

# Tendering Beyond 2024 – What You Need to Know

The last year has seen major changes to the way the NHS and Local Authorities procure contracts. Tenders-UK Managing Director Chris Martin sets out some recent trends to be aware of for your public contracts:

## Social Value Continues to Grow

Since 2021 when government guidance mandated at least 10% of tender scores be allocated to Social Value, we've seen buyers across the country adopt many different systems and strategies for assessing it. Both the new NHS Provider Selection Regime (PSR) and the new Procurement Act place even greater emphasis on non-cost elements like social value; in the case of PSR this extends to being able to directly award contracts in part based on local community links and public benefit. That means if you have public contracts coming up for renewal, analysing and reporting on the Social Value Performance of those contracts ahead of time is vital to your retention strategy. For those of you bidding into new geographic areas, you'll need to spend much more time understanding the place and the people to make a truly localised Social Value offer in your bid.

## MEAT meets MAT

This balancing of non-cost elements is best demonstrated in one of the changes arising from the new Act. Most Economically Advantageous Tenders (MEAT) has been the term used to describe tender scoring for more than a decade, and it's now being replaced with Most Advantageous Tender (MAT). This reflects the reality that for some contracts things like experience, service quality, and community links are what define success.

Increasingly we're seeing fixed-rate contracts which are awarded based exclusively on these non-cost elements. A situation driven in part by constrained budgets, commissioners are pushing their bidders to be more inventive. This goes beyond the old euphemisms where 'creative and flexible' was just a way of saying 'underfunded'. Now buyers have more licence to buy creatively.



This shift to more open commissioning will continue in the coming years with the Act also paving the way for more Outcomes Based Commissioning (OBC); commissioners recognise that overly prescribing how a contract must operate cuts them off from market innovation. Forward-thinking commissioning teams will be using this opportunity to set out the problem they need to solve so that industry leaders can propose new ways of working.

## Change Creates Opportunity

These are just a couple of changes which we're seeing in the tendering landscape, but the key thing they have in common is that tendering is getting more personal. With a greater focus on solving unique local challenges and supporting specific local communities, tenders cannot rely on repeating the same offers around the country.

As you move into 2025 tapping into local knowledge and networks will be an essential part of every bid process, and your local staff will be increasingly vital to capturing the insights needed to win.

To learn more about tender opportunities in your area and the help available preparing for them, head to the [Care England website](#).

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