

Academy Procurement Resource

Buying for your Academy

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1.0 How will this help my Academy?

- Highlights areas of spend where your Academy can achieve value for money.
- Includes organisations that provide contracts, deals and frameworks.
- Has web links to finance, procurement, and Academy related information.
- Highlights training opportunities.
- Includes information about buying green, and environmental initiatives.

2.0 Background

Your Academy Trust must apply the basic rules of procurement whenever it spends public money. These rules aim to ensure that public funds are spent openly and fairly, and make the most of every budget, while protecting you against legal challenges, financial penalties and damage to your Academy's reputation. The [Academies Financial Handbook](#) (currently under review) refers to a wide range of financial management, funding and accounting issues that your Academy must follow.

We have developed this document to help you with collaborative purchasing.

3.0 Department for Education information

The Department has a variety of online procurement information and good practice:

- [Procurement for schools](#) - this includes procurement information, available contracts and frameworks, contract regulations, templates, specialist advice and lots more.
- [Efficiency and value for money in schools](#) - includes a range of value for money tools and case studies about how individual schools have improved their efficiency. There are links to general support, including the National College's Leadership Library and school business management area, as well as the National Association of School Business Management resources for everyone involved in school business management.
- [Academies](#) - provides a range of information about Academies.
- [Leadership and governance](#) - this section contains information on all aspects of school leadership and governance, including issues such as strategic funding, school performance, governance and managing staff, and the management of teaching and learning.

4.0 Making savings

- All Academies are subject to public standards of accountability.
- Although schools and Academies spend most of their money on education staff, they collectively spend approximately £9.2bn on other areas including energy, catering and back office.
- The benefits of effective procurement practices include:
 - financial savings that can then be re-invested in your priorities for driving up standards
 - ensuring that the goods or services purchased are fit for purpose
 - ensuring suppliers deliver (and continue to deliver) as agreed
 - ensuring legal and financial obligations are complied with.

4.1 Understanding your spend

- Your Academy is responsible for its own financial management and the details of your deals and contracts.
- Understanding your finances and deals can help you identify where savings can be made and makes it easier to compare your current deals with those offered by organisations such as Crescent Purchasing Consortium, Pro5 and the Government Procurement Service.
- Our [Schools financial management](#) web pages have information to help with your financial management and planning.
- There is information on the [Young People's Learning Agency](#) website that can help you to plan and manage your finances including:
 - [Academies Financial Handbook](#) (currently under review)
 - [Academies: Accounting for VAT guidance](#)

5.0 Areas for potential savings

- **Energy** – we are working with partners to make sure Academies can access energy at fair prices. Visit the [energy pages](#) on the DfE website for updates.
- **Food ingredients, catering supplies and catering equipment** – visit the [catering and food](#) pages or the [School Food Trust](#) for more information.
- **Telephony** – paying too much for calls? Visit the [Government Procurement Service's telephony](#) pages for framework contracts.
- **Exam fees** – working with other schools can bring savings. The Association of Colleges has a useful [exam fee download](#) which can provide ideas.
- **Shared services** – See the [shared services pages](#) on the jisc website for ideas where collaborative procurement is creating major savings.
- **Insurance** – there are deals available through [Crescent Purchasing Consortium](#). Your Academy must follow the procedures outlined in the [Academies Financial Handbook](#).

5.1 ICT provision

The Department for Education and its partners have the following ICT frameworks in place for Academies to use. The suppliers on these frameworks understand educational requirements, have undergone a vigorous evaluation process, pose less risk due to pre-determined contractual terms, and are subject to performance management reporting.

- [ICT Services Framework](#) – Infrastructure and mobile connectivity services, and provision of integrated ICT services.
- [Consultancy Services Framework](#) – ICT consultancy services in educational use of ICT, technical implementation of ICT and ICT procurement.
- [Microsoft licensing for schools](#) – How to access savings when purchasing Microsoft software.
- [Information Management \(IM\) and Learning Services \(LS\) Framework](#) – IM includes management of school information, such as tracking pupil absence or holding assessment results. LS covers online services that enable teaching and learning, such as curriculum content and lesson planning.
- [Software for Educational Institutions Framework](#) - this framework was arranged by the Government Procurement Service in conjunction with Becta and covers a range of suppliers approved to provide standard desktop and server based software operating systems, security, and office applications software to schools.

5.2 Broadband and internet access

- Aggregated legally procured broadband services for schools are primarily delivered by the [Regional Broadband Consortia \(RBC\)](#) and local authorities (LA). Check with LA / RBC e.g. [The National Education Network](#).
- In the first instance we would recommend that your Academy discusses with your RBC what broadband services can be provided.
- If your Academy does decide to go to market, we advise that you take into account ISP standards including things like content filtering, other measures to ensure e-safety, protection against virus attack, and type of connectivity.
- [The Government Procurement Service](#) also has broadband framework contracts in place.

5.3 Photocopiers (multifunctional devices)

It can be easy to be tempted into uneconomical deals on leasing photocopiers, or multifunctional devices, by suppliers who offer 'gestures of goodwill' or sales incentives.

Shocking but real examples

1. Head teacher signed a *blank* contract - value approx £200,000 over five years.
2. Payments equating to £125,000 over five years for *one* copier.
3. New head teacher and bursar uncovered *rollover* (finance) lease agreement agreed by previous head and bursar of £1.2M. The school looked for a settlement figure but the finance company asked for £500,000.
4. A school had to make a teacher redundant to cover the cost of a photocopier.

Photocopiers – things to consider

We are aware of examples of schools entering into really poor deals that have had a serious and long term impact on schools' finances. If you are looking to enter into any kind of agreement relating to the lease of a photocopier or a multifunctional device, make sure that you are getting an excellent deal by considering the following points:

- Be aware that some agreements will require you to give notice of termination even though an expiry date has been specified. Also check for financial implications of terminating early.
- An operating lease means entering into an agreement to rent equipment. A finance lease is equivalent to committing the school to a loan, which is prohibited under current legislation. See [Tips for successful leasing](#).
- Ensure you include and compare Crescent Purchasing Consortium, the Government Procurement Service, Pro5 or local authority approved suppliers in your quotation exercise.
- Ensure that any verbal and written quotations are exactly what you have agreed to – do not allow contracts to be completed by the supplier afterwards.
- Your quarterly payment for one photocopier should be **hundreds** not **thousands**.
- Any offers of 'cash back' or 'marketing support' is an indication that you are entering into a finance lease.
- At the end of the agreement term ownership of the equipment should remain with the supplier.
- Please see the [MFDs \(photocopiers\)](#) page on the DfE website for more info.

5.4 Creative Media and Publishing Services

The Department for Education has established two contracts to help schools achieve more cost effective and innovative communications. These contracts are designed to help you:

- save money and be more cost effective
- improve quality in publishing and creative media services
- receive flexible levels of support and guidance
- access the latest innovation and technology.

[Publishing Delivery Service \(PDS\)](#) - For all your publishing needs from hard copy print (e.g. school prospectus) to e-broadcasting/text messaging services (e.g. parent communications).

[CMS Creative Media Services \(CMS\) \(Creative Choice\)](#) - For all your marketing needs including events, design and digital/web services (e.g. designing your website, managing your website).

5.5 Temporary education staff

The Managed Services for Temporary Agency Resources (MSTAR) framework contract offers Academies the chance to source a range of temporary education staff.

The benefits of the framework include:

- improved quality of supply, especially in regard to safeguarding children
- reduced costs of supply by regularising and reducing the fees charged by agencies
- reduced administrative effort incurred in procuring temporary workers
- reduced demand for temporary workers by providing management information to aid, for example, workforce planning.

For more information visit the [Pro5 MSTAR page](#).

6.0 Contact your local authority

Your local authority could provide you with information about local and national contracts for buying goods and services, and answer any procurement questions you have. You may want to contact your local authority to find out exactly what help and support is available. For a full list of local councils visit [Directgov](#).

6.1 Useful Public Sector Buying Organisations (PSBOs)

Who are they?

- [Crescent Purchasing Consortium \(CPC\)](#) – The CPC is run and owned on behalf of the further education sector.
- [Pro 5](#) – includes the five largest PSBOs; Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation, West Mercia Supplies, Central Buying Consortium, Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation, North Eastern Purchasing Organisation.
- [The Government Procurement Service](#) is the national procurement partner for all UK public services and is part of the Efficiency and Reform Group within the Cabinet Office.

What do they do?

- CPC and Pro5 help and support Academies to achieve better value for money through combined buying power and procurement expertise for commonly bought goods and services.
- Provide framework contracts that have been procured professionally and are dedicated to the delivery of education.
- The role of the Government Procurement Service is to maximise the value for money obtained by Government departments and other public bodies through the procurement and supply of goods and services. The established procurement arrangements allow public sector organisations to save time and money. These cover a range of areas such as ICT, energy, travel, fleet, office solutions, property solutions and professional services.

6.2 [Crescent Purchasing Consortium \(CPC\)](#)

- Offers access to properly procured contracts across commonly purchased categories of goods and services in the education sector and long established higher education purchasing consortia.
- Membership of CPC is free of charge and open to all Academies. Visit the [CPC website](#) to join for free.
- Examples of CPC compliant frameworks include:
 - insurance with five of the top ranking suppliers
 - recruitment advertising and resourcing services
 - estates professional services.

6.3 [The Pro5](#)

Who are they?

- [Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation \(ESPO\)](#)
- [Central Buying Consortium \(CBC\)](#)
- [West Mercia Supplies \(WMS\)](#)
- [Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation \(YPO\)](#)
- [North Eastern Purchasing Organisation \(NEPO\)](#)

What do they do?

- Pro5 offers access to national contracts across commonly purchased categories of goods and services in the education sector. Contact them on 0300 123 2005 or email enquiries@pro5.org.
- Examples of current [Pro5 national frameworks](#) available to Academies include:
 - Catering equipment - commercial
 - IT consumables - sustainable recycled materials
 - IT related products and associated services
 - Mail services
 - Playground equipment - outdoor
 - Telephone systems
 - Telecommunication equipment.

7.0 Private supplier examples

Here are some examples of private supplier initiatives where contracts between you and the supplier are required. We do not endorse such resources but understand that they can provide alternative information that may prove useful.

- [TES BuyWire](#) – this is a free online marketplace that allows you to collect quotes from suppliers for your specific requirement.
- [buy4schools](#) – website which generates income for schools from parents buying from the site.
- [Procureweb](#) - JISC Procureweb is upgrading the existing Xchange system which enables you to buy and sell equipment that is surplus to your local requirements.
- [Teacher Network \(The Guardian\)](#) – provides thousands of ready made resources for teachers on subjects including maths through to PE aimed at four to 18 year olds.

8.0 Develop and improve your procurement knowledge and skills

[BuyWays](#)

- BuyWays has been developed by the Department for Education as a basic introduction to procurement. It can be used by anyone working in education in England - bursars and business managers, administrators, governors, teachers and headteachers.
- The guidance and advice in the BuyWays modules can be used as an introduction, and basic up-skilling course, for anyone new to public procurement, or as a handy 'refresher' for more experienced buyers.
- There are six modules in the course, dealing with topics like the Procurement Cycle, EU Legislation, and Contract Management. There are case studies to help you learn about real-life procurement, and short review sections where you can test your knowledge.
- All users can access [BuyWays](#) free of charge.

Other organisations offering training:

- [The National College](#) offers training for school business managers.
- [National Association of School Business Management](#) also has a range of training courses available.
- [Association of School and College Leaders](#) is holding regional Academy briefings for school business managers.
- [Training and Development Agency](#) offers a number of courses for school business managers.
- [National Governors' Association](#) provides a range of training for governors.

9.0 Buying green – saving the planet

- Undertake a purchasing and waste audit.
- Is waste minimisation included in everyone's job specification?
- Does your curriculum cultivate the knowledge, skills, values and confidence for pupils to minimise waste and consume sustainably?
- Do you have links with external bodies that can champion the cause to being green? For example:
 - [Green Buying](#) provides information about what other businesses are doing to become more sustainable and the tools to act now, plus there's the Eco Shop which sells green office supplies at competitive prices.
 - [Walk to school](#) encourages all children to make walking their journey part of their daily routine.
 - [Big Green Book](#) provides information on new services and information.
 - [Safe PC Disposal](#) offers free recycling of redundant IT equipment and a guaranteed secure data destruction facility.
- Water course surveys are green and can help you save money. One further education college managed to save nearly £80,000.

9.1 Be sustainable

- We want schools to make their own judgements on how sustainable development should be reflected in their ethos, day-to-day operations and through education for sustainable development – further advice can be found on our [Sustainable development](#) pages.
- There are good practice materials on the [Sustainability and Environmental Education website](#) that underpin the national framework for sustainable schools, which includes a series of top tips on how to help schools become more sustainable, including a [Top Tips to reduce energy and water use in schools](#).
- The Government also supported the launch in 2011 of the Sustainable Schools Alliance, which aims to provide a clear and compelling offer of support to all schools, which will help them to put sustainability at the heart of what they do. The Alliance, which brings together over 400 local and voluntary organisations, aims to provide accessible information for schools. Visit the [Sustainable Schools Alliance](#) website.

10.0 Other useful links

- [Direct Gov](#) - The official UK government website for citizens.
- [Local Government Improvement and Development's procurement page](#) - This procurement management resource has been designed specifically to meet the needs of the local government procurement community. It contains a range of guidance and good practice on all aspects of procurement.
- [Carbon Trust](#) – The Carbon Trust's website provides energy saving ideas.
- [Young People's Learning Agency Academy pages](#)
- [The Independent Academies Association](#)
- [Specialist Schools and Academies Trust](#)
- [Foundation, Aided Schools and Academies National Association](#)
- [The New Academy Guide](#)
- Email academy.conversion@education.gsi.gov.uk to be put in touch with recently converted Academies.

11.0 Tell us what you think

We would like your feedback on:

- Any gaps in information and support
- Content of this resource
- Additional information you require
- Content of the DfE website
- Anything else you would find useful

Email us at CG.COMMUNICATIONS@education.gsi.gov.uk