



# BUSINESS GROWTH SERIES

## GUIDE 2



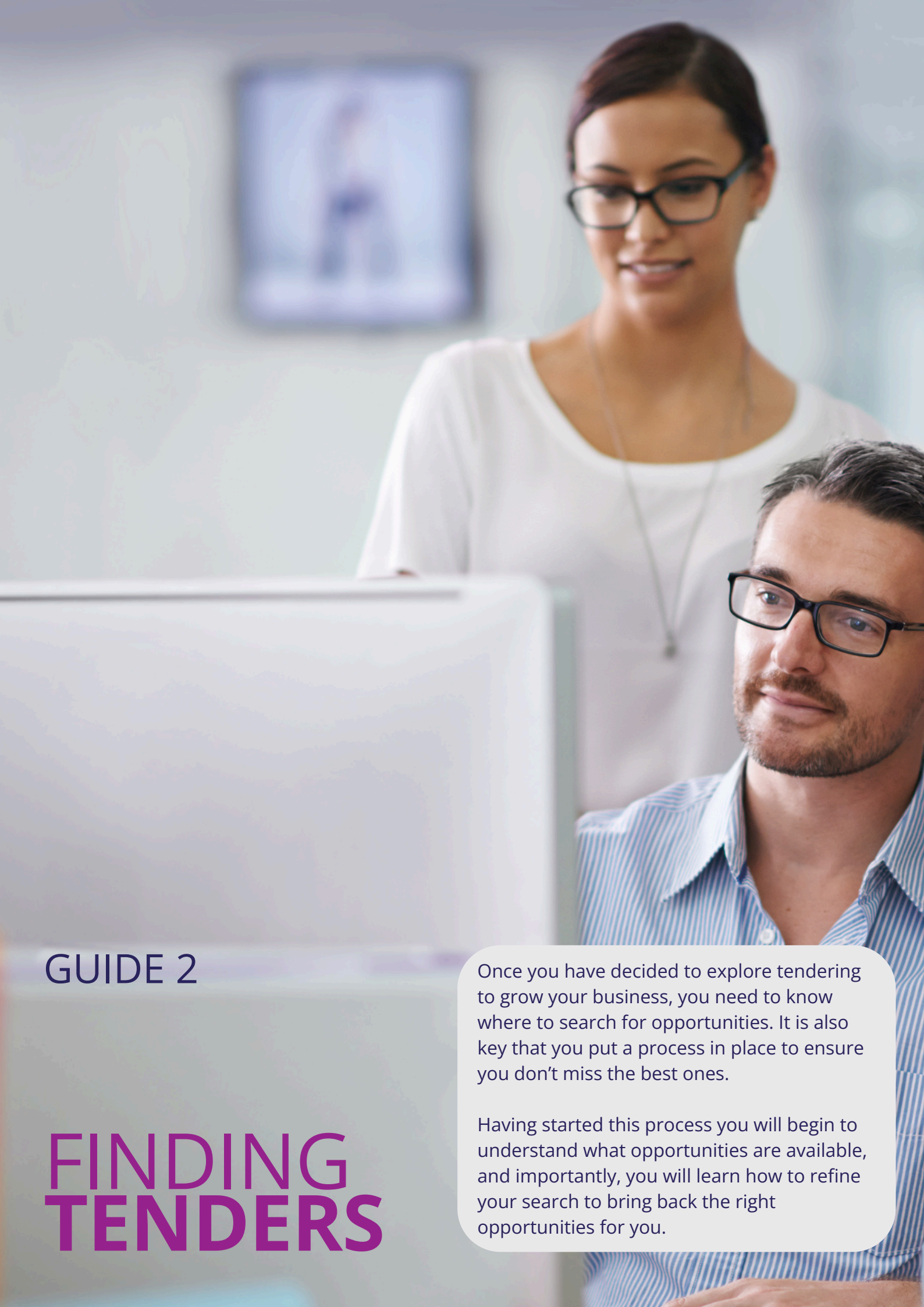
FINDING TENDER OPPORTUNITIES



# GROW YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH WINNING CONTRACTS

Welcome to the second guide in our Business Growth Series, designed to support you to win contracts and grow your business. This series is brought to you by **Hertfordshire Growth Hub** and **Complete Tenders**, whose mission is to help small businesses compete against their rivals and win contracts. This series will guide you through the key areas involved in finding opportunities, getting ready to tender and writing winning tender responses.





## GUIDE 2

# FINDING TENDERS

Once you have decided to explore tendering to grow your business, you need to know where to search for opportunities. It is also key that you put a process in place to ensure you don't miss the best ones.

Having started this process you will begin to understand what opportunities are available, and importantly, you will learn how to refine your search to bring back the right opportunities for you.

# WHERE TO LOOK FOR TENDER OPPORTUNITIES

Public sector contracts, that is to say those for the government and its agents, the NHS and councils, are in the public domain.

There are three main websites you should make yourself familiar with

## **1. Find a Tender**

In the UK, public sector authorities must follow a set of procurement rules which includes the requirement to publicise contract opportunities above a contract value threshold on **Find a Tender\***. Higher value contracts, typically over £139,688, including those for all Hertfordshire County, District and Borough Councils, can be viewed and searched here. To view these opportunities you can visit the **Find a Tender** website.

This site enables you to do simple and refined searches for relevant contract opportunities based on keywords that are appropriate for your business e.g. search “electrical” as an electrical contractor.

## **3. Supply Hertfordshire portal**

**Supply Hertfordshire** is set up to support the procurement of lower value public sector contracts specifically in Hertfordshire. Hertfordshire’s Local Authorities have signed up to use this facility, including:

- Borough of Broxbourne,
  - Dacorum Borough Council,
  - East Herts District Council,
  - Hertsmeire Borough,
  - North Herts Council,
  - St Albans City & District Council,
  - Stevenage Borough Council,
  - Welwyn Hatfield Borough,
- alongside Hertfordshire County Council.



## **2. Contracts Finder**

Below the threshold, public contracts do not have to be publicised in the same way, however, it is still in the public interest to go to tender for most products and services. As such, most lower value contracts are still advertised on the central government website **Contracts Finder**.

# TOP TIPS FOR SEARCHING

When using a public tender website, make the most of the search functionality available to help narrow down the searches. With hundreds of opportunities live at any one point, you don't want to try and trawl through them all.

## 1 Use the search term functionality

Try a few different terms/keywords and see what comes up. If you are a cleaning company, as an example, you may want to try a few different variants such as cleaning services, commercial cleaning, school cleaning, void cleaning, NHS cleaning, etc..

Consider using a variety of industry terms and their variations, and think about words that are commonly misspelt and try those too. The information detailed on the opportunity is manually input and is subject to human error, so keep an eye out for this. When you find a good opportunity, make note of the terms you used to find it.

## 2 Don't be fooled by the contract value

When writing out their contract notice, a procurement officer may state this as £0 or leave blank. So, consider if you really want to set a value range for your search. You might not want to limit the opportunities to e.g. <contracts over £200k> if there is a chance of missing out on ideal ones where the data is incomplete. On the flip side, a contract may appear to be too large however a £40 million framework might be split into multiple 'lots' of smaller contracts.



## 3 Think about the dates you are entering

You can usually search by 'dates published' and also 'deadline.' Think about this when searching, you don't want to search and see that your perfect opportunity has to be submitted today, so consider what lead time you need to prepare a tender.

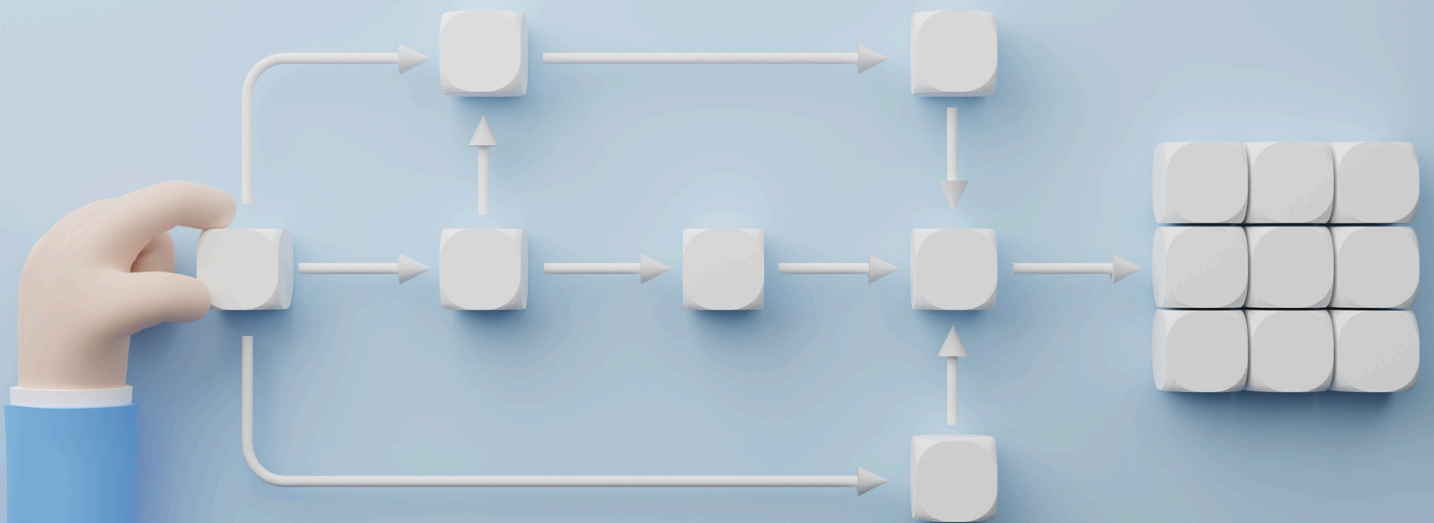
## 4 Dig deeper than the name of the tender

The names given to tenders can sometimes be misleading, so don't just look at the title. Take a read of the opportunity in a bit more detail, it may say NHS Opportunity in the title but is this providing beds, equipment, consumables, lighting, transport, the list goes on. A generic titled tender could also have a number of 'lots' within it meaning you don't have to be able to fulfil the whole contract but a part of it. Express your interest, download the documents and read them in detail to get a greater understanding of the opportunity.

# CREATING A REGULAR PROCESS TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES

Finding opportunities is not something you just try on one day, find something and then you are done. You need to have processes in place to search regularly to avoid missing a key opportunity and to give you the most lead time to pursue it.

In doing this you will start to understand more about the buyer's quirks, what they do and don't say in their tender notice, what contracts fit your business, and you'll also narrow down the number of opportunities you need to review - a weekly search means only having to look at 7 days worth of notices compared to 4 weeks.





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# GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

This series is brought to you by **Hertfordshire Growth Hub** and **Complete Tenders** and is designed to support you to win contracts and grow your business!

Explore the Growth Hub for more in our series or visit [completetenders.com](http://completetenders.com).

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