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NHS Social Value Playbook

NHS Commercial guidance on applying social value in the procurement of NHS goods and services

[Publication \(/publication\)](#)

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Executive summary and introduction

In 2020, the NHS became the world's first health service to commit to net zero emissions. This includes the NHS's large and complex supply chain with c.80,000 suppliers, accounting for c.66% of all NHS emissions.

Following publication of the [Delivering a Net Zero National Health Service](#) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/a-net-zero-nhs/>) report, NHS England published the [Net Zero Supplier Roadmap](#) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/get-involved/suppliers/>) to help suppliers align with our net zero ambition between now and 2030. The first milestone committed the wider NHS to including a minimum of 10% net zero and social value weighting in all procurements – [worth £35 billion in spend](#) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/strategic-framework-for-nhs-commercial/>).

In 2022, NHS England published [net zero and social value guidance](#) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/publication/applying-net-zero-and-social-value-in-the-procurement-of-nhs-goods-and-services/>) to support NHS organisations to unlock additional social, economic, and environmental benefits through procurement. NHS procurement teams have made excellent progress building social value into the commercial lifecycle. Internal feedback and its supply chain indicates, however, that more support is needed to develop the maturity of our approach to social value. NHS buying teams asked for help in question setting, evaluation, and contract management, while suppliers asked for clearer questions related to their skills and expertise. This NHS Social Value Playbook sets out practical steps at each stage of the procurement or commissioning lifecycle. The playbook emphasises the flexibility of including Fighting Climate Change as a core requirement to the contract deliverables or as social value theme for suppliers to deliver above and beyond the core offer. It also outlines how creating key performance indicators (KPIs) is critical and provides examples of how to do this.

In 2025, the Social Value Model was updated to align with the Government's missions and ensure contracting authorities can implement the new National Procurement Policy Statement. The playbook acknowledges updates in the Model and caters for the transition period between February – October 2025.

The playbook comes as the [10 Year Health Plan](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>) is published. The focus on sustainability and the reduction of health inequalities in the Plan further emphasises the role of NHS organisations as social and economic anchor institutions. The playbook highlights the positive impact social value can have on health inequalities and outcomes, setting out examples for common areas of spend. It asks commercial colleagues to collaborate with their commissioning, clinical and operational counterparts on social value and sustainability from the outset of the business planning process to ensure the themes and questions meet the needs of the patients or end users of the goods or services.

Key messages

- social value themes should be considered early in the planning process in collaboration with commissioners, operational leads, clinicians, and suppliers to support delivery of broader NHS challenges and priorities
- pre-market engagement is key to ensuring proportionate and relevant questions
- fighting climate change, effective stewardship of the environment or clean energy can be included as a core requirement or a social value theme. See more information in [section 3.1](#)
- modern slavery should be included as a core requirement where there is a medium or high risk
- creating social value key performance indicators (KPIs) within the contract is critical to assuring and measuring delivery

What's new

- [10 Year Health Plan for England: fit for the future](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>)
- [NHS Provider Selection Regime](#) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/the-provider-selection-regime-statutory-guidance/>)
- [Procurement Act 2023](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/transforming-public-procurement#:~:text=The%20Procurement%20Act%202023%20came,check%20back%20for%20further%20updates.>)
- [National Procurement Policy Statement 2025](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-procurement-policy-statement>)
- [The Social Value Model 2025](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-002-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-contracts/ppn-002-guide-to-using-the-social-value-model-html>) (PPN 002)
- [Green Plan Guidance](#) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/green-plan-guidance/>)
- NHS England's approach to [health inequalities](#) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/>), including Core20PLUS5
- aligning social value to integrated care systems' (ICS) [core purpose](#) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/integratedcare/what-is-integrated-care/>), with a focus on tackling health inequalities
- emphasising the importance of clear framework documentation relating to social value.

1. What social value means to the NHS

Our health is shaped by the places we live, with social, environmental, and economic factors play a critical role in people's long-term health. Applying social value provides NHS commissioning and buying teams the unique opportunity to improve patients' lives and the communities they live in through how we buy and the way we manage contracts. Social value in procurement drives the supply chain to deliver additional social, economic, and environmental benefits alongside their commercial commitments.

The purpose of this playbook is to provide further information on how and where to apply social value in new tenders and ensure key performance indicators (KPIs) are included in the management of all new contracts.

1.1 Policy background

The NHS has committed to reaching net zero by 2040 for the emissions we control directly, and by 2045 for the emissions we influence, through the goods and services we buy from our partners and suppliers. In 2021, NHS England published the [NHS Net Zero Supplier Roadmap](#) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/get-involved/suppliers/>) to help suppliers align with our net zero ambition between now and 2030. Three government policies inform the roadmap:

- [The Social Value Model](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts>) (PPN 06/20)
 - The updated Social Value Model (PPN 002)
- [Taking account of Carbon Reduction Plans](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0621-taking-account-of-carbon-reduction-plans-in-the-procurement-of-major-government-contracts>) and
- [Tackling Modern Slavery in Government Supply Chains in the Procurement of Major Government Contracts](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-0223-tackling-modern-slavery-in-government-supply-chains/ppn-0223-tackling-modern-slavery-in-government-supply-chains-guidance-html>).

The roadmap states that from April 2022, all NHS procurements must include a **minimum** 10% net zero and social value weighting. Including social value applies under the [Public Contract Regulations 2015](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukesi/2015/102/contents/made>) (PCR) and will continue to apply under the [Procurement Act 2023](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/54/contents/enacted>).

Under the [Health and Care Act 2022](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/31/contents/enacted>), NHS organisations are obliged to consider and be compliant with the [UK Climate Change Act 2008](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>) and the [Environment Act 2021](#)

(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>), and must 'adapt to any current or predicted impacts of climate change' when procuring works, goods, and services, and when commissioning healthcare services.

NHS trusts, foundation trusts and ICBs are expected to meet these duties through delivery of board-approved Green Plans, which set out the key actions each system and trust will take to deliver emissions reductions and support resilience to climate impacts.

1.2. Missions based procurement and social value themes

The government published 5 areas of focus to drive mission-based procurement and public services with a view to delivering ambitions, long term and measurable objectives. The National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) calls for contracting authorities to deliver social and economic value, supporting the 5 missions and working in partnership across organisational boundaries. Social value outcomes should be co-designed and considered throughout the commercial lifecycle.

The Social Value Model 2025 has refreshed the objectives and key themes to align with the 5 missions. The updated model (PPN 002) will replace the existing PPN 06/20 from October 2025, themes include

1. Kick starting economic growth
2. Make Britain a clean energy superpower
3. Take back our streets
4. Break down barriers to opportunity
5. Build an NHS fit for the future

Until October 2025, NHS organisations can choose whether to apply PPN 06/20 or the updated PPN 002, noting there are some differences between the models on the application of social value. See more information in section 4.

Building an NHS fit for the future is a cornerstone of the [10 Year Health Plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>) published in 2025. This emphasizes the importance of building social value into our contract commitments to tackle health and economic inequalities and improve outcomes in our communities.

1.3. Core20PLUS5

Core20PLUS5 is a national NHS England approach to support the reduction of health inequalities at both the National and System level. The approach defines a target population cohort – the 'Core20PLUS' – and identifies '5' focus clinical areas requiring accelerated improvement. The approach is made up of three key parts.

- **Core20** – The most deprived 20% of the national population as identified by the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The IMD has seven domains with indicators accounting for a wide range of social determinants of health.
- **PLUS** – ICS-determined population groups experiencing poorer than average health access, experience and/or outcomes, but not captured in the 'Core20' alone. Populations we would expect to see identified are ethnic minority communities; people with a learning disability and autistic people; people with multiple long-term health conditions; other groups that share protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010; groups experiencing social exclusion, known as inclusion health groups coastal communities (where there may be small areas of high deprivation hidden amongst relative affluence). [Inclusion health](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusion-health-applying-all-our-health/inclusion-health-applying-all-our-health) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusion-health-applying-all-our-health/inclusion-health-applying-all-our-health>) groups include: people experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol dependence, vulnerable migrants, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, sex workers, people in contact with the justice system, victims of modern slavery and other socially excluded groups.
- **5** – Five clinical areas identified as requiring accelerated improvement. These are: maternity, severe mental illness, chronic respiratory disease, early cancer diagnosis and hypertension. For children and young people, the health priorities are asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, oral health and mental health.

1.4. Benefits

When applied in procurement and delivered throughout the life of a contract, social value can:

- support targeted improvements to health inequalities impacting our most at risk communities to improve health outcomes and quality of life
- create resilient businesses and opportunities for quality employment and skills development
- improve innovation and supply chain resilience
- tackle climate change and reduce waste

Organisations should decide what social, economic and environmental themes are relevant to either the individual tender and/or in support of local priorities, including those related to health outcomes and inequalities.

It is important that the inclusion of social value is relevant and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract and tender or commissioning process. NHS England recognises that social value delivery can be a complex area for procurement and commercial teams and recommends the teams work closely with their commissioners, programme teams and services, together with suppliers through pre-market engagement, to choose social value themes and develop questions.

1.5. Provider Selection Regime

The [Provider Selection Regime \(PSR\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/the-provider-selection-regime-statutory-guidance/#key-criteria) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/the-provider-selection-regime-statutory-guidance/#key-criteria>) sets out rules for procuring healthcare services in England. As from 1 January 2024, for procuring such services* the PSR applies instead of PCR. The PSR has been designed to encourage integration and collaboration by introducing a more flexible process for deciding who provides healthcare services. Following the introduction of the PSR, social value applies to the following award processes as one of [five key criteria](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/the-provider-selection-regime-statutory-guidance/#annex-d-key-criteria) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/the-provider-selection-regime-statutory-guidance/#annex-d-key-criteria>) under Regulation 5:

- direct award process C
- most suitable provider
- competitive process
- frameworks

Relevant authorities can decide the importance and weighting of the five key criteria must be considered. Authorities are expected to assign at least 10% to social value when commissioning healthcare providers.

* Under the PSR, health care services are defined in section 150(1) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The common procurement vocabulary codes for use under the PSR are defined in Schedule 1 of the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023

For further information, please see the Provider Selection Regime [statutory guidance](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/the-provider-selection-regime-statutory-guidance/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/the-provider-selection-regime-statutory-guidance/>), [FAQs](https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/how-commissioning-is-changing/nhs-provider-selection-regime/provider-selection-regime-frequently-asked-questions/#how-does-the-mandatory-10-social-value-weighting-interact-with-the-provider-selection-regime-psr) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/how-commissioning-is-changing/nhs-provider-selection-regime/provider-selection-regime-frequently-asked-questions/#how-does-the-mandatory-10-social-value-weighting-interact-with-the-provider-selection-regime-psr>) and [toolkit](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/provider-selection-regime-toolkit-products/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/provider-selection-regime-toolkit-products/>).

All NHS organisations act as anchor institutions for the local communities they serve. Anchor organisations are rooted in a place with strong ties to the area in which they operate and large enough to make a significant contribution to the local economy through their purchasing power. Under the PSR, integrated care boards and integrated care systems are expected to demonstrate their social value offers in the same way as all other suppliers and independent providers. Section 2, page 7, provides information on how to develop social value priorities. This information can also help determine how your ICB or ICS delivers social value to relevant authorities.

ICBs can use Green Plans to inform social value offers relating to the theme Fighting Climate Change or Clean Energy.

1.6. Procurement Act 2023

The [Procurement Act](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/procurement-act-2023-guidance-documents) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/procurement-act-2023-guidance-documents>) 2023 (the "Act") reforms the UK's public procurement regime, placing value for money, public benefit, and transparency at the heart of procurement. In addition, the Act will [benefit suppliers of all sizes](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-act-2023-short-guides/the-procurement-act-2023-a-short-guide-for-suppliers-html) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-act-2023-short-guides/the-procurement-act-2023-a-short-guide-for-suppliers-html>), levelling the playing field for small businesses. It applies to most NHS procurements for goods and/or services other than for healthcare services (as defined under PSR, for which see section 1.3 above). The Act reforms the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and will be effective from early 2025. Opportunities to deliver social value throughout the life cycle of the contract include:

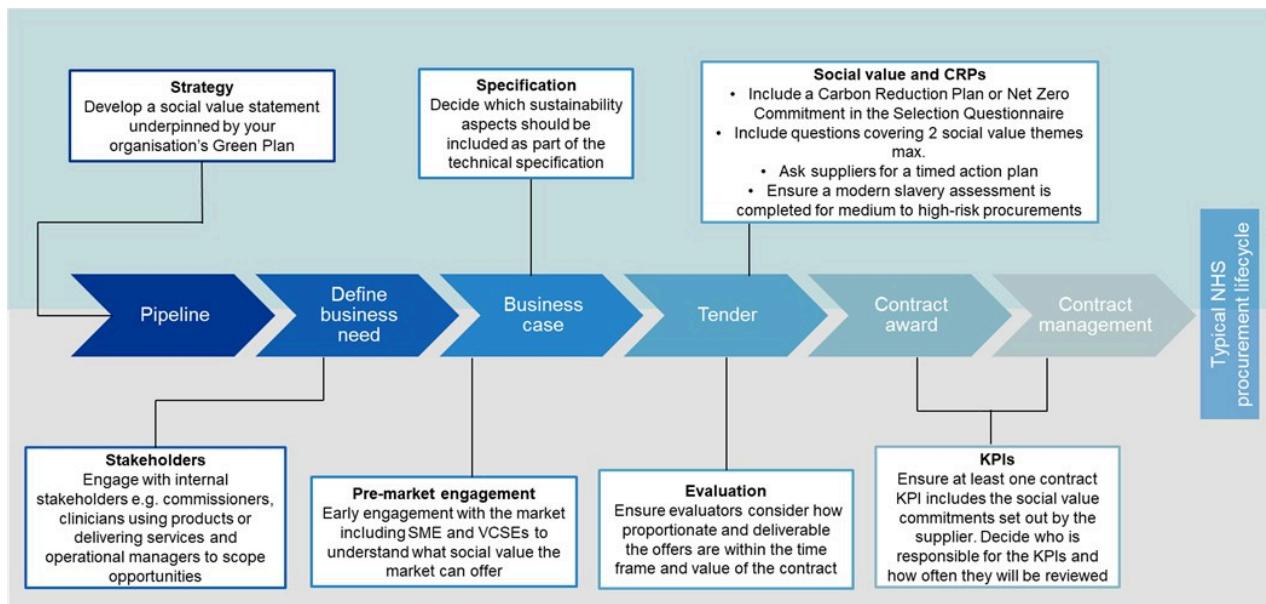
- Introduction, Section 12(2) outlines how contracting authorities must have regard for the importance of maximising public benefit.
- Chapter 2, Section 19(1) describes the 'Most Advantageous Tender' which satisfies the contract authority's requirements and awards criteria.

- Chapter 5, Section 52 requires contracting authorities to set at least three key performance indicators and must publish any KPIs.

1.7. Social value – from pipeline to contract management

The [Social Value Model](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts>) guidance explains there should be a clear 'golden thread' from the social value priorities to the development of strategies and business cases for programmes and projects, through to procurement specifications and the assessment of quality when awarding of contracts. For example, where [Carbon Reduction Plans](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/carbon-reduction-plan-requirements-for-the-procurement-of-nhs-goods-services-and-works/) or [Net Zero Commitments](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/carbon-reduction-plan-requirements-for-the-procurement-of-nhs-goods-services-and-works/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/carbon-reduction-plan-requirements-for-the-procurement-of-nhs-goods-services-and-works/>) demonstrate corporate level commitments, social value offers are a contract level commitment. See figure 1: social value in the procurement process.

Figure 1: Social value in the procurement process.



(<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/social-value-in-the-procurement-process.jpg>)

The flowchart shows how the NHS Procurement Lifecycle integrates social value throughout six key stages. Starting with **Pipeline** identification of opportunities and stakeholder engagement, it moves to **Define Business Need** with early market engagement including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSEs). The **Business Case** stage develops sustainability specifications and social value statements aligned with Green Plans.

During **Tender**, suppliers submit Carbon Reduction Plans, address up to two social value themes with timed action plans, and complete modern slavery assessments for medium-high risk procurements. Evaluators assess proportionality and deliverability within contract parameters.

Contract Award selects successful suppliers, leading to **Contract Management** where at least one KPI reflects social value commitments. Responsibilities and review frequencies are clearly defined throughout.

This systematic approach ensures social value and sustainability considerations are embedded from initial planning through contract delivery, supporting environmental goals and ethical sourcing across NHS procurement activities.

1.8 Green Plans

The social value themes can also be informed by green plans. A green plan is published by each ICB and trust, setting out initiatives being delivered, or those which are planned, to reduce their emissions. Procurement teams should refer to their green plan to support inclusion of relevant social value metrics within their procurements and contracts. Where a specific outcome or ambition is documented in the green plan, then social value themes, questions and metrics can be identified within the specification, ITT documents and contract KPIs to support the delivery of those ambitions. See the updated [green plan guidance](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/green-plan-guidance/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/green-plan-guidance/>) for further information on what trusts and integrated care boards need to include.

2. Define social value priorities

Integrated care systems (ICS) have [four key aims](https://www.england.nhs.uk/integratedcare/what-is-integrated-care/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/integratedcare/what-is-integrated-care/>): improving outcomes in population health and healthcare; tackling inequalities in outcomes, experience, and access; enhancing productivity and value for money; and helping the NHS to support broader social and economic development. In addition, The NHS has committed to [3 shifts](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>) to transform the way we deliver care, these are:

- hospital to community
- analogue to digital
- sickness to prevention

The NHS can use its collective commissioning and purchasing power to help deliver on these core objectives. Commercial teams should have a good understanding of the product or service being procured and can help deliver the priorities of that programme or service through the procurement design. Introducing and applying social value should be proportionate and achievable for suppliers.

The NHS has a range of strategic and operational priorities at a national, regional, and local level which can help identify what social value can deliver the most additional benefit. To deliver meaningful social value that is tailored to local needs, NHS organisations should consider how social value can be identified as a golden thread throughout overarching strategic plans.

How does what you are buying or commissioning have an impact on your organisation? If you are unsure, search for your local strategic plans and ask your senior leaders.

Local

- [ICS joint forward plans](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/guidance-on-updating-the-joint-forward-plan-for-2024-25/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/guidance-on-updating-the-joint-forward-plan-for-2024-25/>)
- ICS health inequalities priorities (published for each ICS), in line with the [Core20PLUS5](https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/core20plus5/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/core20plus5/>) model;
- [System and trust](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/green-plan-guidance/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/green-plan-guidance/>)

National

- [NHS operational planning and contracting guidance](https://www.england.nhs.uk/operational-planning-and-contracting/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/operational-planning-and-contracting/>)
- [NHS Net Zero Supplier roadmap](https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/get-involved/suppliers/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/get-involved/suppliers/>)
- [Greener NHS](https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/get-involved/suppliers/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/get-involved/suppliers/>), including national Net Zero targets *
- [NHS Health Inequalities Hub](https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/>)
- Health Innovation Networks (HIN) – local and national
- [National Procurement Policy Statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-procurement-policy-statement?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=a25bbcf3-7966-410a-ae8a-424a0f87735d&utm_content=immediately) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-procurement-policy-statement?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=a25bbcf3-7966-410a-ae8a-424a0f87735d&utm_content=immediately)

*While organisations may choose to encourage suppliers to move further or faster than the NHS net zero supplier roadmap requirements, suppliers aligned with the NHS Net Zero Supplier Roadmap should not be excluded for not being aligned with local targets.

3. Select social value themes

Social value themes should be considered at business case stage in collaboration with commissioners, operational leads, subject matter experts (e.g. programme leads or clinicians) and suppliers. Including social value as part of the anticipated benefits will draw out the desired impact and what key performance indicators (KPIs) suppliers may need to commit to. For example, an accountancy supplier may be better placed to deliver social value through training and skills development than they may be to improve community integration through creating green spaces. **It is recommended that procurement teams use no more than 2 themes unless the aim is to increase the social value weighting above 10%.** Section 3.3 provides detail on which social value themes may be more relevant to common areas of spend.

3.1. Clean energy and modern slavery

Sustainable procurement practices to reduce carbon footprints, minimise waste and promote use of green technologies, must be included in all NHS contracts to support the NHS ambition to achieve net zero for the emissions we influence, through the goods and services (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/a-net-zero-nhs/>) we buy from our partners and suppliers by 2045, as one of the following:

1. Technical/core specification – where suppliers can reasonably demonstrate reduction in their scope 1,2 (<https://ghgprotocol.org/corporate-standard>) or 3 emissions as part of the delivering the contract e.g. a waste supplier increasing their recycling targets as part of the delivering the contract e.g. a waste supplier increasing their recycling targets.
2. Social value questions – where the sustainability offer would be additional to the core deliverables of the contract, e.g. delivering climate change training to the contract workforce.

Contracts deemed **high risk for modern slavery** should consider including modern slavery in the core specification.

3.2 Market engagement

Pre-market engagement can enable procurement teams to understand the capability and capacity of the market in addition to identifying the right social value themes to test. This is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate collaboration and the intent to create a diverse supply chain that supports start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSEs). For complex, high value procurements, social value should be included in pre-procurement market engagement activities. Low value procurements may not have capacity to conduct individual market engagement activities but should make use of existing market analysis information and/or category-specific intelligence to inform the approach to social value in the tender.

Social value offers will vary depending on the quality of the questions and how they reflect the category of spend or type of supplier. Delivery of local social value offers is often most effective where the core requirements of the contract necessitate localised provision, for example cleaning services or building works. Local SMEs may be well placed to identify social value opportunities bound by limited geographical areas. In contrast, national frameworks or capital equipment provided by global suppliers are better placed to offer social value delivered on a regional or national scale. For example, virtual skills improvement or lower carbon logistics. Procurement design should promote the use of SMEs and VCSEs during the delivery of the contract by creating opportunities for subcontracting, or in the creation of lots, so support the Government's targets to increase spend with SMEs and VCSEs.

Suppliers know their own organisations and their operational reality. They are uniquely positioned to provide useful insight into social value initiatives, direction of travel and maturity levels and for their market segment. Effective market engagement can help identify whether the planned social value evaluation methodology is relevant, proportionate, and achievable and can help shape the award criteria and evaluation question(s) when considered alongside the social value priorities and procurement objectives and outcomes.

The Government Commercial College offers e-learning courses on pre-market engagement (<https://www.govcommercialcollege.co.uk/enrol/index.php?id=40>) in line with the Cabinet Office Sourcing Playbook, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-sourcing-and-consultancy-playbooks>)

Not sure what social value themes or questions are relevant or proportionate? Ask your suppliers. They can provide insight into what is already being delivered or what is possible.

3.3 Social value examples by common areas of spend

Below sets out potential areas to consider when buying a range of products and services and can be used as a guide when engaging internally and externally during pre-market engagement.

NHS Social Value Procurement Framework

Clinical Procurement

Social value themes and outcomes:

- understanding local needs and tackling health inequalities
- improving wellbeing and community integration through collaboration and co-design

- building an NHS fit for the future
- fighting climate change to deliver a Net Zero NHS

Illustrative examples:

- enhancing digital access to service users, addressing digital exclusion
- expanding patient information in multiple languages to ensure equity of access to services reflect local demographics
- expanding the inclusion of patients and/or Core20PLUS communities in service design or continuous improvement of service delivery
- going above and beyond to support the workforce, such as commitment to training and education throughout the duration of the contract, action plan for responsive support and engagement e.g. extended service hours
- work experience placements for local young people
- if sourcing from NHS trusts, ensure an up-to-date Green Plan is in place, with an annual summary of progress on delivery of the plan reported to the board and published in the annual report, as set out in national guidance
- for independent healthcare providers, consider what activities identified in carbon reduction plans can be flowed down the supply chain to deliver additional social value. e.g. reducing dependency on single-use items and introducing reusable products or low carbon alternatives

Workforce, training, and education

Social value themes and outcomes:

- building an NHS fit for the future
- clean energy and delivering net zero
- break down barriers to opportunity

Illustrative examples:

- developing new courses or offering apprenticeships with accessibility and inclusion in mind supporting health and wellbeing, pastoral support, and disability
- providing support to parents in education e.g. infant feeding facilities, childcare, family accommodation, academic support
- establishing volunteering schemes for students or workforce to support local community groups or charities. For workforce, this could include pro-bono work to support local charities with their business management, finances, projects etc.
- including sustainability and net zero content in curricula, where applicable, e.g. greener models of care, sustainable leadership
- carbon literacy training for internal/external colleagues or students
- promoting green and active transport through relevant schemes, e.g. cycle to work
- attending careers fairs and hosting career events to target Core20PLUS communities and underrepresented groups
- offering free development sessions to junior members of an organisation when running board/senior level training
- targeted work experience and internship placements internal/external

Digital procurement

Social value themes and outcomes:

- sustainable procurement practices – ensuring digital and cloud-based suppliers are aligned with reaching Net Zero by 2050 or earlier
- improve understanding of climate change, carbon reduction and Net Zero within the NHS and externally
- skills – including training and development of NHS staff and the local community to improve digital literacy
- workforce – targeting underrepresented groups in the digital and tech sector
- modern slavery considerations

Illustrative examples:

- running cloud-based services with renewable energy, using continuous improvement approaches to identify new ways of reducing environmental or social impact
- green coding and design development to reduce unnecessary energy data and carbon consumption
- delivering climate change training within the supplier's organisation and/or within the buying organisation
- digital skills training delivered to contracting workforce or local community groups
- attending careers days and fairs, supporting schools with students to provide targeted support to underrepresented groups
- internships or work experience, in-person or virtual, where appropriate. Free software licences or unused technology distributed through community groups

- ensuring suppliers have completed risk assessments for high-risk areas e.g. digital hardware with a plan on how to manage and reduce the risk in their supply chains e.g. codes of conduct, ethical sourcing, whistleblowing policies

Estates procurement

Fighting climate change or net zero should be a core part of the contract offer for estates procurements that impact the use of energy, water, and waste. In addition, it is mandatory to include the NHS Net Zero Building Standard as a core part of the contract for construction and refurbishment projects over £25m and best practice to include the standard for projects below this threshold. Fighting climate change (carbon reduction) may be included in the specification or core contract deliverables. If so, social value questions should cover additional social value themes and questions.

Social value themes and outcomes:

- skills, including training internal (NHS) or external colleagues (e.g. apprentices)
- workforce, including targeted employment opportunities (local, unskilled, long-term unemployed, prison leavers, veterans)
- reducing environmental impact (waste hierarchy and working towards net zero)
- estate as a means for social good (health inequalities, green spaces, community benefit)

Illustrative examples:

- paid training opportunities for NHS or supplier's staff, e.g. Chartered institutes, carbon literacy training or areas where there are skills gaps, such as data analysis
- commitment to deliver apprenticeships throughout the life of the contract
- supported internships, providing long term work experience placements for young adults with learning disabilities or who are neurodiverse
- delivery of Princes' Trust or other skills development courses
- social and wellbeing schemes that also reduce waste e.g. Men in Sheds, Trussell Trust
- creating a green space as part of a construction project, e.g. therapy garden
- identifying opportunities for innovation throughout the life of the contract

More information resources:

- how the NHS estate can help reduce health inequalities
- NHS clinical waste strategy
- NHS Net Zero Building Standard

Professional services (e.g. consultancy, service contracts)

Social value themes and outcomes:

- take back our streets
- increase supply chain resilience and capacity through collaboration
- breakdown barriers to opportunity

Illustrative examples:

- pro-bono services to local community groups or charity organisations e.g. legal services
- business to business mentoring for SMEs and VCSEs
- CV writing support for young people and school students
- targeted engagement with schools or young person's charities in person or virtual

Travel and transport

There are opportunities to reduce emissions across all modes of transport can consider how to reduce emissions and improve their stewardship of the environment. For more information see the NHS Net Zero travel and transport strategy.

Social value themes and outcomes:

- break down barriers to opportunity

Illustrative examples:

- where it is not proportionate to explore electric vehicles or active transport in the core specification, NHS fleet and non-emergency transport may benefit from working with their suppliers to develop innovative approaches in this space

- for business travel and staff commuting, NHS organisations and external suppliers can encourage green travel through public transport or salary sacrifice schemes, e.g. Cycle to Work and NHS Fleet Solutions
- for logistics, fleet electrification or other methods e.g. bicycle, final mile deliveries, optimising logistics e.g. consolidating deliveries, off peak delivery times, shared distribution hubs
- both internal and external suppliers can promote local employment, training opportunities, internships, or work experience
- non-emergency transport providers could support the local community through charitable or community-based groups which would benefit from access to transport
- fair employment practices, e.g. no zero-hour contracts, labour conditions, fair living wage

4. Setting effective questions

Social value should drive benefits over and above what would be achieved from the contract without it. Between February and October 2025 there will be a transition from The Social Value Model (PPN 06/20) to the Social Value Model (PPN 002) for published procurements. There are some differences in how the two models approach questions:

- the [Social Value Model](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts>) (PPN 06/20) includes a [Social Value Model Quick Reference Table](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts>) setting out the policy outcomes, Model Award Criteria (MACs) and model evaluation questions under each theme. In situations where MAC questions are not suitable, the structure of each social value question should be clear, proportionate, and relevant to the Model Award Criteria.
- the [Social Value Model \(PPN 002\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-002-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-contracts/procurement-policy-note-002-the-social-value-model-html) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-002-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-contracts/procurement-policy-note-002-the-social-value-model-html>) simplifies the approach. Following pre-market engagement, follow the 3 steps – 1. select one outcome, 2. insert the model question and refine as needed, 3. insert the social value award sub-criteria corresponding to the outcome and refine as needed

Irrespective of which Model applies, commissioners and buying teams may want to consider SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) when writing and evaluating questions. No more than 2 social value themes should be used in any one tender process unless increasing the weighting above 10%. A reasonable word limit should be set for each question response, and the questions should be both relevant and proportionate to the theme, outcome or tender.

Specific

- are the questions related to the contract and reflective of your organisation's priorities?
- has a reasonable word limit been set? Consider capacity of bidding and evaluating teams. Timed action plans should not be included in the word limit.

Measurable

- does the question clearly set out the desired outcomes of the procurement and the expectation of a timed action plan?
- has the commissioning/buying team determined essential or desirable criteria to help scoring? Has this been shared with bidding suppliers?
- has the commissioning/buying team set model key performance indicators (KPIs)?

Achievable

- is the ask proportionate and specific to ensure bidders can demonstrate a robust approach to delivery?

Relevant

- is the ask relevant to the expertise of bidding suppliers?

Time-bound

- does the ask enable the supplier to mobilise and deliver their social value offer during the term of the contract?

Commissioners and buyers – **say what you mean**. Suppliers sometimes feedback that it is not always clear

what is being asked of them. Write your question in a way that clearly states what you are looking for.

4.1. Timed action plans

Requesting a timed action plan as part of the response can increase delivery confidence. Timed action plans should set out what will be delivered, when it will be delivered and who is responsible. The plan may include:

- use of metrics (to be defined by the buying team and converted to contractual KPIs and targets)
- tools/processes used to gather data (assumptions, target groups, methodology)
- reporting (methodology, tools, frequency)
- feedback and improvement (review mechanism, continuous improvement methodology)
- transparency (governance, escalation, change control)
- named lead for overseeing delivery of the social value offer

5. Evaluation and feedback

Social value responses should be evaluated in the same way as all other award criteria with a focus on the quality of the response. Commissioners and buyers can use timed action plans, and pre-determined essential or desirable criteria developed through pre-procurement engagement with the market or local stakeholders to ensure consistency of scoring. Evaluation points to consider:

- is the social value offer relevant to what you are buying and the supplier's expertise?
- are the proposed deliverables clear and proportionate to the size and value of the contract?
- can the offer be turned into tangible KPIs and measured throughout the life of the contract?
- has the supplier(s) demonstrated they can deliver the KPIs?
- additional benefits – e.g. how does the offer help your organisation achieve its goals? E.g. improving patient experience, reducing risk of emergency department attendance, reaching net zero by 2045. Does the offer make a positive impact on known inequalities in access, experience, and outcomes? E.g. commitment to the real living wage, more equitable access to health services, creation of green spaces, education for young people.

5.1. Scoring methodology

PPN 06/20 **Social Value Model Quick Reference Table** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts>) includes model award criteria (MACs) against all themes and outcomes. PPN 002 includes reference to outcomes, model award criteria and sub-criteria. Below describes an example scoring methodology adapted to consider social value responses:

Social Value Tender Scoring Framework

Score 4 – Excellent

The tenderer's response provides full confidence the Tenderer understands the social value question, the response is relevant and proportionate to the goods, works or service. The Tenderer includes a timed action plan featuring deliverables and metrics providing full confidence the social value offer can be delivered within the parameters of the contract.

Score 3 – Good

The tenderer's response provides a good level of confidence that the Tenderer understands social value question in relation to the needs of the organisation. The Tenderer's response is relevant and proportionate to the goods, works or service. The offer addresses all the requirements set out against the question but has only partially demonstrated how they will be delivered.

Score 2 – Satisfactory

The tenderer's response provides a satisfactory level of confidence that the Tenderer understands the social value question, the offer is both relevant and proportionate. The offer addresses some but not all requirements set out against the question and has only partially demonstrated they will be delivered.

Score 1 – Poor

There are weaknesses (or inconsistency) in the tenderer's understanding of the social value question and needs of the organisation. The offer is not relevant or proportionate and the tenderer has not demonstrated how the offer will be delivered.

Score 0 – Unacceptable

No response and/or information provided is deemed inadequate to merit a score.

6. Framework agreements

Social value should be included in the establishment of all procurement frameworks used by the NHS. In some circumstances, this will satisfy the social value requirement for any call offs from that framework, for example one set up and owned by NHS Supply Chain for the procurement of a specific type of product delivered on a national scale.

Other framework call-offs will benefit from further testing of social value opportunities for individual contracts awarded, for example, "design and build" contracts for significant site refurbishments or new buildings. For these frameworks, social value must have been included as a consideration when established.

Additionality is key to ensure suppliers deliver social value above and beyond their core commercial commitments. Where a supplier has developed a social value offer for a national framework, the additionality may be in expanding an already established scheme rather than creating something new. For example, a supplier may have an existing internship scheme. If they are not physically based near where the call off organisation is located, it may be proportionate for them to commit to expanding the existing scheme in their locality.

Framework owners are recommended to reference all social value themes in the framework documentation, making it clear to suppliers and buyers there is flexibility, where relevant and proportionate, at call off. As detailed in section 4, inclusion of social value themes at framework outset will impact what themes and questions can be tested at call-off. For example, if the framework agreement has only outlined reference or questions relating to Theme 1 – fighting climate change and Theme 3 – equal opportunity, no further themes can be included at call-off.

NHS England published [system guidance for the implementation of framework host management](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/system-guidance-for-the-implementation-of-framework-host-management/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/system-guidance-for-the-implementation-of-framework-host-management/>) via nationally accredited frameworks and framework hosts in April 2024. The aim of the guidance is to make it easier for suppliers to do business with the NHS and simplifies the route to market for NHS buyers.

6.1. Further competition

Where testing social value is required in the call-off procedure/mini-competition, framework owners should ensure there is clear and transparent information available to buyers detailing how social value has been approached at framework agreement level, including relevant themes and Model Award Criteria. Buyers are advised to check with the framework owner how social value has been managed.

NHS buyers – if you are unsure how social value has been assessed or managed at framework agreement level, contact the framework owner to find out more information.

6.2. Direct award

Where a framework agreement permits direct award, the supplier will be bound by a commitment to deliver social value, entered into when accepting a place on the framework. As part of a direct award procedure, the buyer and supplier should jointly agree on the specific social value policy outcomes and award criteria to be delivered and included as part of the contract. The buyer should then evaluate the supplier's delivery against these policy outcomes and award criteria as part of ongoing contract performance management.

For more information regarding frameworks, please see Section 4 of the [Guide to Using the Social Value Model](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-002-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-contracts) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ppn-002-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-contracts>) (pages 16 and 17)

6.3. Single tender action

Where purchases are compliantly made directly with a supplier outside of a framework or competitive process, commissioners and buyers are encouraged to discuss social value policy outcomes and award criteria with the supplier, ensuring KPIs are included in the ongoing contract performance management.

6.4. Medicines procurement

Due to the complex nature of medicines procurement in the NHS and the legal imperative of supply, social value is addressed through medicines procurement by requiring all suppliers to annually submit an Evergreen Sustainable Supplier Assessment. More information on the medicines procurement approach to the Social Value Model can be found [can be found on the SPS website \(<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/net-zero-and-social-value-requirements-in-nhse-medicines-tenders/>\).](https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/net-zero-and-social-value-requirements-in-nhse-medicines-tenders/)

7. Contract award and managing the contract

Documenting in the contract and holding suppliers and providers to account for the commitments made at tender stage will strengthen delivery and value to the community. Where a Timed Action Plan has been submitted as part of the tendering process, this can serve as a useful reference for the buyer/commissioner and supplier to confirm for inclusion in the contract.

Social value key performance indicators (KPIs) need to be included in the contract to track delivery of the commitments made by suppliers and providers. Collecting, recording, and monitoring the KPIs in the Atamis system throughout the contract will document and help determine whether the contract is achieving. Social value deliverables should be documented in the contract, useful references can be found in the section below.

Contracting parties should use the Model Award Criteria and Reporting Metrics set out in the procurement documentation and in the tenderer's proposals to establish KPIs. The KPIs should be comprised of a deliverable, target and means to measure progress and form part of the contractual obligations of the supplier. For example, if a supplier committed to delivering career development sessions for young people, below sets out example deliverables and metrics. Where suppliers are unable to meet their contractual commitments, including social value, NHS organisations should agree remedies in line with existing local policies.

Social value delivery plan example

Identify schools and colleges

Example metrics:

- promotional materials developed
- no. of schools and colleges contacted
- no. schools and colleges onboarded

Deadline: September – November

Lead: Name

Initial engagement sessions

Example metrics:

- no. sessions (virtual or face to face)
- co-design reasonable adjustments

Deadline: November – December

Lead: Name

Deliver CV writing sessions

Example Metrics:

- no. places offered
- no. sessions delivered
- no. students attended

Deadline: January – March

Lead: Name

7.1. Contract terms

For including references to net zero and social value into relevant schedules and clauses, see the NHS Terms and Conditions. In addition, the [NHS Standard Contract](https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/>) service conditions, section 18, describe how NHS providers must take all reasonable steps to deliver commitments set out in [Delivering a Net Zero National Health Service](https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/a-net-zero-nhs/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/a-net-zero-nhs/>). Obligations for 2024/25 include:

- maintain and deliver a Green Plan approved by the governing body (18.2.2)
- provide annual summary of progress on delivery to the co-ordinating commissioner (18.2.3)
- regard the potential to secure wider economic and environmental benefits for the local community and population in its purchase and specification of products and services, discussing and seeking to agree with the co-ordinating commissioner and review on an annual basis (18.5.1)
- when procuring goods, services and works, comply with the Net Zero Supplier Roadmap (18.5.2)

When procuring goods, non-clinical services or a combination of both, the [NHS Terms and Conditions](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-terms-and-conditions-for-the-procurement-of-non-clinical-goods-and-services/#heading-1) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-terms-and-conditions-for-the-procurement-of-non-clinical-goods-and-services/#heading-1>) should be used as is appropriate. Within both the terms and conditions for framework agreements, and for contracts, net zero and social value commitments, including the requirement to produce a Carbon Reduction plan, complete the Evergreen Assessment, and to deliver commitments for social value.

For contract terms and conditions:

- supply of goods, Schedule 1, Key Provisions 1, Section 7
- provision of services, Schedule 1, Key Provisions 1, Section 8
- combined supply of goods and provision of services, Schedule 1, Key Provisions 1, Section 8

For the establishment of a framework agreement terms and conditions, relevant clauses are included within Schedule 1, Key Provisions, Section 8 in each set of terms and conditions.

7.2. Review frequency

Contract management conversations should occur regularly at a frequency determined by the complexity, risk, and value of the contract.

- for providers of health care services contracted under the Provider Selection Regime, reviews should be at least every 6 months ([NHS Standard Contract 2024-2025](https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/24-25/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/24-25/>)).
- for goods, works and non-healthcare services, below outlines suggested minimum requirements:

Low value

Minimum social value review:

If below threshold, social value may not be proportionate to the contract value. If included, light touch review as needed, as a minimum at the start and before the close of the contract.

Actions:

- include KPI progress in written supplier reports

Medium value

Minimum social value review:

Light touch review as needed, as a minimum at the start and before the close of the contract, but ideally annually.

Actions:

- review timed action plan and progress against agreed KPIs
- discuss overview of outcomes delivered to date

- identify opportunities for collaboration and continuous improvement over the life of the contract

8. Find out more – net zero, social value and sustainable procurement

To find out more about social value and the wider Net Zero and Sustainable Procurement programme, including the Net Zero Product Savings Calculator and Evergreen Supplier Maturity Dashboard please visit: [Central Commercial Function \(CCF\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-commercial/central-commercial-function-ccf/) (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-commercial/central-commercial-function-ccf/>). Further resources are available to NHS staff via [FutureNHS](https://future.nhs.uk/CCF_Hub/view?objectId=28690032) (https://future.nhs.uk/CCF_Hub/view?objectId=28690032).

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