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## Driving Improvements in Procurement



**Pauline Gordon**  
Director

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“I’ve been an active member of the PSG since 2008, representing the interests of social enterprises and supported businesses and I’m proud of the progress we’ve made collectively in influencing policy and practice of benefit to suppliers. The supplier reps on PSG have always sought to be constructive, commending progressive policies, and where necessary, challenging practice and offering solutions, but always championing the importance of socially responsible procurement and of advancing the power of our public spend to work better to support local suppliers, job creation, skills development and in delivering wider social value and community benefit.

### Impacts of COVID-19 And EU Exit

The PSG’s January 2021 meeting considered the profound health, economic and social impacts of COVID-19. This, combined with the need to mitigate the risks associated with EU Exit has led the PSG to refresh its focus on how it can best work with the public sector buyers via the Public Procurement Group (PPG). and policy makers to ensure that the views and experiences of suppliers are heard, understood and acted upon. We need to ensure that best practice in procurement continues at pace, and equally important, that together we continue to build the capacity of the supplier community to support recovery and build a wellbeing economy, supporting communities and a greener economy.

The PSG members acknowledge that in Scotland, we have already taken action to address a number of the issues included within the [UK Government’s Green Paper on transforming public procurement](#). This applies to the rest of the UK now that the UK is no longer bound by EU laws – but in Scotland, we can’t afford to stand still!

More than ever, as we prepare for the post-Covid era, public procurement including how we design and deliver public services will require bolder and more innovative approaches to deliver those wider social benefits that can help address deep-rooted inequalities and support economic recovery as well as social renewal.

This calls for a re-assessment of how well we are doing in Scotland on this continuous improvement journey, to promote good practice, implement lessons learned from COVID and identify further actions to be addressed. Many actions are already underway:

Scottish Government published a report on the effectiveness of the Sustainable Procurement Duty on 17 December 2020. It reveals that although significant progress has been made, we recognise that there is room for continued progress across all strands of the Duty. In particular, the research cites that more needs to be done to support public bodies in promoting innovation, in facilitating the involvement of Third Sector bodies, and in evidencing the impact of the Duty.

Scottish Government has also undertaken a Supplier Survey to better understand their experiences of public procurement in Scotland. Analysis of over 1,500 responses received will identify key issues that may need to be addressed and a report should be available in spring.

Scottish Government is preparing the second annual report on procurement activity in Scotland – informed by an analysis of 110 public bodies annual procurement reports published following the 2018-19 financial year.

The Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee is carrying out post-legislative scrutiny of the 2014 Act and we look forward to the output of this work.

Collaboration between public sector, the business community and the Third Sector will continue via the PSG to support innovative, smarter solutions – to change some of the practical problems suppliers tell us they are experiencing.

We appreciate that some areas still require attention and action, however, this should not detract from the substantial progress on public procurement policy and practice in Scotland. Not just the tangible benefits for businesses and the third sector, but also the genuine collaborative approach between the public, private and third sectors. Changing the way we work together to deliver procurement that improves public services for a prosperous, fairer and more sustainable Scotland.”