outcomes, manage risks and provide value for money.

Use the NOSE approach

Need: Show your understanding of the buyer's requirements and objectives.

Outcome: Explain what benefits will be achieved through your solution.

Solution: Outline your delivery methodology, team and approach.

Evidence: Provide proof through case studies, performance data and testimonials.

Look beyond the specification

Review:

- Strategic objectives.
- Background information.
- Ways of working.
- Reporting requirements.
- Social value expectations.
- Resident engagement requirements.

Understanding the wider context helps tailor your response to what matters most to the buyer.

Step 8: Demonstrate social value and delivery confidence

Social value is increasingly a key component of tender evaluation. Buyers want evidence that contracts will deliver wider benefits to residents and communities.

Examples of social value commitments

- Creating local jobs.
- Supporting apprenticeships.

- Delivering skills and training programmes.
- Engaging local SMEs.
- Supporting community initiatives.
- Reducing environmental impacts.

Build confidence through evidence

Include:

- Relevant project case studies.
- Measurable outcomes.
- Customer testimonials.
- Performance indicators.
- Resident satisfaction results.
- Examples of successful stakeholder engagement.

The strongest bids provide evidence rather than simply making claims.

Step 9: Track funding and plan for future opportunities

Understanding where retrofit funding is being allocated can help identify future work pipelines. Funding drives demand, and organisations that secure funding will often begin procurement activity shortly afterwards.

Key funding sources

- Warm Homes programmes.
- Social housing decarbonisation initiatives.
- Local authority retrofit schemes.
- Regional energy efficiency programmes.

How to stay informed

- Monitor DESNZ announcements.
- Follow local authority investment plans.
- Review housing association funding awards.
- Participate in RISE and industry networks.

Prepare ahead of future funding rounds

- Build relationships with potential clients.
- Maintain accreditations and compliance.

- Develop delivery partnerships.
- Continue investing in workforce capability.

Businesses that engage early are often best placed when procurement begins.

Resources

Podcast: All RISE podcasts are available here.

Podcast: Effective retrofit contract management available here.

Masterclass: All RISE masterclasses are available here.

Masterclass: Procurement Considerations, Tendering and Awarding of Contracts available here.

Advice pack: All RISE advice packs available here.

Advice pack: Supply chain advice pack: Procurement Act 2023 update available here.

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