

# Are you ready to tender for a contract (A guide to the basics)

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Firstly you need to understand the jargon:

**Commissioning** describes the whole cycle of buying in services that meet the needs of either a particular area or group of people.

The Commissioning Cycle looks a bit like this:



**Procurement** describes the process of buying appropriate goods and/or services at the best possible total cost to meet the needs of the purchaser in terms of quality, quantity, time, and location.

**PQQ** is the **P**re **Q**ualification **Q**uestionnaire which is often required when an opportunity is advertised and you register an interest. The purpose of the questionnaire is to check that your organisation would be able to deliver a contract – they usually require information about:

- the financial position of your organisation
- previous experience, qualifications and references
- that you have the necessary policies and procedures to deliver work of a good standard including information about the quality standards you work to

**Tender** is the bid you put together when you receive an invitation to tender (ITT). The documentation varies but will usually include a letter, service details, what you need to submit – often in an application form format but not always, scoring criteria and sometimes a draft contract etc.

Sometimes the PQQ and ITT are put together in a single process that might only allow 2 weeks and sometimes only those on the suppliers list are invited to bid.

Understanding the jargon is the first step, next you need to make sure that your organisation, the way it runs and all internal processes are up to scrutiny. **Are you:**

In good control of your finances (have a high standard of record keeping and money management) and understand your cash flow? If not contact Newcastle CVS and Ellison Services.	
Able to manage if paid in arrears? You need to check the terms of the contract and decide how you will manage your cash flow.	
Able to demonstrate that your organisation is well run and managed with appropriate quality assurance, policies and procedures (including Equality and Diversity and if appropriate to your work Safeguarding)? If not or you aren't sure please contact Newcastle CVS.	
Able to show you have adequate insurance levels – you are often asked to give proof of cover e.g. Public Liability, employers liability, Professional/liability or Indemnity Insurance and the PQQs often state level required.	
Able to demonstrate professional competence and expertise at the level necessary to deliver the work? You might be asked for evidence of experience, qualifications, references etc.	
Able to demonstrate compliance with up to date health and safety legislation? Ask us if you would like more information.	

Understand the different expectations that come with delivering a contract rather than receiving a grant? If you are not sure what this means please get in touch with Newcastle CVS.	
Able to talk confidently about your work and network to build key relationships and enhance your credibility with decision makers? If not contact Newcastle CVS for support.	
Able to identify your USP (Unique Selling Point) and fill out a tender document with confidence? If not contact Newcastle CVS for support.	

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