

Procurement Readiness 2024



Guidance Notes

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Introduction

The Procurement Readiness Programme is run by the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) in partnership with RBC Brewin Dolphin.

This programme will develop leaders with the emotional intelligence and capabilities to develop social enterprises that are procurement ready. This programme aims to give social entrepreneurs the best possible chance of success, through access to support and funding.

The Procurement Readiness Programme

Are you an established and ambitious social enterprise looking to scale and secure bigger contracts?

This programme, funded by [RBC Brewin Dolphin](#), aims to demystify procurement processes and help social enterprises to understand how to bid for - and win - public and private sector contracts.

- **Strengthen your organisation by becoming procurement ready** with our free learning programme: eight days of learning (a blend of online and in-person sessions) between April 2024 and July 2024.
- **Receive a £2,000 grant**
- **Gain a network of peers** to help you develop your plans and act as a sounding board.
- **Grow your network of buyers and connect with potential future contractors**
- **Learn from those who have done it before through expert speaker sessions and 1:1 mentoring**

By the end of this programme, you will have the knowledge to pitch to businesses, bid for contracts and feel comfortable and confident with procurement processes.

What are these guidance notes?

This document explains more about the programme and grant, and how to apply.

Accessibility

If this document is formatted in a way that is not accessible to you, please email felicity.day@sse.org.uk or call us on 01872 306130 so we can share an accessible version.

Remember to apply in time!

The deadline for applications is **1pm on Wednesday 10th January 2024**. Please do not apply after that point.

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)

We recommend starting your application as early as possible, so we can help you with any questions you have.

Eligibility

Can I apply?

We want to support individuals who are committed to making a social or environmental impact, in a disadvantaged area or with people in need. You must already be an established social entrepreneur with a track-record of work. You may be performing successfully within a business to customer model and looking for opportunities to expand to a business-to-business model. Or you may already be using a business-to-business model but finding challenges and obstacles with securing contracts.

For examples of previous entrepreneurial approaches, we have supported, see the case studies on our website: the-sse.org/our-stories

If you can answer YES to all the following questions, then you can apply for the Procurement Readiness programme.

About you

- Are you an ambitious individual who is leading a social enterprise and looking to expand and secure bigger contracts?
- Your organisation is a social enterprise, with social purposes, a restriction on the majority of assets, and an asset lock.
- Your organisation is based in and works primarily in the UK.
- Are you committed to meeting and sharing with others who have been through and are going through the same process?
- Are you committed to attending the blended learning programme on at least eight days between April 2024 and July 2024?

Please do not apply if...

- You only want a grant and do not intend to attend the learning programme.
- You plan to develop a purely commercial business.
- Your project will be undertaking party political activities or will aim to induce people to convert to a religion (proselytising).
- Only one applicant from each project or organisation can attend the learning

programme.

Programme at a Glance

Witness Sessions

Entrepreneurs share their experiences and discuss the secrets of their success. You will be able to listen, learn and question them to help you examine and find meaning for your own project.

Expert Sessions

Through questioning, observing and listening to experts, you will improve your understanding of procurement processes and develop as a leader.

Grant

A grant of £2,000 will help you to develop your organisation and become procurement ready.

One to One Mentoring

You may be matched with an experienced business or skills-based mentor, who will offer guidance and advice over the course of the programme.

Peer Sessions

You will bring your skills and experience to the group and learn from the skills and experiences of other members. This network of like-minded social entrepreneurs will provide vital support as you develop over the programme.



What will I learn on the programme?

This programme will develop leaders with the emotional intelligence and capabilities to develop social enterprises that are procurement ready. You will build your leadership skills, understand how to develop, and adapt your product/service and grow as a self-directed learner. Our learning programmes are very different to traditional teaching. We're not about essays and academia. We believe in learning from other people's stories. You'll hear from inspiring social entrepreneurs who speak frankly about the good, the bad and the ugly of running an organisation.

You'll learn about:

- Procurement processes and contexts.
- Relationship and network building.
- Opportunity mapping.
- Developing and adapting your product/service.
- Prototyping.
- Pitching and tender development.
- Fulfilling a contract.
- Delivering on a contract and working towards contract renewal.

You'll be in a group of around 10 people who are at a similar stage to you, coming from all across the country.

[This playlist of videos](#) shows the type of story you might hear.

The course is a transformational experience that will push, challenge, and support you. It will give you the confidence and skills to achieve the impact you are aiming for. In addition to the structured learning blocks, you will also join peer led sessions that will provide you with a valuable forum for reflection, personal development, and developing your own solutions to challenges.

What is the time commitment?

In total:

- Eight learning days (four online and four in-person), spread over six months
- Attending three online Peer Learning sessions across the six months.
- Four online 1:1 sessions with your mentor across the six months.

We don't normally deliver learning during school holidays.

There is also a graduation event at the end of the programme which you will be invited to attend, to celebrate your achievements and your completion of the programme.

The learning programme is only one part of the picture. You will need to be developing your project during the year and will need to have the time and commitment to do this.

The programme dates

Session	Format	Date
1	Online	Monday 15th April
2	Online	Tuesday 16th April
Peer Learning Session 1	Online	w/c 29th April
Peer Learning Session 2	Online	w/c 6th May
3	Online	Tuesday 21st May
4	In-person 3-day residential at an RBC Brewin Dolphin office - location TBC	Monday 3rd June
5		Tuesday 4th June
6		Wednesday 5th June
7	Online	Tuesday 18th June
Peer Learning Session 3	Online	w/c 24th June
8 and graduation	In person - location TBC	Tuesday 2nd July

These are the proposed dates for the programme and may change if required (although we'll try not to).

Where will the course be held?

The programme will be a blend of online and in-person learning.

You must be able to travel to attend the in-person learning days. You can reimburse up to £150 for travel and accommodation will be provided.

The grant

You receive a grant of £2000, paid in two instalments.

You can use the grant to help you attend the programme and to help with the costs of developing your social enterprise and making it procurement ready. The grant can be spent on to support your learning and help you put your learning into practice in your organisation, including towards your salary, to help you spend time on development, or specific activities to help you become procurement ready.

You will be required to attend the learning programme to receive the grant. You will need to be able to spend your grant between April 2024 and July 2024.

It is helpful if you can tell us how you might spend your grant, but you can change this later in agreement with us. If you don't know yet, just say you don't know. It won't affect your application.

What you can use the grant for	What we cannot fund
The costs of attending the learning programme, including subsistence	Academic studies, or those that are not relevant to the development of your project
Your salary (including payment to yourself as a sessional worker), living costs or childcare	Costs incurred before the grant is awarded
Marketing and publicity - e.g. developing a website	Assets over £1000, purchase of vehicles or refurbishment of buildings
Salaries for sessional staff	
Supplementary training for yourself or others directly relevant to the development of your project	
Other items that you can show are relevant to developing your project	

How will my grant be paid?

- Your grant will be paid in two instalments, at the beginning and end of the programme.
- To receive the full grant, you will need to attend at least 80% of the learning programme.
- The grant will be paid to your organisation, which must have a bank account that is either controlled solely by yourself or is “dual authority”, i.e. two people must be involved in releasing funds from the account.

How do I apply?

Apply online by 1 pm on Wednesday 10th January 2024.

Top tip: We recommend applying early, so we can help you if you have questions or problems. (We will be very busy in the week before the deadline.)

- [CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)
- You can save your application and return to it at a later date. Just click “Save for later”, and you will be given a unique link to return to your application. Remember to save this link. (We will also email you the link. Check your junk folder if you can't find the email.)
- When you've completed all the questions, click “Preview” to review your application, then click “Apply”. You'll receive a copy of your submission by email and will then be redirected to our equalities monitoring form.

If you have any problems, contact Felicity Day at felicity.day@sse.org.uk or 01872 306130.

Top tip: If you want to include a governing document, your accounts or any additional documents in your application (these are all optional), save them in the format “FirstnameSurnameAccounts.doc” so they are ready to attach.

Don't miss the deadline! Please don't submit your application after 1 pm on Wednesday 10th January as it will not be considered. Under exceptional circumstances, we may approve to submit your application late. You will need to get in touch with programme manager Felicity Day to discuss this, ahead of the deadline - felicity.day@sse.org.uk

How will my application be assessed?

1. January 2024: We assess your online application.

Once we have received your application, we will check that you meet the basic eligibility criteria and that your application is complete. (Please note that incomplete applications will be rejected.) Your application will then be assessed by the SSE team.

2. February 2024: Group assessment session and interview

We will invite shortlisted candidates to a group assessment session and an interview. We may ask you to provide your proof of identity and right to work.

3. February 2024: Offer to join the programme.

If successful, you will be offered a grant offer and a learning programme package. You will be asked to provide necessary documentation, including criminal record checks where appropriate.

4. April 2024: The programme begins!

The learning programme starts in April 2024 and runs until July 2024.

“I came to the School for Social Entrepreneurs pretty much as a blank canvas and now feel like an emerging picture equipped with the tools to succeed and progress. It’s really empowering.”

- SSE student

FAQs

What do we mean by procurement?

Procurement is the act of obtaining goods or services, typically for business purposes. Procurement is most commonly associated with businesses because companies need to solicit services or purchase goods, usually on a relatively large scale.

Private and public sector organisations are increasingly considering the social impact and value of the goods and services they procure, due to a change in the government's Social Value Model (2021), meaning they must now explicitly evaluate social value in their contracts.

This provides a real opportunity for social enterprises to increase their income, influence and impact by seeking a bigger slice of central government's [£292bn annual spend](#) on goods and services. It could mean more influence and income opportunities with the government, as well as creating and maintaining jobs for those furthest from the labour market. [Read more in our blog post.](#)

What if I have particular needs which may prevent me from fully taking part in the learning programme?

If you have any particular needs or any barriers may prevent you from taking part in the programme, do talk to us about this. We are keen to enable people with disabilities and other access issues to come to our programmes.

There is a separate small fund held by the SSE to enable students who have particular needs to access the programme. This will be negotiated individually with participants. If you do have specific needs and are concerned about this, please contact us to discuss.



FAQs continued...

What happens if my enterprise works with children, young people or vulnerable adults?

Vulnerable adults means anyone in vulnerable situations including people who are receiving counselling, social work support, health or personal care, assistance with finances or shopping because of age, illness or disability, or transport to day centres, etc.

If your project will be undertaking unsupervised work with children under 18 years old, or working with vulnerable adults, you may need Enhanced DBS checks for staff and volunteers working with these people.

The SSE can provide you with advice on this.

What about other requirements?

- You must ensure that health and safety standards are met to protect yourselves and others involved in your activities.
- You must have any insurance (e.g. public liability Insurance, employer's liability insurance, equipment insurance etc.) that is required for your activities.
- You must also ensure that you have any approvals, permissions, licenses or carry out any criminal record checks required by law.
- If you are providing therapeutic counselling services, you must be able to demonstrate that you are properly trained and supervised, e.g. through membership in an appropriate body. If you haven't got this already, we may make it a condition of your grant.
- You will also be required to put Equal Opportunities procedures in place once your project has started. We can advise you about this.
- You will be able to put your grant towards these costs.

Can I apply if a larger organisation hosts my project?

You don't need to have established a formal organisation, but if you have, it must have been set up for less than two years at the time of application. Your project may be hosted by a larger and older organisation. If so, it will have to have a degree of independence within that organisation. However, we do not normally accept franchises or organisations that are controlled by a local authority.

Can I apply for this programme if I have criminal convictions?

Previous SSE fellows have included people who have criminal convictions, some of whom have used their experience in prisons to make a difference in the lives of ex-offenders.

You do not need to let us know about previous convictions unless they are relevant to your application.

If you have unspent convictions for fraud or any convictions which may affect your ability to run your project, including working with children, young people or adults who are vulnerable, you should let us know, as we may undertake checks during the application assessment.

Can I apply if unsuccessful in the past?

If you or someone else from your organisation or project has applied before and not been successful, you are welcome to apply again. We often have people on our programme who are applying for the second or third time, and whose ideas or plans have developed since they first applied. However, we would suggest that you check the feedback you received in the past. If in doubt, you can contact us.

Can more than one person from our project apply?

We will only assess applications from one person from your project or organisation. Please decide who you would like to attend the programme and they should be the ones to apply. Because of the way the learning programme works and how the trust within the group attending the learning programme is built, it must be the applicant who attends all the sessions. In general, we will not allow others from your project to attend the programme.

Can I apply if I am connected to the School for Social Entrepreneurs or any of the funders of this programme?

We cannot accept applications from people who are staff or trustees of SSE. If you have a close connection with SSE, its host organisations, staff, trustees or the funders of this programme, please contact us before making an application.

Can I apply if I am supporting other businesses including social enterprises?

We do not usually accept applicants whose main work is providing training or business support services primarily to other businesses, including social enterprises or charities. This would include training, fundraising or management support. However, we sometimes consider applications where the services provided are mainly back-office support services, such as HR, accountancy or office space, or where training is provided for unemployed people to help them access employment. If in doubt, please contact us.

Can I apply if my project is a franchise?

We do not usually accept applications from projects that are franchises of another project. We expect that you will receive the support you need to set up from the parent organisation.

Can I apply if a public sector organisation controls my project?

We accept applications from projects which are public sector roll-outs, or set up with the support of local authorities, as long as they are now fully independent. However, we do not usually accept applications from projects or organisations that are controlled by a public-sector organisation. If in doubt, please contact us.

What about Data Protection?

The School for Social Entrepreneurs is committed to protecting your personal information and acting in line with your rights under data protection laws and will treat all data by our Data Protection Policy here: <https://www.the-sse.org/your-data>

SSE will collect and use personal information provided by you in your online application or separately, or which we otherwise lawfully obtain about you. We may use this information for:

- processing your application and managing the selection process for the programme
- conducting due diligence on you and your organisation as part of that process

This includes contacting you about the workshop or programme which you are applying for by phone or email.

If your application is successful, we may also use your information for:

- managing your participation in the programme
- managing your grant claims and payments
- matching you with a contact at RBC Brewin Dolphin
- monitoring your progress and the impact of the programme
- sharing and promoting your story and the story of your social enterprise online or externally
- other lawful reasons

We may share your information with our funders and partners including RBC Brewin Dolphin for monitoring and reporting purposes. They will also only use your information for the reasons outlined above

Further details, including how we share your information and your rights relating to our use of your information, can be found under our Data Protection Notice, a copy of which is available here: <https://www.the-sse.org/your-data>.

We ask you to provide your Equal Opportunities details. You are not required to give these and you can select the 'Opt Out' box. However, it is helpful for our future development and marketing that you provide this information. It can also help us to identify ways in which we can provide specific support to those who need it, for example, applicants who may require additional support to attend interviews or participate fully in the programme.

Key contact details

If you need any advice on your application, please contact us on 01872 306130 or by email at felicity.day@sse.org.uk

For more information please go to:

- the main programme page: [RBC Brewin Dolphin Procurement Readiness The School for Social Entrepreneurs \(the-sse.org\)](https://www.the-sse.org)

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of the programme, please see our Complaints Procedure: <https://www.the-sse.org/complaints>

