

*Cynadleddau Cadwyni Cyflenwi -  
Supply Chain Summits*

# SUPPLY CHAIN SUMMITS RESOURCE PACK

# Introduction

Introducing Business Wales' Supply Chain Summits; four sessions that will explore the opportunities available to Welsh SMEs in supplying the public sector and large industry buyers.

In each virtual session, our speakers will share their knowledge and experience to help you gain a better understanding of how your business can get involved with the supply chain in Wales.

Whatever the size of your business, wherever you are in Wales, and whatever the products or services you provide, these summits will provide you with invaluable insights into how to become part of this £6.5b annual opportunity.

## Construction 1

In this session, you will hear first-hand from two leaders in the Welsh construction industry who regularly work with SMEs through Business Wales and Sell2Wales. These construction industry experts will also provide insights into future demands and supplier opportunities.

### Our speakers include:

- Ian Ress – Area Manager Wales, Kier Group
- Mark Bodger – Engagement Director, Wales CITB
- Jake Burley – Director, Swansea Professional Painters Ltd

## NHS

In this session, our speakers will provide a unique inside insight into the NHS procurement process to help potential suppliers identify opportunities where they can bid and potentially win work as part of the NHS supply chain.

### Our speakers include:

- Huw Thomas – Director of Finance, Hywel Dda UHB
- Rob Type – Deputy Head of Procurement, Aneurin Bevan Services Partnership
- Chris Bishop – Director, WR Bishop

## General

In this session we will speak with expert buyers with a particular focus on learning from their insider knowledge of the procurement process, offering hints and tips on how your business could identify new opportunities and potentially win public and private sector contracts.

### Our speakers include:

- Stephen Pickard – Senior Procurement lead, Transformation and Policy NHS Wales Shared Services
- Nick Abbott – Procurement and Value for Money Manager, Linc-Cymru
- Chris Bishop – Director, WR Bishop

## Construction 2

In this session, you will hear first-hand from two leaders in the Welsh construction industry who regularly work with SMEs through Business Wales and Sell2Wales. These construction industry experts will also provide insights into future demands and supplier opportunities.

### Our speakers include:

- Catherine Griffith-Williams – Chief Executive, Construction Excellence Wales
- Stephen Tomkins – Managing Director, Alun Griffiths Ltd
- Jake Burley – Owner, Swansea Professional Painters and Decorators

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# Thought Leadership

## Howard Jacobson

### Why the public sector needs YOU.

Howard Jacobson, Supply Chain Engagement Manager for Business Wales, discusses how the public sector is intent on expanding its local supply chain, and how smaller businesses across Wales can get a slice of the action.

If you're reading this then chances are you have an interest in the supply chain process and public sector procurement in Wales.

Maybe your opinion is that that public sector contractors are only ever big businesses, that contracts always go to the same old people, or even that most go to companies outside Wales. Perhaps you don't know how to find these opportunities, or where to go to for support when bidding for contracts. Possibly you have had an unsuccessful bid and don't know why this is.

Or your opinion could be neutral. You may have very little experience in this arena and are here to learn more, with no expectations.

Maybe your experience is a positive one. Perhaps you are a small Welsh SME, or even a start-up, that has recently won a sizeable public sector contract and are growing your business using public sector contracts in order to scale. I know these businesses are out there because I speak to them every day. Here at Business Wales, this is the type of work that makes our jobs extremely rewarding.

#### The procurement landscape in Wales

Firstly, let me address those whose opinion of public sector procurement processes in Wales, or across the UK, may be negative.

Many of you have extremely valid opinions and we have been working to make the changes the system needs.

I have spoken with lots of you at various events, both in-person and online, across Wales in recent years and listened to your thoughts and concerns



about how public sector procurement operates, and how in lots of cases, it could be done better.

All of these opinions and ideas were taken onboard and have formed the basis of a new way of engaging with Welsh businesses, and the structure of our regular procurement focused events.

We introduced a new strategy based on quick and more focused 1-2-1 meetings between buyers and potential suppliers, using an almost speed-dating like format. Our invitees have also become more targeted. Whereas previously guests lists for a construction focused event (for example) may have been fairly broad, with our new approach we became far more purposeful, inviting only specialists in certain sectors like roofing/signage/

plastering/tiling/decorating etc to attend, depending on requirements.

This approach cut out a lot of criticism that people had travelled often significant distances and sometimes felt that they had wasted their time.

We first implemented this new approach with two events in Swansea and Bangor before the pandemic, which proved to be hugely successful, and we continued to roll them out physically before Covid hit.

But like everyone else, we adapted and took the process online, and it continued to work extremely well. In fact, it worked even better. Now instead of having to travel to events, guests were invited to 'sit' in front of a buyer virtually, with 15 mins to discuss the available opportunities to become part of their supply chain and pitch accordingly.

This saved everyone time and of course brings a huge carbon saving for businesses. We can also see that the satisfaction from suppliers is extremely high and that they are winning business as a result of this new delivery model.

## **Visibility**

The one major problem with all of this however is that we can only invite people to our procurement events who are visible to us – in other words they must be registered with **Sell2Wales**, the Welsh Government portal that connects Welsh SMEs with public sector contracts.

If a company is not registered, then those in charge of managing public sector contracts simply don't know they exist and you won't receive tender notifications. Which (when you consider that over £6.5bn worth of contracts are available via Sell2Wales each year) seems like an enormous own goal for Welsh businesses who aren't giving themselves a chance to even bid for work.

To help remedy this we have been doing a huge amount of proactive work recently to map Welsh supply chains and actively encourage those who aren't already registered with Sell2Wales to register immediately and start tendering for, and winning, work.

It's been a massive project to map the relevant Welsh businesses operating in thousands of different sectors and start reaching out to them to explain the opportunities available within public sector procurement and how to get involved. It's early days but I know every hour and pound spent on this project will be worth it.

## **Proof is in the pudding**

However, I also know from personal experience from many hundreds of conversations with Welsh SMEs that many of these businesses we reach out to will think that public sector work is not for them. For a multitude of reasons. Sometimes it's concerns about the complexity of the tendering process itself (I'll get into this later), but more often than not many business owners feel that they are simply too small to ever have a hope of winning public sector work. I understand this perception, but they are wrong.

As an example, we were asked recently by a contractor to find them a local sandwich shop to deliver to their workers on site, to avoid the additional risk of catching Covid. So, you can see that opportunities can appear in the most unlikely circumstances, for even the very micro SMEs.



On a larger scale, another example is Swansea Professional Painters & Decorators, a firm run by a young man called Jake, who actually first engaged with the Welsh Government via its youth entrepreneurship service, **Big Ideas Wales**. Since then he has progressed to working with Business Wales where one of our tendering advisors encouraged him to sign up to Sell2Wales and start pitching for public sector decorating projects.

Jake acknowledges that he never thought a firm of his size and relative infancy could win public sector work, but Jake and his team now run public sector decorating contracts across South Wales. His story is testament to how the system can and does work for the 'little guy' when you put yourself in the right position for success.

## Misconceptions

Building on the above there is certainly a misconception among many potential suppliers that public sector procurement is a big ticket exercise, or really intimidating, and where the only contracts are for major projects like huge infrastructure schemes, or niche technical undertakings. But this is far from an accurate representation.

For example, people think the NHS just needs X-ray machines, or hospital beds, or surgical equipment, but this is incorrect, they need to buy everything, all of the time, down to pens and paper. It's truly an entire ecosystem that needs supplying and there are contracts available for virtually everything.

Similarly local authorities need things like nappies. And if you're a nappy supplier not visible to them on Sell2wales they could buy via Amazon. This is a true story and symptomatic of the huge lack of suppliers within public sector supply chains.

So, if you're a potential supplier, and the vast majority of businesses are, I truly implore you to engage with Business Wales, who will support you in your registration with Sell2Wales. Business Wales can support you in making sure that your profile and alerts settings make you visible to buyers and get opportunities flooding into your inbox. For more insight I recommend

listening to this [brilliant podcast where S2W describes the benefits of registering and an SME explains their experiences of winning millions of pounds of business](#).

## The role of CSR in developing local supply chains

As Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) becomes more and more entrenched in supply chain decision making across the public and private sectors, businesses and organisations are putting far more emphasis than ever before on buying locally, in order to reduce carbon emissions and to boost local economies (supporting the Foundational Economy).

The services and products within the foundational economy provide those basic goods and services on which every citizen relies and which keep us safe, sound and civilized. Care and health services, food, housing, energy, construction, tourism and retailers on the high street are all examples of the foundational economy.

This approach is crucial to meeting CSR objectives which have been redrawn in recent years due to hard hitting Net Zero objectives, and the Welsh Government's Foundational Economy and Future Generations Act initiatives

The public sector has a duty to lead by example here and if Wales is to meet our carbon emissions pledge – to be Net Zero by 2050 – the public sector must buy closer to home wherever possible. However, this means that thousands of new Business Wales and Sell2Wales registrations will be required in order to significantly increase the visibility of local suppliers in the marketplace, to meet the demand from buyers desperate to meet their CSR and Net Zero targets.

## Sell2Wales and Quick Quotes

I have mentioned [Sell2Wales](#) endlessly in this feature and with good reason. It truly is the key to unlocking public sector money that could be the catalyst to transforming your business, driving growth, or simply assuring consistent and secure payment for work undertaken, unlike the private sector where invoices often



remain unpaid and uncertain for huge periods of time. All of this provides a reliable, long term additional income stream for your business.

A great place to start with Sell2Wales, or improve your tender experience and success rate, is to attend our **How to Tender workshops**, which include information and advice on how best to utilise the Sell2Wales platform, as well as Quick Quotes – Sell2Wales' invaluable portal for smaller opportunities.

Quick Quotes is a quotation facility within Sell2Wales which allows public sector buyers to obtain competitive quotes for lower value contract requirements (of under £25k). Three companies can be invited to quote privately using this mechanism (note: construction is slightly different – contracts under £1.4 million can use Quick Quotes).

It's a great system for many reasons in that it is far less onerous for all parties involved – but especially for the supplier who does not have to put together a far more extensive tender, and there is way less competition – usually just two other companies, which makes it easier to win public sector work.

It also acts as a foot in the door for many businesses. A stepping stone onto the larger tenders. A confidence boost that many SMEs require when dipping their toe into public sector procurement waters for the first time.

I have never witnessed such an extreme will and desire within the public sector to engage the services of local organisations and businesses as I have right now. And rightly so, everyone must play their part in supporting their regional economies and meeting Net Zero objectives.

But they need a wide range of options to buy from within the procurement frameworks available to them in order to achieve this.

So, if you've not yet signed up to Sell2Wales, consider the fact that in 2022 the annual Welsh Government budget stands at a little over £24bn. I imagine that would go a long way to benefiting the bottom line of every single Welsh SME out there. Don't forget – if you're not visible to buyers, they won't know who you are, where you are, or what you do. Get involved now!

*For more information and support to help your business discover new supply chain opportunities, and to speak to a specialist advisor, contact Business Wales.*

**Call 03000 6 03000 or visit [www.businesswales.gov.wales](http://www.businesswales.gov.wales)**

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# Case Studies

## Swansea Professional Painters

### Public sector contracts give Swansea painters a design for success.

Jake Burley founded Swansea Professional Painters Ltd, a contractor business specialising in the public sector, in 2019.

Today, the business has a proven track record in completing all aspects of painting and decorating for clients in the commercial, industrial and public sector. But, until Jake engaged with Business Wales in 2020, he'd exclusively focused on small scale domestic decorating projects, believing public sector contracts to be out of his reach.

The first support Jake received was from Big Ideas Wales, a Business Wales service for those between the age of 5 and 25 who wish to develop a business idea.

The team at Big Ideas Wales began by helping Jake to develop an effective business plan. That guidance then allowed the young entrepreneur to identify and implement systems that would allow him to grow his company.

Business Wales then put Jake in contact with an adviser who had direct experience in supplying services to public sector clients. The knowledge he gained from that support opened his eyes to the real potential that existed for SMEs to secure contracts with local authorities and public service providers.

As Jake explains: "Having that insight is just something I would never have been able to get if it wasn't for Business Wales. Not knowing that support was there to start with meant I initially struggled to get the business operating the way it needed to. I learned things the hard way. But, once I got that help from Business Wales, I really managed to grow in the right direction and streamline the process."

A tendering adviser then helped Jake to navigate the Sell2Wales online platform - which matches public sector tendering opportunities with suitable suppliers – guiding him through the process of creating an effective profile for his business and planning the terminology used in tender submissions.

Crucially, Jake's adviser was able to demonstrate how to complete the quote itself, breaking down each stage of the tendering process and scoring system. With that training in place, he was able to see how to set out his initial quote for a public sector contract, a



[Click here to watch Case Study Video](#)



tender that was ultimately successful. As a result of continued successes, Swansea Professional Painters Ltd now exclusively focus on significant painting and decorating contracts for the public sector, in addition to clients in the industrial and commercial sectors. Its services cover a range of disciplines, including coatings for various metal work, all types of exterior renders and internal decoration, as well as maintenance and refurbishment for care homes, hospitals, and much more.

Jake continued: "Before getting a lot of help from Business Wales I thought the future for my company would be slow organic growth via domestic projects. But, with a lot of help from my business advisor and tendering advisor, I've realised that the public sector must be my focus. I'm still committed to growing steadily, but entering the public sector means I've already been able to double the size of my company through constant work and reassured payments."

The first quarter of 2022 has seen the firm take on its most ambitious and technical project to date. A contract with the Vale of Glamorgan Council has seen Jake's team collaborate with a local artist to rejuvenate Gladstone Bridge in Barry, in addition to several other public sites in the local authority.

Jake's plans for the future will see his company continue to grow at a steady rate that

maintains quality assurance. A strategy that focuses on being the best, not the biggest. And, with the support of Business Wales, he thinks this is an approach that could help many aspiring entrepreneurs to succeed in any sector.

Reflecting on the support he's received from Business Wales, Jake, said: "We've had such great growth over the last 12 months it's really humbling, and I'm really proud of where we've come. I highly recommend Big Ideas Wales and Business Wales to anyone starting off or even if they've already got a company, because it really enables you to have more insight into how a business should run. You may have your own systems in place now, but there's so much more to learn and so much more to know."

***Watch our Expert Sessions to learn from industry insiders and gain a better understanding of how your business can get involved with and benefit from the supply chain in Wales. All sessions are now available to watch online.***

***For more information and support to help your business discover new supply chain opportunities, and to speak to a specialist advisor, contact Business Wales. Call 03000 6 03000 or visit [www.businesswales.gov.wales/](http://www.businesswales.gov.wales/)***



# Case Studies

## WR Bishop

**Family business, WR Bishop, specialise in supplying fresh produce and provisions to the catering industry, local authorities, and the NHS.**

Over the last 60 years the business has grown to supply over 2000 deliveries a week including schools in six local authorities and six NHS health boards across South Wales, in addition to catering firms and restaurants.

Bishop now employs 40 people across its two sites in Pontyclun and Cardiff and the continued growth of the company is significantly linked to its success in securing and maintaining public sector contracts.

Chris Bishop from WR Bishop, explains: "By maintaining our high standards of fresh produce and consistency of deliveries we have become a trusted supplier among South Wales based organisations.

"These major public sector customers are vital to our sales planning as the contracts mean we can plan for things like vehicles, equipment and staff security. We can also plan for regular

secure volumes of business so we can negotiate competitive pricing with our suppliers, which in turn helps us compete for other contracts which we are looking to tender for."

In 2021 the company moved to a brand-new bespoke warehouse near Pontyclun, which allowed the capacity to expand its product range and operate more efficiently.

However, facilities and the ability to deliver on quality are only part of the equation for those that seek to tap into public sector supply chains. Regardless of a business' abilities, in order to be successful in the public sector, companies need to develop their tendering processes.



Today, all public sector contracts WR Bishop tenders for are published digitally through the Sell2Wales platform, which matches tendering opportunities with suitable suppliers.

Like all companies, in order to respond to daily tendering alerts, WR Bishop first had to register on Sell2Wales and input a company profile. That included matching its products to the Sell2Wales product codes and specifying the geographical locations it can service.

WR Bishop first turned to Business Wales for advice and support on obtaining sustainability accreditations that are now crucial to tender submissions and their ability to retain existing contracts.

The business was then introduced to sustainability advisers, who visited its premises to provide insights that led to WR Bishop achieving the Green Dragon environmental standard. This accreditation became vital to winning a contract tender and continues to support the family business' future growth.

Mr Bishop continued: "It is vitally important for interested companies to understand how to tender for Welsh public sector procurement contracts, and the requirements needed for doing so."

"We have been aware of the fully funded business support for a few years now, which is of great benefit to Welsh businesses in sourcing National Procurement Wales contracts."

"We have had some great help especially from our tendering advisers, who have helped guide us through the e-tendering portals, which can be quite daunting at first. That support continues to benefit our tendering exercises today."

**"I would fully recommend that any Welsh firm looking to tap into public sector supply chains to approach Business Wales, even if they feel they are not in a position to do so right now."**



[Click here to watch Case Study Video](#)

"I'm sure many will find that after Business Wales' experts demonstrate what is possible, they will likely discover there are more opportunities available than they would have imagined."

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# Here are some links and further reading.

To register with Business Wales call **03000 6 03000** or click here:  
[businesswales.gov.wales/campaigns](http://businesswales.gov.wales/campaigns)

All Business Wales workshops and Meet The Buyer Engagement Events can be found here:  
[wales.business-events.org.uk](http://wales.business-events.org.uk)

Search for contract opportunities on Sell2Wales:  
[sell2wales.gov.wales](http://sell2wales.gov.wales)

Details of the Welsh Government's Well-being Of Future Generations Act can be found here:  
[Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 | Future Generations](#)

Foundational Economy:  
[Foundational Economy | Business Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

Welsh Government Code of Practice Ethical Employment in Supply Chains:  
[Code of Practice: Ethical Employment in Supply Chains | Welsh Government \(gov.wales\)](#)

Welsh Government Social Value Guidance:  
[WPPN 01/20 Social value | Welsh Government \(gov.wales\)](#)

