



CHECKLIST

How to Create & Publish a Call for Tenders for Hot Meals on eTenders

(Below €750k Procurement Threshold)

School Meals Scheme 2025/26

Hot Meals Procurement Checklist – Summary

1. First Steps

2. Create & Publish a CfT on eTenders

3. Evaluation Process

4. Contract Award Process

1

First Steps

- ☐ Identify your school's preferred Hot Meals delivery mechanism
- ☐ Contact your insurance provider
- ☐ Estimate the contract value
- ☐ Register on eTenders platform
- ☐ Prepare the procurement suite of documents for publication on eTenders

Further information available at:
www.spu.ie/resources/hot-meals

See Pages 3 - 4

2

Create & Publish a CfT on eTenders

- ☐ Create a Call for Tender (CfT) Workspace and carry out associated tasks
- ☐ Complete the eForm
- ☐ Publish the Tender

An indicative timeframe for completing this process is approximately 3 hours. Please make sure you allow sufficient time to complete all tasks at one sitting.

See Page 5

3

Evaluation Process

- ☐ Unlock and access tender submissions after the tender deadline passes
- ☐ Evaluate submissions received
- ☐ Issue result letters

See Page 6

4

Contract Award Process

- ☐ Sign the Contract and related documents
- ☐ Publish Contract Award Notice

See Page 7

Hot Meals Procurement Checklist –

1. First Steps

1. First Steps

2. Create & Publish a CFT on eTenders

3. Evaluation Process

4. Contract Award Process

Step 1: Identify your school's preferred Hot Meals delivery mechanism



Review the SDG02 TN-06 Guidance for Existing Primary Schools in Relation to Facilities for Provision of School Meals ([link](#))

This document will help you to identify the most appropriate Hot Meals delivery mechanism for your school:



- ☐ Meals Prepared Off-site and Delivered Ready to Eat
- ☐ Meals Pre-Prepared Off-Site and Heated in the School's Designated Preparation and/or Servery Area
- ☐ Meals Pre-Prepared Off-Site and Heated in the School by use of an External Pod or Mobile Catering Unit
- ☐ Meals Fully Prepared On-Site

Step 2: Contact your insurance provider



Once you have identified the most suitable Hot Meals delivery mechanism for your school, you should contact your school insurance provider to discuss your preferred option and to ensure there are no insurance implications.

Step 3: Estimate the contract value



Download the Hot Meals Calculator for Primary Schools ([link](#)) and insert the number of students to obtain your estimated contract value to a maximum 3-year term.

Step 4: Register on eTenders



Follow the instructions according to the [video guide](#) which matches your profile. Alternatively, access the Introduction to eTenders [written guide](#), which covers all scenarios.



Video Guide: Existing user but do not know your username ([link](#))



Video Guide: Existing user login/forgot password ([link](#))



Video Guide: If registered on old eTenders platform (how to retrieve this account in the new platform) ([link](#))



Video Guide: **Registering a School as a Contracting Authority (CA)** / Completing CA and CAPC Profiles ([link](#))



Once you have successfully logged into eTenders, fully complete your School's Contracting Authority (CA) Profile.



Video Guide: Registering a School as a CA / **Completing CA and CAPC (CA Procurement Coordinator) Profiles** ([link](#))



Written Guide: Introduction to eTenders ([link](#))

Hot Meals Procurement Checklist –

1. First Steps (continued)

1. First Steps

2. Create &
Publish a CFT on
eTenders

3. Evaluation
Process

4. Contract
Award Process

Step 5: Prepare the procurement suite of documents for publication on eTenders



Download and complete the Call for Tender (CFT) document ([link](#))



Download and complete the Tender Response Document (TRD) ([link](#))



Watch the Video Guide: How to Complete the Hot Meals Procurement Documents ([link](#))

You can save your school's CFT and TRD using the following file naming convention:

CFT Hot Meals – [School Name] [School Roll Number]

TRD Hot Meals – [School Name] [School Roll Number]

Example: CFT Hot Meals - St. Mary's Dublin 12345A

You can also add the date at the end.



Where Hot Meals are to be prepared or heated in the school's facilities, the school must also add to their procurement suite of documents the following documents



Download the appropriate Draft Property Licence Template to be included in the school's procurement suite of documents ([link](#))



Download the Deed of Renunciation Template to be included in the school's procurement suite of documents ([link](#))

Hot Meals Procurement Checklist –

2. Create & Publish a Cft on eTenders

1. First Steps

2. Create & Publish a Cft on eTenders

3. Evaluation Process

4. Contract Award Process



Download the Written Guide: Create & Publish a Call for Tenders for Hot Meals (below €750k) ([link](#))



Watch the Video Guide: Create & Publish a Call for Tenders for Hot Meals (below €750k) ([link](#))

1. Create a Call for Tender (Cft) Workspace and carry out associated tasks on eTenders.gov.ie



1.1. Task 1: Create New Cft (see from page 4 of the written guide)



1.2. Task 2: Finalise Cft Core Information (page 12)



1.3. Task 3: Associate PO/TC (page 15)



1.4. Task 4: Accept Code of Conduct (page 15)



1.5. Task 5: Define Workflow (page 17)



1.6. Task 6: Publish Contract Notice – Part 1 (page 19)

2. Complete the eForm



2.1. Section 1 – Metadata (no edits required in this section)



2.2. Section 2 – Contracting Party and Service Provider (see from page 26 of the written guide)



2.3. Section 3 – Procedure (page 28)



2.4. Section 4 – Lot (LOT-001) (page 31)



2.5. Section 5 – Organisations (page 37)



2.6. Validate and Save the eForm (page 39)

3. Publish the Tender



3.1. Publish Contract Notice – Part 2 (page 42)



Further guidance is available at www.spu.ie/resources/hot-meals-below-750k (e.g. How to Use the eTenders Messaging System, How to Withdraw and Upload Documents, How to Review Cft Workspace after Error Message, etc)

Hot Meals Procurement Checklist –

3. Evaluation Process

1. First Steps

2. Create &
Publish a CFT
on eTenders

3. Evaluation
Process

4. Contract
Award Process

Before proceeding to the guidance available below, schools must understand these critical factors for consideration to prevent legal challenges:

If public procurement competitions are not carried out appropriately, they can lead to legal challenge and reputational damage to the school and staff.

For schools who are in the process of tendering for Hot School Meals, it is critical to understand that they must follow the procurement rules of confidentiality, fairness, equal treatment and transparency.

This means that schools **can not**:

1) share any information or engage in any way with any Hot School Meals service provider outside of the formal procurement process.

In the event a school does engage in any way with a Hot School Meals service provider outside of the formal procurement process, it will jeopardise the school's procurement process and possibly lead to its collapse, resulting in the need to retender, and open the school and its staff to legal risk and challenge;

2) discuss any details of the competition, the tenderers and/or their tenders with anyone outside of the school's tender evaluation team, as the procurement process is strictly confidential.

Step 1: Unlock your tenders

Download the Written Guide: How to Unlock and Access Tender Submissions ([link](#))

Watch the Video Guide: How to Unlock and Access Tender Submissions ([link](#))

Step 2: Set up your Evaluation Team

Review the recommended composition of an Evaluation Team ([link](#))

Step 3: Evaluation Team members to sign Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Declaration

Download the Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Declaration, which must be read and signed by all members of the Evaluation Team ([link](#))

Step 4: Conduct the Compliance Check and Evaluation of the Qualitative Award Criteria

Download and complete the Evaluation Spreadsheet ([link](#))

This document is for the school's records only, for registering the compliance check, and scores and feedback for the qualitative award criteria. Please ensure to read guidance notes within this file.

Watch the Video Guide: How to Complete the Hot Meals Evaluation Spreadsheet ([link](#))

Download and complete the Evaluation Report ([link](#))

This document is for the school's records only.

Step 5: Draft, finalise and issue result letters to tenderers, according to your findings

Download the required letter templates for your procurement process:

- [Letter to non-compliant Tenderer template](#)
- [Letter to unsuccessful Tenderer template](#)
- [Letter to preferred Tenderer template](#)

Hot Meals Procurement Checklist –

4. Contract Award Process



Step 1: Sign the Contract and related documents

Once the required standstill period has elapsed without challenge, and upon receipt of all required final documentation from the successful service provider, the school must complete the contract documents and print two original copies of each. These two copies are then sent to the Service Provider for their signature and return. Once both fully signed copies are returned, the school representative will countersign them, ensuring one fully executed original remains with the school and the other is returned to the service provider. Please note that the below documents must be completed and signed by both parties.

- Services Contract (see Appendix 5 of your published CFT document), including all schedules.
- Confidentiality Agreement (see Appendix 6 of your published CFT document).
- Data Processing Agreement – DPA (see Appendix 8 of your published CFT document).
- Property Licence and Deed of Renunciation, as published in your competition, ***if applicable***.

Step 2: Close the competition on eTenders: Publish a Contract Award Notice (CAN) on eTenders

Download the Written Guide: Create & Publish a National CAN for Hot Meals on eTenders (below €750K) ([link](#))