



# **SOCIAL VALUE ACT GUIDE**



# WHAT IS THE UK SOCIAL VALUE ACT?

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public-sector organisations in the UK, such as local councils, NHS trusts, central government departments, and housing associations, to consider social, economic, and environmental value in addition to cost when they buy goods and services.

In simple terms:

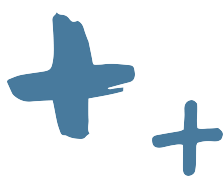
Public contracts aren't awarded on price alone. Suppliers must show how their work will create positive impact for people and the planet.

Since January 2021, central government procurement applies a mandatory minimum 10% weighting to social value in tender scoring. Sometimes more.

## WHAT "SOCIAL VALUE" REALLY MEANS

Social value covers five broad themes. You'll often see these reflected in bid questions:

- 1. COVID-19 recovery & community resilience**
  - Local job creation, volunteering, supporting local groups
  - Helping communities build skills or access services
- 2. Tackling economic inequality**
  - Supporting small/local businesses, inclusive supply chains
  - Providing apprenticeships and skills training
  - Promoting fair pay and responsible employment practices
- 3. Fighting climate change**
  - Reducing carbon emissions
  - Improving resource efficiency
  - Transitioning to net zero operations
- 4. Equal opportunity**
  - Inclusive recruitment
  - Supporting under-represented groups
  - Removing barriers for disabled people
- 5. Wellbeing**
  - Employee health and wellbeing strategies
  - Safe workplaces
  - Social cohesion and community engagement



# WHY SOCIAL VALUE MATTERS FOR SMES

Public-sector buyers want suppliers who can prove their positive impact. For SMEs, this is an opportunity, not an obstacle!

Key advantages:

- **Level playing field:** Social value criteria allow smaller organisations to stand out against larger competitors.
- **Clear expectations:** Frameworks like the [Social Value Model](#) help SMEs understand exactly what to demonstrate.
- **Recognition for existing practices:** Many SMEs already behave responsibly. Now you can formalise and score points for it.
- **Longer-term opportunities:** Strong social value performance can improve your chances for future bids and re-tenders.

## WHAT SMES NEED TO DEMONSTRATE IN A BID

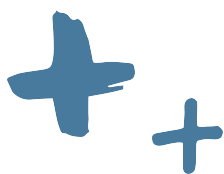
Procurement teams look for evidence and deliverability, not just good intentions. Typical expectations include **clear commitments** (e.g. quantified targets - “*reduce waste 20% over 12-months*”); **realistic delivery plans** (e.g. *how* actions will be implemented, including clear timelines and milestones); **measurement and reporting** (e.g. KPIs you will track, and tools you will use to monitor your progress).

## HOW FUTUREPLUS CAN HELP

If you’re a FuturePlus IMPACT CERTIFIED member, you’re already producing measurable social and environmental commitments, tracking progress, and have the ability to provide structured reporting aligned with public-sector expectations.

**FuturePlus supports SMEs by:**

- ✓ Producing evidence-based social value statements
- ✓ Aligning your actions with government themes
- ✓ Helping you set credible, achievable, and auditable goals
- ✓ Providing ongoing monitoring and reporting
- ✓ Strengthening your organisational credibility



# PRACTICAL STEPS SMES CAN TAKE NOW

## 1. Identify what you already do

Most SMEs have informal good practices; document them.

## 2. Use a framework (like FuturePlus) to define your goals

Establish baselines, commitments, and KPIs.

## 3. Create a Social Value Statement

Summarise your existing impacts and future goals. This becomes reusable tender content.

## 4. Build a delivery plan

Who will do what? When? With what resources?

## 5. Prepare reporting templates

Show the contracting authority how you will measure impact.

## 6. Keep evidence organised

Policies, training records, carbon calculations, DEI actions—all help score higher.

## COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Making vague promises (“We will reduce emissions”)
- Committing to actions with no delivery plan
- Using general marketing language rather than measurable outcomes
- Over-committing due to misunderstanding resource needs
- Forgetting to align answers directly to the tender scoring matrix

## NEED MORE HELP?

The Social Value Act asks businesses to demonstrate *how they* will make a real difference. SMEs are often already doing the right things; the key is evidencing them.

If you need more help with Social Value or a bid process, and would like to speak to the team, you can reach us at: [info@future-plus.co.uk](mailto:info@future-plus.co.uk)

