1. What are Model Answers?

P4P recommends that when preparing to tender for contracts you should create a ‘Bid Library’. In your Bid Library you could include your annual accounts, policies and procedures, staff CVs, case studies, details of accreditations, as well as ‘model answers’.

Model answers are answers to commonly asked questions in tenders which you can use as a starting point when responding to a tender. The benefits of doing this include that it can save you time and effort and help you to standardise your answers to questions if there are multiple staff writing a tender.

2. How do you create them?

2.1 Identify commonly asked questions

If you have bid for contracts previously you should analyse each tender to identify the most commonly asked questions. The wording of questions is likely to change in each tender, but you should be able to identify themes.

If you have not bid for contracts previously then predicting likely questions will be more difficult. You may be able to find past tender documentation by first searching for previous contracts published on Public Contracts Scotland and then requesting access to the tender documents by contacting the buyer organisation using the contact details provided.

We have provided you with some general headings you may wish to use in Section 3 below (if you are not sure where to start or you cannot access past tender documentation). Please note that these are merely suggestions and by no means exhaustive.

2.2 Writing your answers

Keep your writing concise and use Plain English, avoiding unnecessary jargon, acronyms and colloquial language. The writing style you adopt should be informative but with a subtle, selling tone to influence the buyer to purchase from you. Sentences should, ideally, be limited to a maximum of 20 words and you should avoid using long paragraphs.

A common mistake is to list the ‘features’ of your product or service but not to convert these into ‘benefits’ for the buyer. A feature is a characteristic(s) of your product or service which benefits the buyer.
The strongest benefits have three qualities – they are concrete (not abstract), specific (not generic), and definite (not vague). A simple way to convert a feature into a benefit is to use the phrases ‘what this means for you is’ or ‘what that enables you to do is’.

3. Suggested headings

Delivery model

If you deliver a range of different services, then you may wish to draft different answers to this question for each of your service areas.

Under this heading you should add information on your approach to delivery of the service. Add as much detail as you can.

Quality management

How do you monitor and improve the quality of your services? Do you have a Quality Policy or a quality management accreditation such as ISO 9001 or EFQM?

A sub-section of this heading could be how you seek feedback from clients or other stakeholders and use this feedback to continually improve your services.

Policy alignment

What policies are you aware of in your sector locally, regionally or nationally? Explain in this section how your services align with these policies and help to meet the aims and contribute to the outcomes.

Fair Work Practices

‘Fair Work Practices’ are workplace standards which go beyond the minimum legal requirements. The Scottish Government believes this will increase motivation, improve workplace outcomes and business performance, and can positively impact on the delivery of a public contract.

Examples of Fair Work Practices could include:
- Paying the Voluntary Living Wage (as defined by the [Living Wage Foundation](https://livingwage.org.uk/))
- Avoiding zero hours contracts
- Equality and diversity policies to ensure a more diverse workforce
- Offering flexible working
- Training and development opportunities for staff
- Recognition of trade union bodies

Under this heading you should include examples of which Fair Work Practices you have adopted. For further information please see this best practice [guidance document](https://www.gov.scot) produced by the Scottish Government.
Community Benefits

Community Benefit Clauses are clauses within public contracts which require suppliers to commit to undertaking activities as part of the contract delivery which improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the authority's area.

Examples of community benefits outcomes could include:

- Targeted recruitment and employment e.g. apprenticeship opportunities
- Targeted skills and training e.g. work experience placements, careers events or mentoring programmes
- Supply chain development e.g. subcontracting opportunities for SMEs or third sector organisations, or business support
- Financial support for a community project.

Under this heading include a list of community benefits you would offer as part of a contract. When you are drafting your response to a tender you will need to be specific in terms of what you can offer but in your model answers this is as important.

Further guidance on community benefits in procurement can be found here.

Policy and procedures

What policies and procedures do you have in place which are relevant to the delivery of your services? For example, Quality, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Data Protection, or Environmental policies.

You should create a folder with copies of up-to-date policy documents, and you may wish to draft a short description of each policy as part of your model answers.

Added value

What do you do which is unique to your organisation? What can you do better than your competitors? Consider adding a list and description of each element.

Contract/performance management

If you were awarded a contract how do you manage delivery? Who is responsible for managing the contract at the organisation and why?

Closely related to how you will manage the contract is how you will monitor and continuously improve your performance. Are there particular techniques, methods or tools you use to do this? If so describe them in this section.
**Staffing**

Who are the key or senior staff in your organisation? Include a short biography of each, including details of their experience, and any relevant qualifications.

How do you support your staff? Do you provide opportunities for training and development? Are these provided in-house or externally?

How do you recruit staff more generally? Outline your recruitment processes here.

**Partnerships**

Do you work in partnership with other organisations to enhance the delivery of your services? Why are these partnerships beneficial?

**Previous experience**

Detail your past experience of delivering similar contracts or funded services. Include details of the buyer or funder, start and end date, value, a brief description of the services provided, highlighting any specific achievements.

**4. Improving your model answers**

You can improve your model answers over time using feedback you receive from tenders you have submitted. **Remember you should request feedback no matter if the bid was successful or unsuccessful.**

You may also wish to send your model answers to a trusted member of staff or external party for comment.

**5. Support available**

For further guidance in developing a Bid Library check out the P4P [How to Create a Bid Library](#) guide.

P4P can also provide you with one-to-one support in developing your Bid Library or Model Answers.

For more information on the services P4P can provide visit the [P4P website](#) or contact us on [info@p4p.org.uk](mailto:info@p4p.org.uk).