

What is the Postbox?

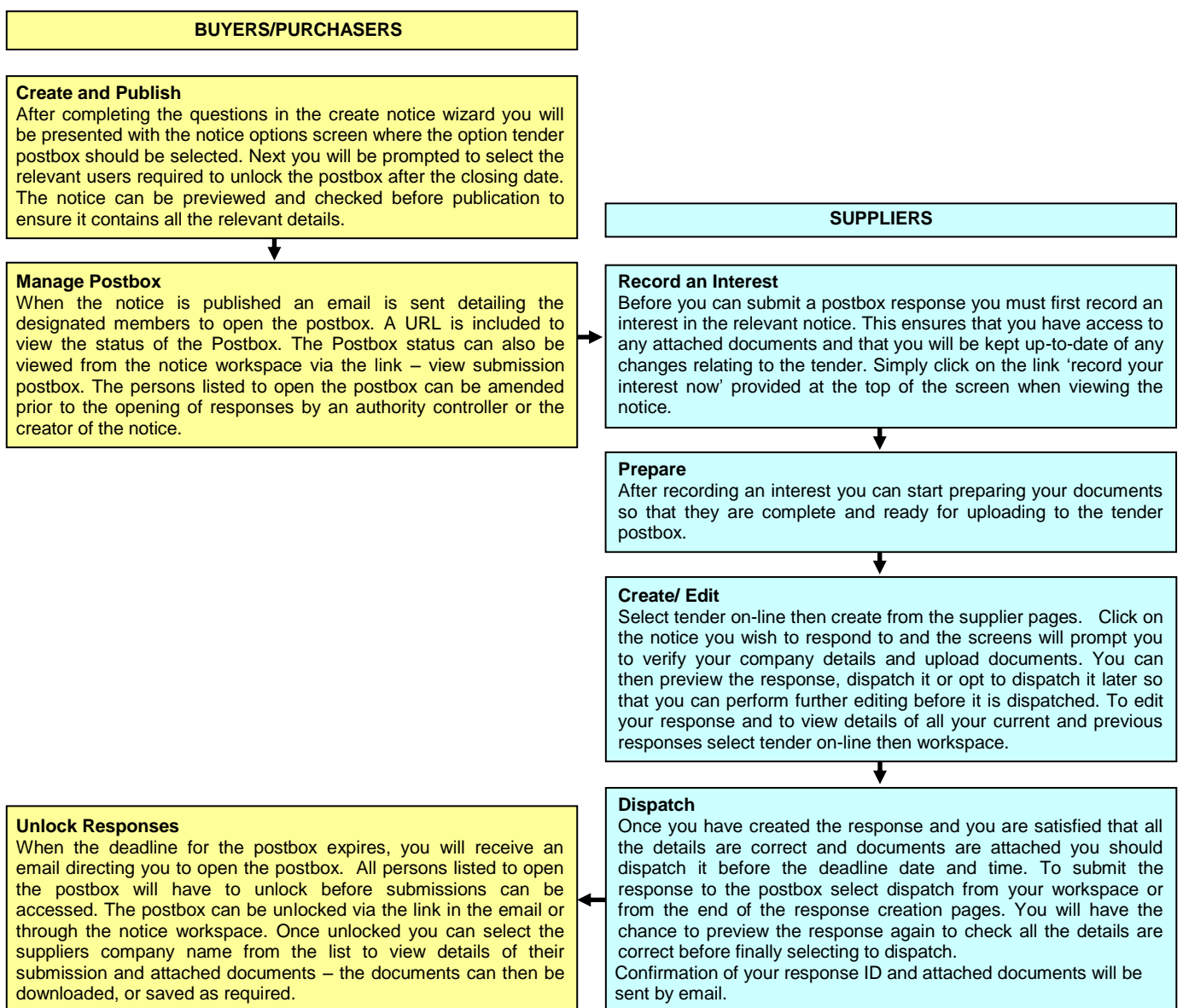
The tender postbox is an online submission facility which allows awarding authorities to receive tender responses from suppliers electronically. Tender responses are held in the secure Postbox until the deadline for responses has expired - selected members of an authority then 'unlock' the Postbox to access the submissions for further evaluation.

When would I use the Postbox facility?

Authorities would use the postbox to receive online tender submissions or pre-qualification documentation from suppliers following the advertisement of a tender opportunity where responses are required. {Note: to use the Postbox for the second stage of a restricted procedure please see the user guide for Restricted Procedure Stage2} This avoids the need to receive paper submissions by post and all submissions are transmitted and stored in a secure environment. A full audit trail is kept of all access to the postbox and a complete record of all supplier submissions is stored.

Suppliers would submit tender responses electronically when an authority has indicated in the notice that the postbox will be used for the return of documents. This will be indicated by a small key symbol next to the notice summary and it will also be stated in the notice text. Once the documents have been downloaded and completed, suppliers can create and dispatch an online response quickly and efficiently.

How do I use the Tender Postbox facility?



IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE

Terms and Conditions/Request for Tender Documents: Purchasers may wish to consider reviewing the terms and conditions in their request for tender documentation in light of late delivery, server down etc.

Information: All notices using the tender postbox for submissions will automatically display the below statement:

The awarding authority has indicated that it will accept electronic responses to this notice via a 'Tender Submission Postbox' facility.

If purchasers are only accepting electronic responses via the postbox this should be made clear in the tender notice and in the documents. Similarly if the authority is operating a dual pilot it should be made clear which tender is deemed to be the one that will stand.

Viruses: The server virus checker will scan all documents when they are uploaded and if a virus is detected the file will be deleted and the supplier notified. Provided that the deadline has not passed, the supplier will have the opportunity to replace with a clean file.

Corrupt Documents: Corruption in documents cannot be detected. Purchasers should define their policy in this regard in the tender document (e.g., it will be rejected).

Document Types: It would be helpful if purchasers specified in the notice or tender documents what file/document types can be accepted and read by your organisation for online submissions.

Document Sizes: There is a maximum size limit of 10Mb for any document to be sent via the postbox, with a combined maximum of 30Mb per postbox response. If suppliers attempt to upload a document larger than 10Mb a server error will be generated and the document will not be uploaded to the response.

File Upload: Suppliers can upload more than one document to a response, but for convenience to both suppliers and purchasers when uploading and opening responses it is advised to keep the number of files to a minimum.

To facilitate organisations receiving multiple tenders file names and descriptions should, as far as possible, be relevant to your company and the content of the particular document rather than using generic descriptions – for example 'company name, section name/number' or 'company name, tender name/number, section name/number'.

It is not advisable to upload protected or encrypted documents as these cannot be opened by the contracting authority.

Preparation: Suppliers can create a postbox response and add documents at any point prior to the deadline date and these details are held in your secure workspace. It is not advisable to wait until the last moment before creating and dispatching your response in case of any last minute problems with internet connections etc.

Changing your mind (suppliers): If you have already submitted a tender it cannot be recalled. However, you can submit a second tender if you wish (but let the Awarding Authority know which one is to stand) or you can submit a paper tender before the deadline (but, again, inform the Awarding Authority which tender is to stand).

Help Desk: For further advice on using the online submission facility please contact the support team using the contact details provided on the site home page.