



Growing  
Independent  
Organisations

# GIO Editions

# TENDERING

# GUIDE



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# A Beginners Guide

For those of you out there who are considering putting in a tender for a service for the first time, the Gio Project has put together a question and answer session that may help to highlight some interesting points which will give you some things to think about.

## **What is commissioning?**

A good definition taken from the North West Road Map is “a cycle of activities at a strategic level - concerned with whole groups of people – including:

- assessing the needs of a whole group of people;
- setting priorities and developing commissioning strategies to meet those needs in line with local and national targets;
- securing services from providers to meet those needs and targets either through grant making or procurement;
- monitoring and evaluating outcomes;
- the above combined with an explicit requirement to consult and involve a range of stakeholders, patients/service users and carers in the process.”

## **What is tendering and what is the process?**

This is the route that an organisation will take when responding to a requirement for a service which has been identified through the commissioning process. There are a number of key stages which include: completing a PQQ (see our jargon buster for a definition), invitations to tender (ITT), scoring the tender and granting the tender.

## **What is the first step to becoming tender ready?**

This is probably the most important part and it is to check that your governing document allows the organisation to tender for services. Have a look specifically in the objects section. It should say something like ‘to enter into contracts’. If your governing document doesn’t allow you to tender for the service, and you are sure your organisation wants to tender then you would need to change or amend your governing document through the trustees and inform the Charity Commission. There are a number of templates for governing documents on the Charity Commission website <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/registration/mgds.asp> or there is a very useful document about amending your charity’s governing document on the Commission’s website: <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc36.asp>

## **Do you want the contract?**

You might think that this is a ‘no-brainer’ but there are some important questions to ask before going ahead. Is the work close to your organisation’s aims and priorities? How is it likely to impact on your other work? Does it pay enough?

## *So You want to Start Tendering*

The best place to start is looking to see what consultation is going on around the specific service area that you are interested in. Commissioning is a cycle that begins with asking service users what their needs are relating to a specific subject e.g. mental health or substance misuse. You can be a part of that consultation and find out what the commissioners might be looking for in a service provider. You can then find out who the key people are that you need to start building a relationship with. As the old saying goes, it's not what you know but who you know. Once you have identified which commissioners you need to be engaging with, make sure that you are in regular contact with them so that if opportunities occur you will be the first to know and this will give you as much time as possible to put your submission together.

There will also be a document of commissioning intentions on the relevant website (local authority, health etc) that sets out what services are likely to be needed over the next three years or so for particular areas of interest. Manchester City Council Adult Services runs a quarterly consultation event for Third Sector providers and this can be a good forum to learn about current developments and a chance to talk to commissioners face to face. If you would like to find out more about this please email [hello@gioproject.org.uk](mailto:hello@gioproject.org.uk)

The main thing I would say is, don't leave it until the tendering opportunity is announced, get involved right from the start. This may seem very time and resource intensive but will pay dividends in the long run.



# Jargon Buster

Fed up of commissioners using language that you don't understand then use our handy guide to decipher what they are actually talking about.

**ITT (Invitation To Tender)** – Once organisations have completed the PQQ stage and their tenders have been evaluated and found to be successful, an ITT will be sent to them as the second stage of the tendering process.

**MEAT (Most Economically Advantageous Tender)** – A selection criteria used for tender selection. This allows the tender to be evaluated on quality as well as price.

**Part A services** – These come from EU public procurement rules and include project management, design and technical services. These services are subject to full EU rules, which impose strict requirements in respect of advertising, tendering, evaluation and award processes.

**Part B services** – These also come from EU public procurement rules and include the services that many CVS organisations would provide including certain health, education and social care services. These services are subject to lighter regulation than Part A services.

**PQQ (Pre-Qualification Questionnaire)** – Is a document to be filled in by organisations that are applying to provide a service and helps the commissioning body to assess whether an organisation is capable of delivering a service. It covers three areas:

- About the organisation (e.g. status)
- Economic (e.g. finance and accounts)
- Technical capability (e.g. insurance)

## **TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981)**

These regulations help to preserve continuity of employment and to safeguard employment rights of all employees whose employment transfers to a new employer as result of a relevant transfer.



**Not just one top tip but five top tips! Use them as a checklist to help you improve your application:**

- 1. Find out the gateway questions and weighting for the scores in advance. Giving this information is a legal requirement of the commissioning body. This will help to show you where you can score the most points and what requires the most effort.**
- 2. Always submit evidence to back up your tender unless the guidelines tell you not to.**
- 3. Always check you have the right person signing in the right place.**
- 4. Do not send your tender by Royal Mail next day service, as this will specify your organisation on the outside of the envelope and immediately exclude your tender.**
- 5. Keep a file with all your information for tendering and previous tenders. It will save you time in the long run and if an opportunity comes out with a tight deadline you are in a good position to respond.**



**TOP TIP**

## ***Four types of tendering procedure***

**'Open' procedure.** This is where an opportunity (including all tender documents) is advertised inviting providers to bid directly for a contract. Scoring takes place and the successful organisation is awarded.

**Restricted procedure.** The opportunity is advertised in relevant places and media. Organisations will then submit an expression of interest and fill in a pre qualification questionnaire. Successful organisations will go onto select list and be given an invitation to tender with the tender documents.

**The negotiated procedure.** It can only be used in a limited number of carefully defined cases (e.g. large capital projects where a range of solutions to deliver are possible). Successful bidders are invited to negotiate with the procuring body, which is called the dialogue phase.

**Competitive dialogue.** This is another procedure only used in the case of particularly complex contracts. Successful bidders discuss the form of the contract and technical specifications with the bidders before the tender documents are issued. The discussion ends when the procuring body can identify a solution to meet its needs. Bidders then submit a tender based on the solution resulting from the discussion.

## The Chest

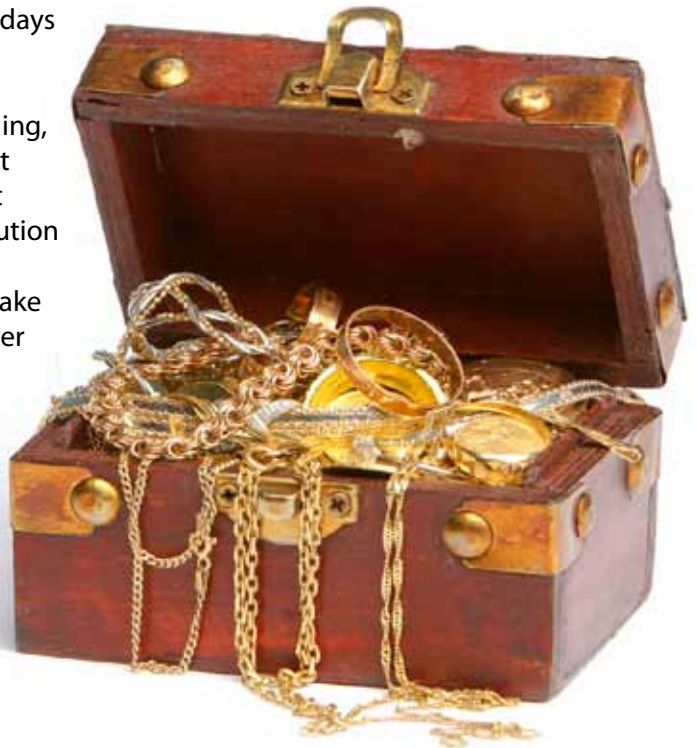
If you are thinking about tendering for opportunities from any of the local authorities in Greater Manchester, the place to visit is The Chest. To visit the website go to [www.thechest.nwce.gov.uk](http://www.thechest.nwce.gov.uk)

This is an electronic portal that most of the local authorities, police, fire and rescue services and some housing associations use to advertise their tenders, but this site is much more than just a place where you can find opportunities. You can register an interest in the tenders that you want to bid for, sign up for electronic notifications when new opportunities are published and when you do come to tender you will have to upload your tender submission and all the supporting information to this site. So my advice to you is to get yourself on there, sign up your organisation, get used to using the site (which can be a bit tricky some times) and start up the electronic alerts. This will save you time in the long run.

If you are going to use The Chest then it also makes sense to have all the necessary documents in an electronic format. By necessary documents I mean your governing document, annual accounts, policies and procedures.

There is no point spending days on end putting together a submission to be uploaded by 7pm on a Thursday evening, then you realize at 6pm that very evening that you don't have a copy of your constitution that you can also upload.

After 7pm the site will still take documents but it will register that they were late and you will be disqualified, all your hard work coming to nothing!



# *How the Gio Project can help*

Whether you are a first timer to tendering or have been tendering for a while the Gio Project can support you in a range of ways.

## **One-to-One Support**

If you have a current opportunity that you want to tender for then we can support you on a one-to-one basis to help you put your thoughts together and identify key strengths to put in the bid. However, this is not a tender writing service.

## **A critical eye**

If you would like a friendly critical eye to read through a funding application before you submit it to the funder (make sure you allocated some time to tweak any issues we may find) then we are willing and happy to work with you.

## **Developing a funding strategy**

By working together we can help you create a long term funding strategy. Having this in place will mean that you are more prepared to weather the economic downturn which will also help lower your stress levels!

## **Organisational health check**

The Gio Project has created our health check to cover key aspects that will be asked for in a pre-qualification questionnaire. So by working through the health check it will mean that you can be tender ready. It will highlight areas to work on so that these can be overcome even before you start to tender.

## **Tendering opportunities**

On our website we put the latest tendering opportunities relevant for the sector. This saves you from having to trawl through the vast amounts of website for the latest information. This section is updated daily. [www.gioproject.org.uk/tendering-opportunities](http://www.gioproject.org.uk/tendering-opportunities)

## **E-bulletin**

Our e-bulletin goes out once a month to your email address and contains an update on the current opportunities that are being advertised. If you would like to sign up to receive the e-bulletin then please email [hello@gioproject.org.uk](mailto:hello@gioproject.org.uk)

## **Training**

We also run training on commissioning and tendering so that you can increase your knowledge on the subject and confidence to tender. Look at our website [www.gioproject.org.uk](http://www.gioproject.org.uk) for current opportunities.



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