Crown Commercial Service

Contracts Finder User Guide
Suppliers
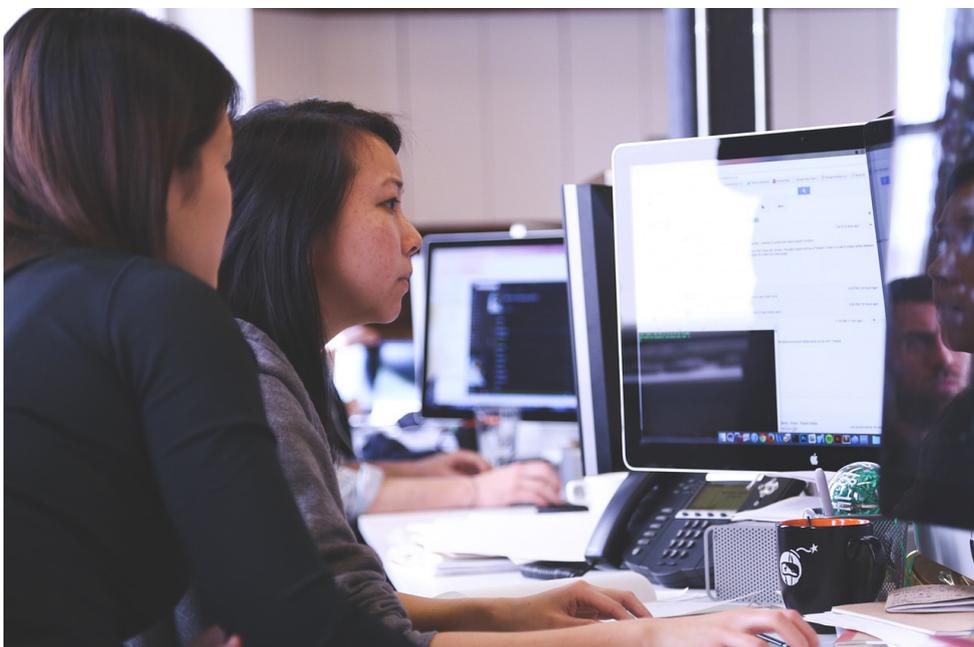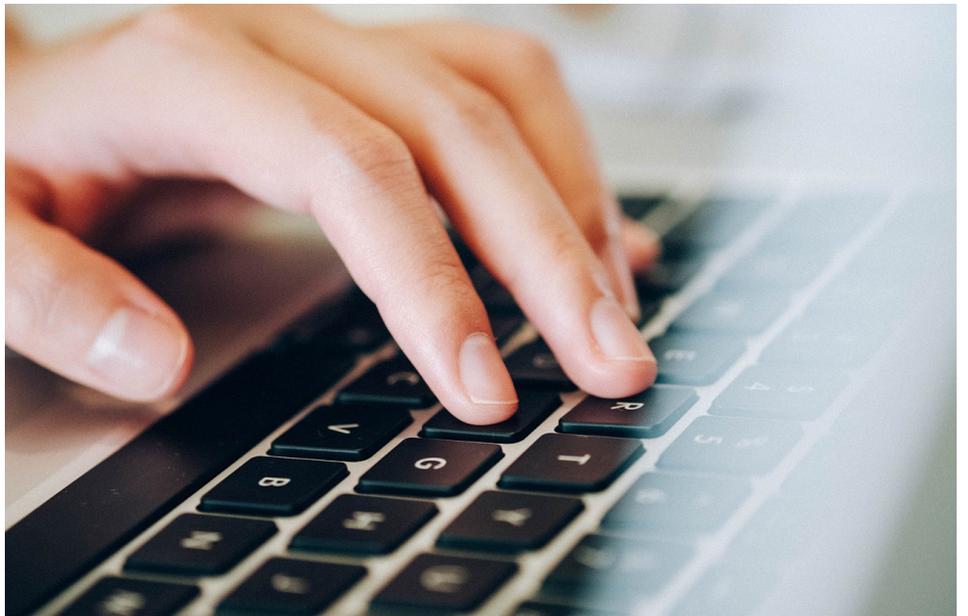
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Introduction

This user guide provides information to organisations or individuals interested in using Contracts Finder to search for public sector procurement opportunities and award information. Specifically, it is aimed at potential suppliers who are interested in doing business with government and public sector organisations.

As the single publishing portal for all public sector procurement opportunities, Contracts Finder makes it easier and more accessible for smaller businesses and voluntary or charitable organisations to do business with the public sector. It is also a critical part of delivering the government's commitments for transparency in procurement.

The website was launched in February 2015 alongside the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The regulations require all UK public sector procurement opportunities and awards (above thresholds of £10,000 for central government bodies and £25,000 for wider public sector bodies) to be published on Contracts Finder.

Contracts Finder allows users to view and search opportunities that are currently open to tender, pipelines of potential procurement activity and awarded contracts. It also has a facility for buyers to engage with suppliers to check interest in and define future procurement needs ('early opportunity' notices).

A separate guide is available to assist public sector buyers in using Contracts Finder.

www.gov.uk/contracts-finder
September 2015

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Getting started: registering and signing in

Contracts Finder is available at https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder . Click on **Start now ›** to enter the site.

You do not need to register to search the notices published on Contracts Finder. However, if you want to take advantage of features including email alerts, saving searches and 'watching' notices, you will need to register and sign in. This is a very simple and quick process.

If you have already registered on Contracts Finder, or have a SID4Gov account, you can sign in following the process on page 5.

Registering for a buyer account

If you are a new user and need to register, click on the link at the top right hand side of the page:
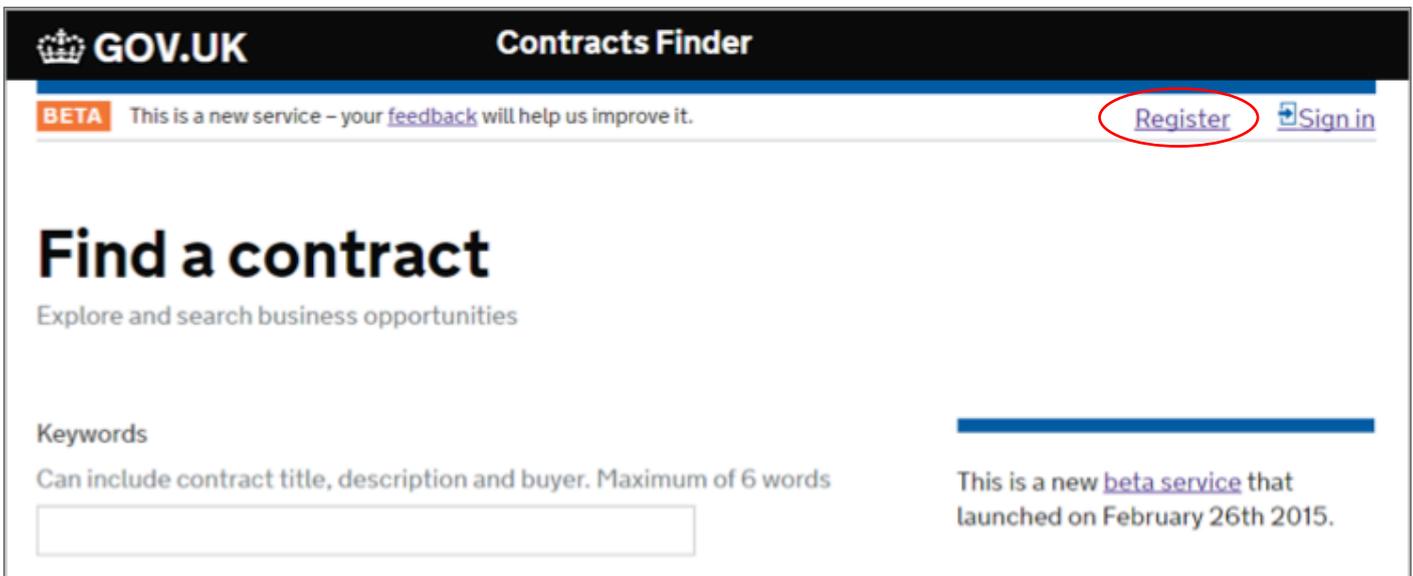
Complete the details requested in the next few screens.

On the next screen you only need to include **one** from your organisation name, postcode or DUNS number - you do not need to enter all three. Select your 'headquarters country' from the drop down list and click **Next**
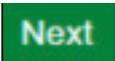
Complete the details requested in the next few screens.

(1/3) Register Organisation

Organisation Name

Or

Postcode

Or

D&B D-U-N-S® Number

To register on Contracts Finder you can either use your Organisation Name or organisation's postcode or Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) DUNS number.

If you are a public sector buyer please register on the following link:- Buyer Registration

Headquarter Country *

United Kingdom - GBR

Next   Cancel

Once you have completed all of the required details click **Register** on the final page. You will then receive your log in credentials via email.

Signing in

Once you have your log in details, click on the Sign in link at the top right hand side of the page.

Enter your log in details (user name and password) on the next page.

If you have forgotten your password, click on the link to reset it.

Sign in

Sign in or create an account.

Email

example@example.com

Password

••••••••

Sign in   Cancel

Forgotten your Password?

Contracts Finder uses the SID4Gov service as its registration portal, so your registration email will refer to SID4Gov registration rather than Contracts Finder.

Please monitor your inbox and any check any spam folders if the activation email hasn't arrived after 4 days.

If you have any problems with registering or signing in, contact ContractsFinder@crowncommercial.gov.uk

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Using the search

The first page you will see on opening Contracts Finder or after signing in is the 'Find a contract' page:

In the 'Keywords' box, use whole words that are specific to the kind of notice you want to find. Avoid general terms like 'public' and 'contract' as this will produce a very large number of results that may not be relevant. You can also specify if you want to see only notices in a particular region or regions, and can select which notice type(s) you want to see.

Clicking on 'Search' will take you to your results page. Here, you can further refine your search criteria by notice status (open, closed, awarded), contract value, industry (using 'common procurement vocabulary' or CPV codes) and date (closing date, publication date or contract award date). If you select any of these criteria to refine your search, click on **Update results** on the bottom left hand side of the page to get the new set of results.

Use the **Sort results** Relevance ▾ drop-down on the top right hand side of the page to sort your results by relevance, value or date.

You can download search results as an XML or CSV file by clicking on Download as XML or Download as CSV .

You can open an individual notice by clicking on its title in the search results page.

To print a notice, open it and click on the **Print this notice** button.

Save your search

You can save your search so that in future you don't have to re-enter all the criteria you've chosen. Saving a search also allows you to set up automatic alerts for new and updated notices that fit your criteria. These options are only availble to registered users.

When you are happy with your search criteria, click on **Save my search** .

This will open a pop-up window which asks you to give a name to your search, and allows you to select your preferences for email alerts: how frequently you want to receive alerts (daily, weekly, fortnightly or monthly) and what you want to be alerted about (new notices only or new and updated notices). If you don't want to receive email alerts, just select 'Never' in the 'Email frequency' drop down box.
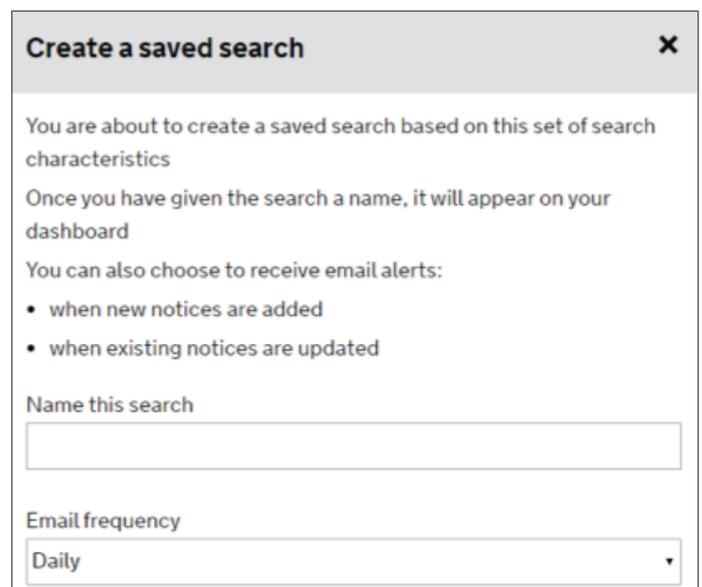
Create a saved search   ✕

You are about to create a saved search based on this set of search characteristics

Once you have given the search a name, it will appear on your dashboard

You can also choose to receive email alerts:

- when new notices are added
- when existing notices are updated

Name this search

Email frequency

Daily   ▾

You can still save your search when no results are returned.

'Watch' a notice

Registered users can also choose to 'watch' a notice that is of particular interest.

Open the notice by clicking on its title in the search reults page, then click on **Watch this notice** on the right hand side of the page.

This will open a pop-up window where you can enter a name for your watched search and select email alert preferences.
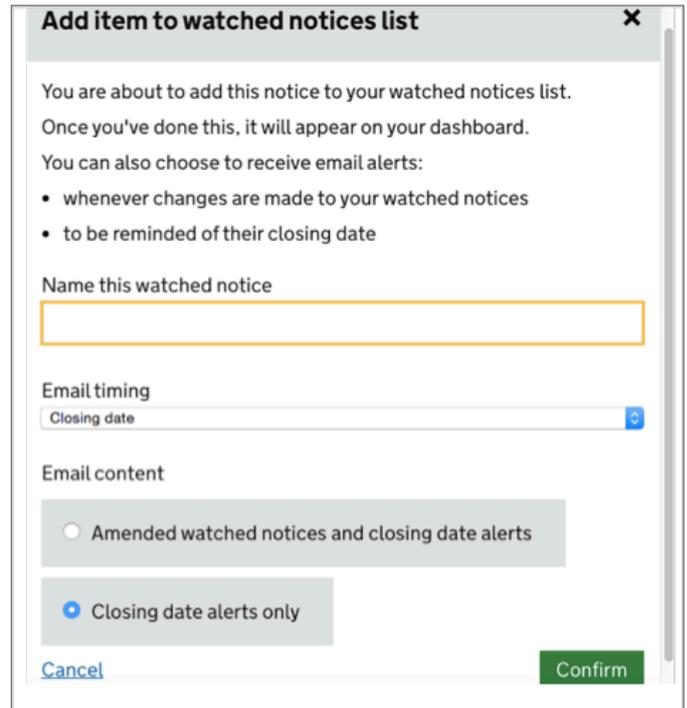
Add item to watched notices list ✕

You are about to add this notice to your watched notices list.

Once you've done this, it will appear on your dashboard.

You can also choose to receive email alerts:
- whenever changes are made to your watched notices
- to be reminded of their closing date

Name this watched notice

Email timing

Closing date

Email content

○ Amended watched notices and closing date alerts

● Closing date alerts only

Cancel   Confirm

If you have any problems with searching, saving searches or watching notices (including email alerts), contact our helpdesk at ContractsFinder@crowncommercial.gov.uk

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Your dashboard

Once you have signed into Contracts Finder you can **manage your settings** (including email alert preferences) and **your profile** by clicking on the Go to your dashboard link on the top right hand side of the front page:
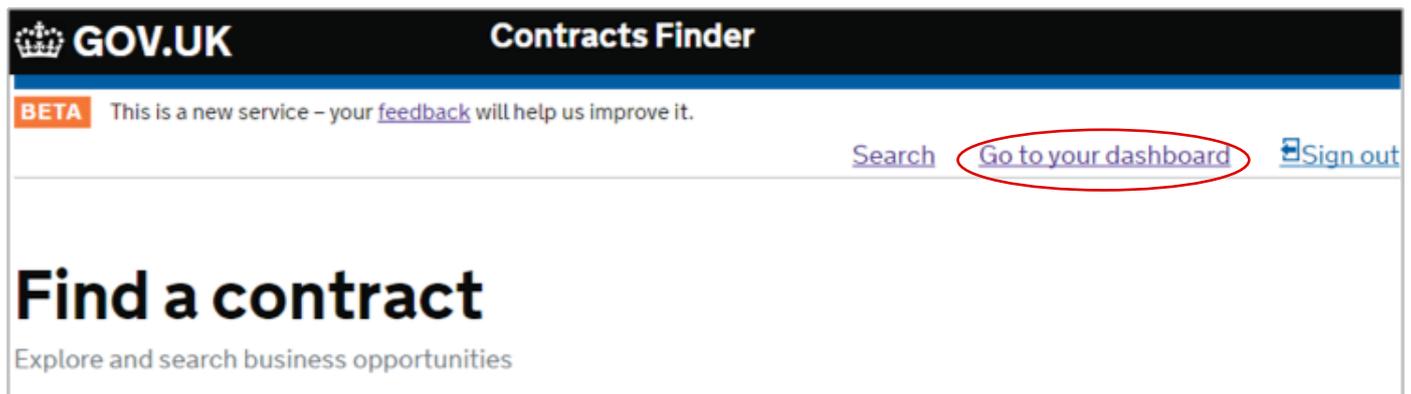
Manage your settings

Email preferences

Click on Email preferences to select if you do or do not want to receive email alerts from Contracts Finder and the type of email that you prefer.

Saved searches

Click on Saved searches to view, edit or delete your saved searches. Check the box to the left of the search name then:

- select 'View' to see the latest results for this search.
- select 'Edit' to change:
  - the name you've given to this search
  - the frequency of your search update emails
  - the type of notices your search returns (new notices or updated and new notices).
- select 'Delete selected items' to delete your search.

Watched notices

Click on Watched notices to view, edit or delete your watched notices. Check the box to the left of the search name then:

- select 'View' to look at the notice in detail

- select 'Edit' to change:
  - the name you've given to this search
  - the frequency and type of your email alerts

- select 'Delete selected items' to delete your watched notice.

Manage your watched notices list

Edit, view and set up email alerts for all the notices you are watching on Contracts Finder

X Plastic Bags   View   Edit

Reminder email Closing date   **Notify me of updates** No

Delete selected items

Your profile

Click on the relevant link to change your secret question, update your password or edit your account details.

Your profile

Change your secret question

Update your password

Edit your account details

If you have any problems when using your dashboard, contact our helpdesk at ContractsFinder@crowncommercial.gov.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or queries relating to Contract Finder please contact our helpdesk:

E: ContractsFinder@crowncommercial.gov.uk

On site feedback link
W: www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search

@gov_procurement

@govmysteryshop

Crown Commercial Service