

Procurement, Contract Management and Finance Supplier/Client FAQ's Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Who should I contact if Coronavirus is likely to impact the goods, services or works I am contracted to provide to Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)?

We encourage all of our suppliers to consider the potential impacts of COVID-19; to discuss any emerging risks with FLS; and to implement contingency measures where possible. In order that we take a consistent approach across our business, we request that you email us at procurement@forestryandland.gov.scot, detailing:

- the Contract Reference;
- the FLS Contract Manager you normally deal with;
- a short description of your contract e.g. fence building in Dalmally;
- the processes that are critical to the continuation of your business and the service you provide to us;
- the potential impacts you have anticipated and any contingency plans you are making, particularly in the event that a large proportion of your workforce were absent;
- any further concerns or questions you have for FLS relating to the impacts of COVID-19

FLS National Teams will be co-ordinating our response to this emerging situation, liaising with colleagues across all parts of FLS.

Will work under my contract be reduced or delayed?

We will continue to follow Scottish Government's guidance on measures to take in light of COVID-19. Government guidance is constantly evolving and it may over time create disruption to contract delivery resulting in reduction in service requirements or work requiring to be delayed or cancelled. These issues will need to be dealt with on a case by case basis. If you have a question relating to any particular concerns with your contract, please email us at procurement@forestryandland.gov.scot.

If work needs to be delayed, can I be paid for this in advance?

We cannot pay for work that has not been undertaken and do not anticipate any changes to payment terms in this respect. However we understand this will be a uncertain time for many businesses and would signpost any supplier with financial concerns to Scottish Government's business telephone helpline:-
Tel: 0300 303 0660.

Will any tenders be delayed?

It is likely that tendering activities will be delayed as our primary focus shifts to supporting existing contracts, priority business activities and provision of staff and supplier guidance.

Will there be any impact to supplier payments?

We will endeavour to continue the processing of all invoices in a timely manner, as far as possible. However, as new homeworking and social distancing measures are implemented, we may not have access to paper invoices, submitted to our offices by post. With this in mind, we encourage all of our suppliers to submit their invoices electronically. This can be as simple as a scanned PDF version of an invoice, attached to an email and sent to the FLS contract manager. Submitting invoices in this manner will minimise any potential disruption to payments.

What do I do if I need to update my payment or contact details?

Invoice fraud remains an area of significant risk across all sectors. While we look to ensure that we continue to make our payments to suppliers in a timely manner by flexing our resource according to the evolving situation; our commitment to the protection of public funds and our suppliers' details will remain unchanged. Please continue to notify your FLS contract manager of any changes in the normal way. We would also like to take this opportunity to ask our suppliers to remain vigilant and be alert for any attempts to maliciously intercept communications, especially around invoice and payment details, with the intention of exploiting the uncertainty that may be apparent at this time.

Can I pay FLS for goods and services in my usual way?

The vast majority of our clients make payment by bank transfer already and we ask that this continues. Those clients who are yet to adopt this method are being asked to move to making payments to FLS by bank transfer effective immediately. This is the safest and most efficient method of settling your account with us by allowing social distancing and not being reliant on a presence in our offices.

A small minority of clients pay for goods or services by cash or cheque at the moment. Effective from Monday 23rd March FLS teams will be advised not to accept cash or cheques as payment until further notice. This is to reduce personal contact and assist in maintaining social distancing, not only between FLS and our clients but also with pick up services and reduce unnecessary travel and additional exposure of our team members at bank branches.

We will endeavour to take payment by credit or debit card over the telephone and where there are facilities to do so at our regional offices and visitor centres. However, it is now highly likely that as we move to home working that we will be in a much reduced position to be able to process your payments by telephone. Home working does not allow for compliance with legislated security measures in processing card payments and we are unable to provide an alternative.

Please contact banking@forestryandland.gov.scot for information on how you can move to settling your accounts by bank transfer.

What are your business continuity plans in the event that several of your employees become ill?

We have established a national COVID-19 response team who are co-ordinating our approach across Regions and Functions in determining appropriate actions and responses to situations, related to COVID-19, as they arise. Prioritisation of work and communicating with staff, suppliers and stakeholders are part of the work this team will be co-ordinating.