

# Linked

AUTUMN 2024



THE MAGAZINE FOR LUPC MEMBERS AND SUPPLIERS



RPHUB<sup>TM</sup>

**LUPC'S PORTAL FOR SUPPORTING  
PROGRESS IN RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT**



**PROCUREMENT  
ACT 2023 DELAYED:  
WHAT'S THE IMPACT?**



**SPOTLIGHT ON:  
ETENDERING  
SOFTWARE  
PLATFORM**

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Welcome to the Autumn edition of Linked Magazine

As autumn sets in, bringing with it a new academic year, I'm delighted to welcome you to this season's edition of Linked Magazine.

Having grown the team over the last few years, we have recently moved to a new office overlooking St Dunstan in the East Church Gardens - a bit of calm in the bustling city! We are holding a breakfast meeting for LUPC Heads of Procurement to come and visit us, meet the team, and network in-person on 27 November; please check the [events section](#) of the website to book your place.

As you will know, at LUPC, we take a holistic approach to Responsible Procurement (RP), that's why we have invested our resources in creating the ultimate RP tool for members and suppliers: the RP Hub. This edition features a comprehensive article that dives into the Hub's capabilities and how it can enhance our collective efforts. To further explore this initiative, don't miss our accompanying podcast episode, where we discuss the Hub's features and hear insights from our RP Lead, Mags

Shapiro, on its anticipated impact ahead of its launch at the end of November.

Additionally, this month marks the launch of the LUPC's corporate strategy for 2024-28. Developed after extensive consultation with stakeholders —the LUPC Board, Executive Committee, and Team — this strategy outlines our vision for the future and our commitment to supporting our members.

We are also pleased to continue our partnership with Central Business School, offering discounted CIPS courses and free CIPS textbooks to our full members. This initiative underscores our dedication to professional development and ensuring that our members have access to valuable resources.

Lastly, look out for the Member Benefits Report, which we will start sending out towards the end of the month. This report will detail the services and support you are using, demonstrating the value of LUPC membership.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition, and listening to the podcast, as always your feedback is welcome.

LONDON UNIVERSITIES PURCHASING CONSORTIUM

SUPC Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium

LUPC & SUPC CONFERENCE 2025

Exhibition Bookings Open in Early December

## LUPC has moved!

We would like to let you know that LUPC has moved to a new office. Our new address is:

LUPC, 5th Floor, Pinnacle House, 23-26 St Dunstan's Hill, London, EC3R 8HN.

Having grown the team over the last few years, our new office provides us with more space. We also have more flexible meeting areas, with a boardroom for 12, a smaller meeting room for

4 and a meeting pod for individual online meetings.

We look forward to welcoming members to our Head of Procurement breakfast meeting and to meet with the team on 27 November. Register [here](#).

Please get in touch if you would like to come and visit, or if you'd like us to come and see you to discuss how we can help with your procurement requirements.



Our new office overlooks St Dunstan in the East Church Gardens - a bit of calm in the bustling city!

## Cabinet Office HE-specific PA23 webinars



The Cabinet Office (CO) is planning on delivering some HE-specific webinars on the new Procurement Act. CO is liaising with [HEPA](#) on this and is requesting topics that members would like to be covered in these. If there is anything specific you would like to be included in these webinars please email [Ashley Shelbrooke](#) by 5 October 2024.

## Annual Bespoke LUPC Events Attendance Report

LUPC members' annual bespoke Events Reports are now ready to download in the My LUPC section of the [LUPC website](#).

## LUPC's corporate strategy for 2024-28 launches

[LUPC's corporate strategy for 2024-28](#) launched this month. It has been developed following wide consultation with LUPC stakeholders including the LUPC Board, Executive Committee and Team.

## The ICE joins LUPC

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) is a 97,000 strong global membership organisation with more than 200 years of history. They [joined LUPC](#) as a full member in September 2024.



## Procurement Act 2023 Update - New Go Live Date

The government announced a new go live date for the [Procurement Act](#) - now expected to launch on 24 February 2025.



## CIPS Study Courses and Free CIPS Textbooks via LUPC

LUPC is continuing its [partnership with Central Business School](#) for the delivery of discounted CIPS courses and free CIPS textbooks for full members.



## LUPC once again proudly renews CIPS Corporate Ethics certification

The [CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark](#) publicly reinforces an organisation's assurance to ethical sourcing and supplier management.

## Framework updates

**ICT & AV Update** This quarter's 8-page ICT & AV update was recently shared with the LUPC Computing Group. If you would like to receive this directly into your inbox, please update [your comms preferences](#) and select ICT.

### [eTendering Software Platform ITS5081 LU Framework Launch](#)

LUPC is pleased to announce that members can now access the new eTendering Platform framework agreement ITS5081 LU.

You can register for the Framework Launch webinar [here](#).

### [Firefighting Equipment and Associated Services EFM2054 NE Framework Launch](#)

We are happy to announce that Members have access to the latest Fire Safety Equipment, Fire Alarms, Suppression Systems and Associated Services Agreement EFM2054 NE.

### [SUPC IT Related Accessories and Parts \(ITRAP\) framework launch](#)

The re-tendered ITRAP framework provides a compliant and responsible route for organisations to purchase a wide range of products such as components, Virtual Reality Equipment, screens, audio visual consumables and more!

### [Electronic Components & Associated Products Framework now available!](#)

Members now have access to the latest iteration of the [Electronic Components & Associated Products](#) (LAB3152 NW).

## STEMed Updates

**Lab Gases Agreement** SUPC will be invoking the final extension of the current iteration of the framework, as the initial term is set to expire on 31st October 2024. If you have any feedback, queries or suggestions on how we can make this framework better suit your needs and requirements, please contact [Antonio Ramirez](#).

### [IRLA Laboratory Consumables and Chemicals Framework](#)

We're pleased to announce the launch of the re-tendered [IRLA Laboratory Consumables and Chemicals Framework](#) to members. The retendered agreement provides a compliant and responsible route for universities to purchase a wide range of products for use within their teaching and research laboratories.



## News

## Events

### LUPC Early Careers Network Meeting #1

5 November 2024

### LUPC eTendering Software Platform Framework Launch

21 November 2024

### LUPC Member Induction

14 November 2024

### LUPC New Office Breakfast Meeting for HoPs (in person)

27 November 2024

### LUPC RP Morning Part 1 – 5 December 2024

### LUPC RP Morning Part 2

10 December 2024

### LUPC Procurement Act 2023 Q&A Webinar #4 with Mohamed Hans – 13 December 2024

Please check the [events section](#) of the LUPC website to stay up to date



**LUPC & SUPC Conference 2025**  
Save the date  
27 March 2025



## UKUPC NEWS

### UKUPC Update for October 2024 published

Members can now access the latest [UKUPC Update \(October 2024\)](#). This edition covers:

#### General

- UKUPC Strategy;
- Staff Updates;
- Migration of database of framework documentation from HE Contracts to the Buyers Hunter Portal and introductory webinars;
- Responsible Procurement;
- Supply Chain and Procurement Risk webinars.

#### Transforming Public Procurement

- The latest Cabinet Office survey to inform the new National Procurement Policy Statement;
- Framework Templates;
- Procurement Pathway Toolkit;
- Central Digital Platform;

- Registration and recordings of the UKUPC Procurement Act Webinar Series.

View all UKUPC Updates [here](#).

### **UKUPC statement on negative human rights impacts in global supply chains**

UKUPC issued a statement, setting out how we are looking to strengthen corporate accountability and promote the effective implementation of human rights due diligence (HRDD).

Please read the full [UKUPC statement here](#).

### **Lastest UKUPC Quarterly Market Insight Documents – September 2024**

The latest quarterly [UKUPC Market Insight Documents](#) (September 2024) are now available to members.

# LUPC LINKED PODCAST



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## Responsible Procurement updates Autumn 2024



### We moved - and so did our furniture!

As you may know by now, in September we moved office to Pinnacle House, overlooking St Dunstan in the East Church Gardens – a wonderful oasis in the middle of the city. After first offering to our Members, we were able to donate a number of items of furniture from the Shropshire House office, including:

Chairs to the Royal Free Charity Rec Club and The Food Foundation

Desks and cabinets to The Brazilian Cultural Centre for a children’s classroom

And to improve ergonomics for a number of our team’s home working spaces. No more dining room chair back ache!

# LUPC Procurement Consultancy

Working within your organisation to bolster your team



Delivered by direct employee of LUPC, [Reece Baines](#)

Strategic or operational procurement  
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Competitive day rates

#### Our Services

- Procurement Strategy
- Procurement Act 2023 and new regulations implementation
- Managing end to end tender processes (call-offs from frameworks or standalone tenders)
- Contract negotiation
- Cover for maternity/paternity leave
- Short-term or long-term contracts possible

Contact [Bindi Sandhu](#) to discuss further

## Responsible Procurement Mornings - 5 and 10 December - save the dates!

This year, we will be holding our annual Responsible Procurement event over two mornings on 5 December and 10 December. We are currently finalising the content but will be holding two 45-minute webinars on each of the dates. We plan to cover Embedding RP in frameworks, Social Value: Tender Evaluation and Measurement, LUPC tools for members working with suppliers towards Net Zero, and Carbon Offsetting. We will share registration links as soon as the webinars have been confirmed, but for now please save the dates!

### Monitoring supply chains and reporting modern slavery concerns

Through our affiliation with [Unseen](#), we have provided a [button linking to the UK Modern Slavery Helpline](#) on our [Responsible Procurement page](#) which directs users to a webform for reporting concerns about a potential instance of modern slavery.

## Electronics Watch launches human rights due diligence maturity matrix

A new tool helps affiliated public buyers to assess the maturity of their current practices, identify gaps and drive incremental improvement.

Public authorities are increasingly expected to implement human rights due diligence (HRDD) in their own operations and supply chains, or to promote it in the market. However, there are few practical tools available to support them in doing so.

Electronics Watch's new HRDD Maturity Matrix offers this practical support to affiliates. It is a self-assessment tool that generates a rating for each practice area.

The HRDD Maturity Matrix helps public authorities to assess the maturity of their current HRDD practices and provides an overview of what different levels of maturity look like within discrete practice areas. Recognising the diversity of public organisations, it supports users to identify gaps, efficiently allocate resources and prioritise opportunities for improvement with the aim of incremental advancement to higher maturity levels.



Electronics Watch has developed the HRDD Maturity Matrix inspired by a tool developed by Daria Toschi and Griffith University, Australia, to assess the maturity of practices aimed at combatting modern slavery. We are grateful to them for allowing us to adapt it. We would also like to thank Boris Verbrugge (KU Leuven), Cristian Martin (LSE), Amy Ledger and Ricarda MacDonald (APUC), Margaret Shapiro (LUPC) and Felipe Vilaca for their valuable feedback and support during the development of the tool.

A webinar was held in September to introduce affiliates to this tool. Members, as Affiliates, can access the tool [here](#). Electronics watch welcomes your feedback on this tool.



## SDG Accord Report 2024

The SDG Accord aims to inspire, celebrate and advance the critical role that education has in delivering the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and the value the interlinked objectives brings to governments, business and wider society.

The Accord is a commitment made by learning institutions to one another, to do more to deliver the SDGs, annually report on individual progress as a Signatory, and do so in ways which share the learning with each other both nationally and internationally.



We're delighted to share the [2024 annual report](#) on the SDG Accord, highlighting how universities and colleges around the world are contributing to the UN Global Goals.

As a supporter of the SDG Accord, we're proud to be a part of the global movement of universities and colleges dedicated to sustainability. With just five years left of the UN Decade of Action, we remain committed to working towards the SDGs and building a more sustainable and prosperous world for us all.

# RP LEAD MAGS SHAPIRO PUTS FAIRPHONE TO THE TEST: FAIRPHONE 4 VS 5 REVIEW

Thanks to supplier Your Co-op Business Solutions, on [LUPC's Framework: Mobile Phones - Ethically Sourced](#), I have had the opportunity to test drive both the Fairphone 4 and more recently the Fairphone 5. Both are available on the framework agreement that commenced 17 February 2024 on a 3 + 1-year basis.

The unboxing experience, in both cases, was a treat. With messaging including "A better phone is a phone made better" and "Built to last" reminders of the environmental sustainability and worker rights you support when choosing a Fairphone. Fairphone continue to make every effort to source all materials and manufacture the phone



with the aim of minimising their social and environmental impact, while protecting the employment rights of workers throughout the supply chain. This includes the use of conflict-free minerals and partners to the Responsible Lithium Initiative as well as paying wages above the in-country minimum wage line and a device design that is both end-user repairable, with extended software support to maximize the phone's useful life. The company has a commitment to supply chain mapping and sourcing from fair mining

initiatives wherever possible including a minimum 30% fair material content. Their supply chain mapping is publicly available. Devices include five-year manufacturer warranty, affordable spare parts, and free and public repair information. Ethical Consumer awarded the Fairphone 4 with its best buy certification and the Fairphone 5 was rated 5 stars in [The Guardian](#) by its technology review team.

A self-confessed non-Android fan, I was sceptical of the transition to an operating system I find difficult to use. It didn't take long to remember my way around and once I got over that hump, I really started to appreciate how robust the Fairphone is. When I asked for a case, our supplier convinced me to trust the

hardiness of the phone. And truly, I was surprised. Both the 4 and the 5 stood up to the test of not only my clumsiness, but also my son's curiosity with the video guides he was able to easily look up online covering DIY repairs and the Fairphone 5's ten swappable spare parts. Mock repairs were successfully conducted by one very smug young budding engineer. And both phones kept on keeping on.

The battery life on both was impressive and the upgrade to the camera on the 5, most welcome. My only real complaint was often unsuccessfully trying to tap to pay, especially in a busy tube station. Storage capacity and Gorilla Glass Protection were both wins, and I did eventually figure out how to connect my Bluetooth earbuds - no doubt more to do with changing operating systems than anything else.

I'll be honest - it felt good to put my phone upside down on the table in meetings, so the logo was obvious. "Oh the Fairphone... what do you think?" was most people's response. My verdict? I was sad to return the phone to the supplier after my trial. I was only really pleased to get back to my ability to monitor my children's movements on our family mobile set up. Don't tell the budding engineer.





## INTRODUCING LUPC'S RP HUB - INSPIRING A RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT MOVEMENT AMONG OUR SUPPLIERS AND MEMBERS.

*Responsible procurement (RP) has been a core part of LUPC activity for over a decade and we are now looking to go further in support of both our members and suppliers. Our brand-new tool, RP Hub, will be instrumental in supporting our members and suppliers in advancing their responsible procurement journey.*

Our aspiration is to share our approach beyond LUPC members and suppliers, to members and suppliers across consortia, the wider public sector in the UK, and globally. We are using our experience and influence to support the development of responsible procurement practices throughout our supply chain, encouraging a race to the top, where suppliers and members are supported in their RP activities. Collaboration is a key element of our approach and through formal and

informal networks and partnerships, we can achieve more and drive continuous improvement. We also feel very strongly that suppliers should not be charged to take part in our assessments of their due diligence!

### Our involvement in Research Projects

Over the years, LUPC has been actively sought by researchers to participate in RP projects. We have learnt significantly from being involved in these, supporting a

### LUPC's RP Credentials

Our work in the area of responsible procurement is evidenced in the range of activities we are or have been actively involved in. These include:

- Being a founding member of Electronics Watch;
- Employing a dedicated responsible procurement role for over 7 years;
- Leadership status since 2019, for our adherence to the ISO20400 international standard on Sustainable Procurement;
- Co-writing guidance for the HE/Public Sector on Preparing a Modern Slavery

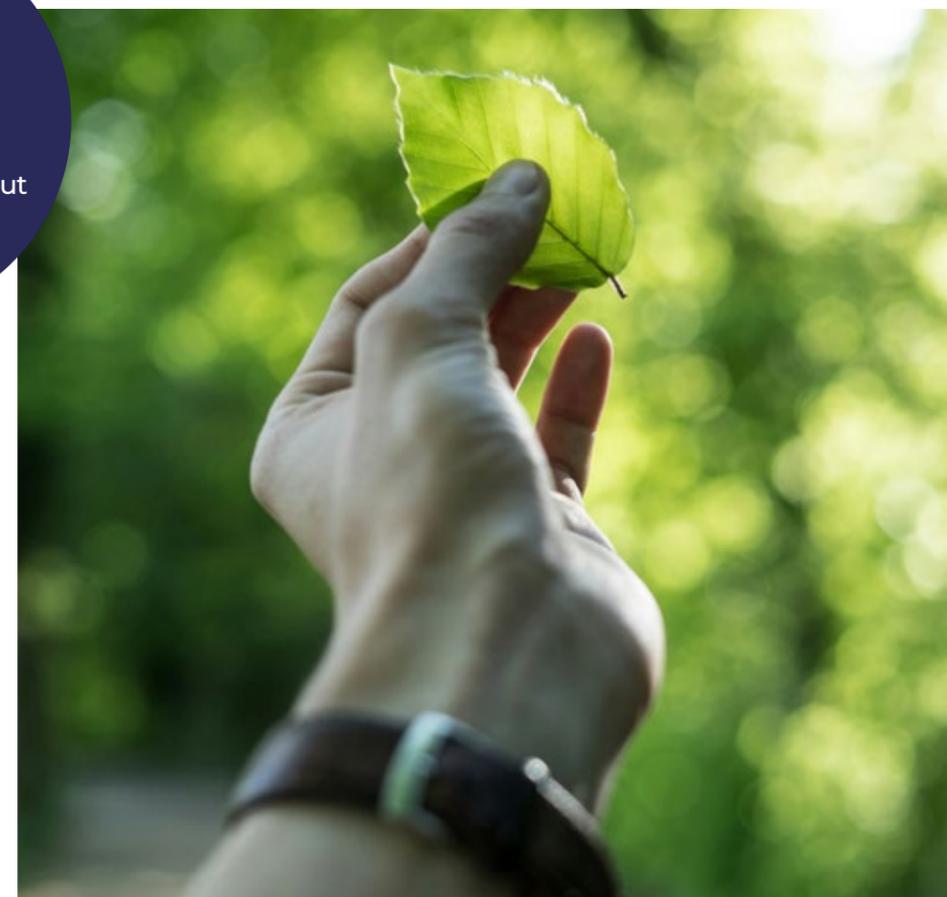
- and Human Trafficking Statement;
- Co-developing an e-Learning Modern Slavery course for the HE sector and public procurement practitioners, as well as producing a guide for CIPS;
- Being a Member of International Working Group for Ethical Public Procurement (IWGEPP);
- Carrying out supplier due diligence on our framework suppliers for over 7 years; and
- All LUPC staff involved in procurement complete CIPS Ethics training annually.



number of sector and global initiatives in the areas of business and human rights and climate change. We also now have multiple citations in academic research and teaching outputs.

In 2023/24, we worked in partnership with researchers Michael Rogerson (University of Surrey/Sussex), Johanne Grosvold (University of Bath), Kyle Alves (University of the West of England, Bristol) and Unseen UK on the research project, [“Intersecting sustainabilities: Protecting both people and planet in public sector supply chains.”](#) The research was funded by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (Modern Slavery PEC). This engagement with researchers has helped shape our approach to supplier due diligence.

One of the findings of the research was: *“Public sector organisations are relying on data platforms for modern slavery assurance without engaging with those platforms to understand what data*

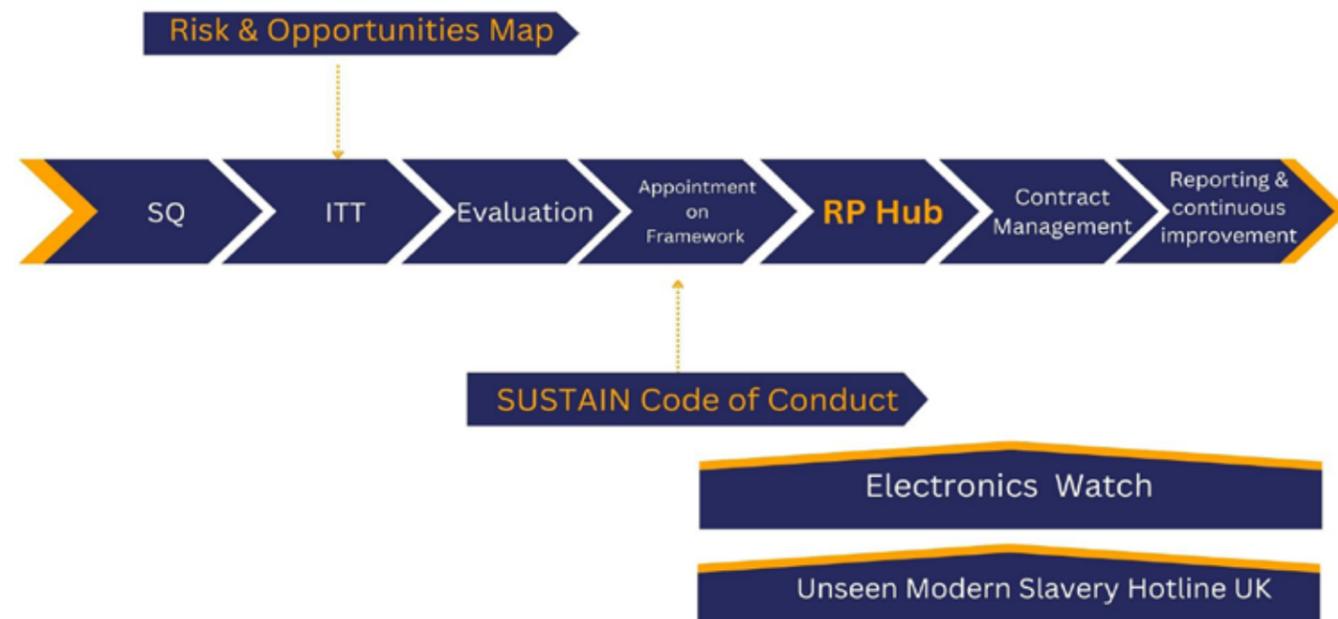


*they hold and what level of assurance they offer.”*

While at the same time our work was recognised as an example of good practice: *“Public buyers which are members of purchasing consortia should better assure against modern slavery risk by ensuring their consortia adopt a robust supplier assurance and contract management programme, similar to the Supplier Due Diligence Tool (SDDT)\* used by LUPC.”*

\*Recently renamed RP Hub.

The findings of the research project have helped us to identify the need to make our RP outputs available to a wider audience, as well as initiating a platform where members and



suppliers can access resources and learn from each other.

**LUPC’s RP Hub**

We have been working on the ethos and the strategy behind our engagement with suppliers, our approach to RP due diligence and the best way to support our members. A key part of the strategy is the design and development of our online HE specific and wider public sector due diligence tool, the RP Hub, free to use for all LUPC members and suppliers on LUPC managed Frameworks. We are working in partnership with our suppliers to support them in their development of sustainable practices. We believe that this joint approach will result in greater benefits and support our members in meeting their own RP objectives and aspirations.

The RP Hub is being developed in 3 stages:

**Phase 1 – Supplier Due Diligence**

The first phase of development relates to the supplier due diligence we carry out for our frameworks. It provides members with the ability to view the RP status of the individual suppliers on Frameworks they use. It also allows suppliers to track their own progress and benchmark themselves against suppliers in their category.

RP Hub will ultimately capture suppliers’ RP status from SQ (Standard Selection Questionnaire) through to the expiration of a Framework.

The [Risk & Opportunities Map](#) developed and maintained in collaboration with members (via HEPA RP Networks) and Consortia (via UKUPC RP Network) informs the RP questions asked at Invitation to Tender (ITT), while the SQ is determined by [PPN 03/23](#).

Once suppliers are appointed on to an LUPC managed Framework and have signed UKUPC’s national Supply Chain Code of Conduct, known as [SUSTAIN](#), suppliers are bound by Framework Terms & Conditions to participate in further due diligence activities, including:

- Our Due Diligence questionnaire;
- Evaluation of Carbon Reduction Plans;
- Evaluation of Social Value commitments;
- Responding to the UK

government’s Modern Slavery Assessment Tool (MSAT);

- Corrective Action Plans agreed with suppliers and forming part of on-going contract management.

Our approach is risk-based and agile, with an evolving process, question set and growing number of support resources, and is free for our suppliers to participate in.

Suppliers are invited to complete an online questionnaire, including closed and open-ended questions,



and provided with the opportunity to upload evidence such as policies, plans, and case studies.

RP Hub has part-automated functionality to respond to closed-ended or multiple choice questions e.g. "Do you have a Human & Labour Rights Policy?" Answers to open-ended questions, such as "Describe the process you follow for identifying Human & Labour Rights abuses," and evidence to support supplier claims are evaluated by our in-house RP Lead with support from our Apprentice.

Any existing third-party reports can also be shared, if they are publicly available, (e.g. Ecovadis, Net Positives, SEDEX, etc.) to form part of the full supplier picture and to reduce the time suppliers need to spend answering our questionnaire. Where a supplier chooses to upload existing third-party supplier reports,

LUPC, as a first step, will use these to populate supplier status on RP Hub. Suppliers might be asked to provide further information if their provided report does not address an area of focus of particular importance to us and our members. We aim to reduce the burden on suppliers, so that they are not fatigued by the process, but rather inspired to do more, along with free support from LUPC.

Our due diligence focus areas are those of most importance to our members. We would like our suppliers' approach to business to be based on a strategy aligned to the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). Within supplier organisations, we are focused on decarbonisation and waste, human and labour rights, and modern slavery, diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as working conditions, ethics, anti-bribery and corruption. We are also interested in what suppliers are doing outside of their organisation in terms of social value and their own supply chain due diligence.

We have a supplier engagement focus, rather than a compliance and audit-driven one, developing bespoke supplier reports and Corrective Action

Plans that are agreed with suppliers.

Supplier development programmes will be based on the needs identified during evaluation of supplier questionnaires.

Live tracking of framework supplier RP status provides an opportunity to embed responsible procurement into contract management. LUPC's Senior Category Managers can access the portal for a snapshot RP overview of a supplier prior to contract management meetings. Members can download reports based on the suppliers used on our frameworks to support members' internal reporting on benefits that have been created within their supply chains or for their own contract management meetings. For example, they can see the social value added by a supplier they are using on an LUPC framework, or check what carbon reduction plans are in place or reductions have been achieved.

### Phase 2 – Community Exchange

Within our strategy, we wanted to strive further than our supplier diligence. We believe that the development of the Community Exchange will impact the wider member audience, potentially including students and local communities.

The Community Exchange will provide an opportunity to members and suppliers to matchmake on projects, such as social value or carbon reduction, whether to increase reach

without duplicating effort, achieve economies of scale, or to pilot untested innovations. It will enable suppliers and members to share case studies and evidence of leading practice.

Under social value for example, a supplier can highlight apprenticeships that they have made available, and a member can view those opportunities to determine whether their student cohort could be suitable and put their students forward for the positions available.

This phase of the RP Hub rollout will also include an area for suppliers to flag any incidents of non-compliance with the SUSTAIN supply chain code of conduct, picked up through their own management systems, and provide insight into the steps they are taking to correct these.

### Phase 3 – Developing wider links

Plans for phase 3 include an area to showcase LUPC RP-related partnerships, collaborations and affiliations, providing links with sustainability initiatives we support and encouraging members and suppliers to join.

The launch of LUPC's RP Hub is an exciting step for us and we will be continually developing and enhancing the hub to become a responsible procurement portal providing information, guidance and support in one central location.

For more information, please contact LUPC's RP Lead, [Mags Shapiro](#).



## PROCUREMENT ACT 2023 DELAYED TO 24 FEBRUARY 2025: WHAT'S THE IMPACT?



*The Procurement Act 2023 should have come into force on 28th October 2024. The commencement date is now 24th February 2025. Browne Jacobson Partner Anja Beriro breaks down how contracting authorities can use this to their advantage.*

### Why the Delay?

[In a ministerial statement made by the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office \(available here\)](#), the Government has explained that the key reason for this postponement is to allow the creation and publication of a revised National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS). This document outlines the government's procurement priorities and is essential for contracting authorities to consider under the new Act. The Government is now holding a survey of the NPPS to "understand how a new, mission-driven approach to public procurement could support delivery of the Government's missions alongside local priorities." This

clearly links with the missions in the Labour Government's manifesto and first 100 days plan. You can access the survey [here](#).

### What Does This Mean for Contracting Authorities?

Contracting authorities now have an additional four months to get acquainted with the new Act. This period is crucial for updating policies, processes, and systems to align with the new public procurement regime. The delay is a relief for many, especially those not fully prepared for the significant changes the Act introduces. Browne Jacobson now has a product aimed at our Education

clients, to support with this. Please contact us for more details.

One frustration for some of our clients is that they had procurements planned for November 2024 onwards, that they had prepared to be under the new regime. Contracting authorities now have a choice: to run the procurement, but under the PCR 2015 (requiring changes to the drafted tender documents); or postpone the procurement until the end of February 2025. For many contracting authorities it won't be much of a choice because it's rare to find a procurement that has a 4 month grace period, but there will be the odd one that isn't time sensitive.

Education institutes in particular must be aware of the requirement under section 93 of the Act, for the publication of pipeline notices. A pipeline notice is required for every contracting authority with an annual spend on contracts of more than £100million. Where an institution meets this threshold, the pipeline notice must be published every 12 months setting out all tender notices or transparency notices (used for directly awarded contracts) within that period for contracts worth more than £2million. The slight rub for universities is that this period starts on 1st April each year, meaning the first one will be 1st April 2025. This of

course, doesn't align with education institutions' own financial years, and therefore, with most of their financial planning. Indeed, the same is true for any contracting authority that doesn't have April to March as its financial year. It brings forward the planning that education bodies will need to do next year (and every year thereafter) if they meet the threshold. Many bodies will not meet the £100million threshold, but for those that do, start planning now!

### What's still to come?

As well as anticipating an updated NPPS, we are expecting further updates to various guidance documents already produced, and possibly some additional ones as well. For example, the guidance on Assessment Summaries was updated at the end of September.

We are also waiting to see what the central digital platform looks like, along with the standard notices. It will be really important for contracting authorities to ensure that they are registered for all updates from Cabinet Office, and that they take time to familiarise themselves with the system as soon as it's available.

So overall, while this delay has prolonged the wait for the new procurement regime, it is time that can be well spent, maximising the opportunity to be fully ready for the Procurement Act 2023.



## Commodity Updates

This section will give you an update on any new agreements in place, or news on existing agreements. Please note this is not the full list of available agreements, just those where there is some news to report. For the full list of agreements and for further information on any of the agreements listed here, please visit [HE Contracts \(HEC\)](#).



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Jisc  
<http://www.jisc.ac.uk>



TUco  
<http://www.tuco.org/>



TEC  
<http://www.tec.ac.uk/>

### Audio Visual

#### Audio Visual: Broadcasting Equipment and Integration Services - AVI3120 NW **MK**

The User Guide was updated to align with NWUPC's recommended approach for conducting mini competitions when calling off from Lot 2 of the framework, aimed at maximising supplier engagement. Please regularly check the User Guide for any updates or changes. If significant changes occur, they will also be communicated via email.

The overdue review meetings are being planned for the end of November. Members are invited to confirm their interest in attending while indicating a preference for a virtual or in-person meeting.

#### Audio Visual: Photographic Equipment and Consumables - AVI3199 NW **MK**

Despite Proactive UK being the 1st-ranked supplier on the framework, the majority of reported spend is going to WEX. It would be valuable to understand the call-off methods being used within the framework as logic would suggest that if most institutions were utilising the direct award route, Proactive would hold the majority share or be more closely aligned with WEX in terms of spend distribution.

Review meetings for the framework are presently overdue and will be scheduled to coincide with Broadcasting, given its smaller supplier base.

#### Audio Visual: Supplies, System Design, Installation and Maintenance - National - AVI2007 NE **MK**

The new Framework Agreement commenced 1 October with three Lots:

- Lot 1 - Regional Supply and Installation of Equipment etc. (8 suppliers, Snelling BS ranked #1)
- Lot 2 - National Supply and Installation of Equipment etc. (7 suppliers, proAV ranked #1)
- Lot 3 - Consultancy (2 suppliers, Hewshott ranked #1)

A Buyers Guide has been uploaded to HEC together with terms and pricing.

LUPC has requested a copy of the final evaluation from NEUPC to:

- (1) enable a response to arising local queries and provide support in general
- (2) help local institutions plan the areas of the process they should either fix (as per the tender) or re-open

### Estates & FM

#### EFM2043 NE Asbestos Consultancy Services - National **JG**

Further to the agreement going live on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024, there have been no cost increases from pricing in 2019

Potential aggregated rebate savings.

#### Catering - Outsourced Services - National - CAT5079 LU **JM**

Compass Group have brought CH&Co and are in the process of finalising the acquisition. At present the companies operate separately and should be considered separate entities for the time being.

#### Electrical Materials & Associated Products - National - EFM3045 NW **JG**

NWUPC have carried out an options appraisal on the future plans for this agreement and it has been decided to extend this agreement for a further 12 months until 31/01/2023.

#### Electronic Components (NUWPEC) - National - LAB3152 NW **AR**

Although this agreement went live on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024, there were still 2 suppliers which had not signed their framework agreements due to on going non compliance, which wasn't specified by NWUPC.

However, in mid August 2024 these issues were resolved, and the 2 suppliers were incorporated into the framework, together with all the necessary documentation for member to access them.

#### Fire Safety Equipment, Fire Alarms, Suppression Systems and Associated Services Agreement - EFM2054 NE **JM**

This framework is now live and accessible to members. The Framework covers the following Lots:

##### Lot 1 - Fire Equipment Supply and Maintenance

The following Goods categories are included within the scope of Lot 1 but not limited to:

- Fire Extinguishers (portable)
- Fire Blankets
- Fire Buckets
- Hose Reels
- First Aid Equipment
- Fire Safety Signs
- Escape and Evacuation Equipment
- Storage and Protection Equipment.
- Door Furniture
- Fire Doors\*

The service and maintenance requirement of Lot 1 is also to include as a minimum:

- Testing/ servicing/correct operation of all extinguishers within timescales as determined by current regulations
- Commissioning of new equipment
- Checking of travel distances in relation to extinguishers, As documented within Members fire strategy

- Responsible disposal of any redundant equipment
- Fire Blankets to be removed from cover, checked and replaced and details recorded annually
- Replacement of any safety clips/hoses/nozzles etc when required
- Checking of current signage for compliance with latest and current regulations
- All fire extinguishers must be refilled/replaced in line with the timelines stated within the relevant British Standards and all lifecycle replacements are recorded
- Installation of new hose reels where necessary
- Routine servicing and testing of all current hose reels and associated parts in line with current guidance
- Replacement of damaged hose reels or associated parts when required
- The Supplier is to have adequate supplies of additional fire blankets available at all times to ensure any replacement at any site can take place within the agreed timescale

**Lot 2 - Fire Safety Inspections, Fire Risk Assessment & Consultation and Fire Safety Training** The following service requirements are included in the scope of Lot 2:

- Fire Risk Assessments
- Fire Door Survey and Inspections
- Fire Safety Training
- Fire Safety Management Consultancy

**Lot 3 - Fire Safety Prevention Detection, Alarms and Suppression Systems** The following goods and associated services are included within the scope of this Lot 3, but not limited to:

- Fire Alarm Systems, Conventional, Addressable and Analogue Addressable (Hard wired / Wireless systems)
- Detector Devices (Ionisation, Optical, Heat, Flame, Carbon, Multi)
- Fire Suppression Systems (Sprinkler, Water mist, Dry & Wet Risers)
- Fire Dampers
- Refuge and Rescue Systems
- Manual call points
- Warning System/Bell Relays
- Door Holder Relays
- Auxiliary (Control Function) Relays
- Loop Sounders
- Automatic Opening Vent (service and testing)
- Emergency Escape Lighting\*

\* Emergency lighting is lighting for an emergency situation when the main power supply is cut and normal electrical illumination fails.

#### Lot 4 – Fire Safety, Fire Alarms, Suppression Systems and Associated Services Complete Solution

##### \*Excluding Fire Safety Inspections, Fire Risk Assessment & Consultation and Fire Safety Training

Suppliers are required to provide products and services that are covered by the scope of Lots 1 and 3 of this framework – Fire safety equipment and Fire Detection, Alarms and Suppression systems as a complete service and goods provision. Note- this Lot will not include the scope of Lot 2 of this framework.

#### Floor Coverings – National – TBC **JM**

NEUPC Contact changed to Will Mendrek. The Framework is currently being tendered for.

Please contact Justin McLoughlin for further up-to-date information.

#### Washroom Services including Period Dignity Solutions – National – JAN3136 NW **IG**

The current Washroom Services including Period Dignity Solutions is due to expire in April 2025. NWUPC have circulated and discussed the draft strategy with the Tender working party. LUPC are and active member of the tender working party. The new agreement is scheduled to go live on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 for two years with the option for two, twelve month extensions. This framework is a national agreement with a regional Lot structure.

Information for the period ending Q4 2023/4 is also available from HEC. Feedback on the agreement remains good and support has been provided to several institutions engaged in summer mini competitions.

Supplier review meetings, which will be in-person, have been arranged for 9-10 October at Dell's Creechurch HQ in London and include a tour of their technical suite. The intended member survey has been held back to 2025 to coincide with preparations for the successor agreement and the formation of the initial strategy ahead of that time. A request for feedback was issued to the LUPC Computing Group three weeks ahead of the reviews. Ahead of the NDNA meetings, the desktop and notebook benchmarking exercises were both refreshed w/c 7 October including a minimum build spec of 16GB memory, 512GB SSD to better reflect both present day requirements and acquisition norms. Minutes from the meeting will likewise be added to HEC when complete.

Following a meeting with Electronics Watch to discuss the proposed streamlining and coordination of all NDNA OEM Factory Disclosure Form requests through the agreement lead, the agreed process has been added to the NDNA Buyers Guide and communicated with the suppliers.

The most recent engagement deck with Intel including the additional price support SKUs and updated elements around manageability and AI PCs has been added to HEC.

Their pilot Intel Tech Impact Incubator Programme will be refreshed shortly with a focus on Higher Education and shared with members.

#### Computing - ITRAP (IT Related Accessories and Parts) National - ITS4056 SU **MK**

The retendered agreement with eight suppliers including for the first time, Bechtel Direct Ltd, Lyreco UK Limited and Sync, went live 1 September 2024. The agreement provides a compliant and responsible route for organisations to purchase a wide range of products such as components, virtual reality equipment, displays, monitors, screens, telecoms equipment, peripheral accessories and audio-visual consumables. A launch webinar was held 2 October.

#### Computing - Library Management Systems & Associated Services - ITS1062 AP **MK**

This Framework Agreement, with broad take up across the sector, is presently being re-tendered. The tender was advertised in July with a view to completion of the framework agreement in October 2024. Tenders are now returned and APUC expects a competitive result inclusive of flexible options for institutions.

#### Computing - National Education Printer Agreement (Provision of Print Equipment and Managed Print Services) - National ('NEPA2') – ITS2006 NE **MK**

A 'light touch' approach is being taken to the next tender, which is being led by Andy Wals at NEUPC. The lotting for the

replacement has been agreed as below:

- Lot 1 Non-Managed Print
- Lot 2 Managed Print
- Lot 3 Production Print
- Lot 4 One Stop Shop i.e. managed, production plus non-managed machines

#### Computing - Networking Supply & Services ('HENSS2') - National - ITS2008 NE **MK**

The first extension review is due next June with supplier meetings to be scheduled for May 25. Spend under the framework remains strong with some call-offs within Consultancy. Following discussions, one Consultancy firm has delayed a price rise on the maximum rates payable.

Members are reminded to invite all bidders when using the mini competition route following a supplier comment on possibly missing out on such invitations.

The current UKUPC Consortia spend breakdown is:

APUC	10%
HEPCW	25%
NEUPC	45%
NWUPC	6%
SUPC	13%

#### Computing - Online Streaming and Online Training Services 2 - ITS1058 AP **MK**

APUC is seeking to retender the Online Streaming and Online Training Services framework agreement and are seeking volunteers for the Tender Working Party. The online training courses focus on IT, project management, professional and soft skills, although there is a wide range of course on some platforms. Current suppliers include LinkedIn learning, Udemy, Kanopy, Clickview and QA Ltd. Please contact [Michael McLaughlin](#).

#### Computing - PCs with Apple Operating Systems – National – ITS6004 HW **MK**

Apple announced the new iPhone 16 range on 11 September with devices available to order from 20 September. The new range features Apple Intelligence for generative AI tasks including image creation and writing. Updated price lists have been requested from all suppliers coinciding with the price review and these will be shared via HEC when available.

The annual price review exercise has commenced with the deadline for supplier responses Friday 27 September. The aim is to complete the evaluation by 4 October. The evaluation outcome and supplier rankings will be shared as soon as possible afterwards, and any new pricing methodology and ranking will apply from 1 November 2024.

We are now approaching the end of the first 12-month extension; the recommendation is that the second, final 12-month extension to 31.10.25 is invoked. NWUPC is looking at the feasibility of accelerating the retender process to

unable the replacement under PCR2015 i.e. prior to 25 February 2025. There are also other considerations that come with this, the most notable ones being the availability of the group to support a retender process within the short space of time between now and February and the length of time potentially between award and the new framework start date.

#### Computing - Server, Storage and Solutions National Agreement ("SSSNA") - ITS4043 SU **MK**

A dedicated HPC framework is presently being tendered for commencement early 2025. Oliver Bradbury Stewart has taken over responsibility for completing the tender process from Mark Lewis.

#### Computing - Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) Systems and Associated Services - ITS1062 AP **MK**

APUC has begun the process to retender the VLE framework Agreement for the HE and FE sectors. There is an active working group but mainly with HE membership. Market engagement sessions are due to commence in October with current suppliers. Previously the framework was lotted for proprietary systems and Moodle. The framework agreement is scheduled to be in place for July 2025.

Sessions have been arranged with D2L, Instructure and Anthology (Blackboard), with a Moodle session from Co-Sector.

#### Computing - IT Equipment Reuse Recycling and Disposal – National – ITS3082 NW **MK**

NWUPC will shortly be looking to extend the framework; updates will be provided once all 3 suppliers have confirmed or rejected the final year extension.

#### Computing – General Matters not covered elsewhere **MK**

The National ICT Group (NICT) last convened 1 October and continues to meet every 4-5 weeks to discuss matters arising across the 25-plus ICT framework agreements, potential future collaboration and present IT procurement-related issues within the sector.

The existing APUC framework agreement for **Similarity Detection** has been extended until end August 2024. The replacement framework agreement has been rebranded as **Academic Integrity and Assessment Management Systems** and the strategy has been agreed with there now two lots:

- Lot 1 - Academic Integrity
- Lot 2 - Assessment Management Systems

The ITT has been issued, evaluated and is currently at consensus stage. This will be awarded towards the end of August 2024.

APUC's **Library Management Systems & Associated**

## ICT and Telecoms

#### ITS1049AP Academic Integrity and Assessment Management Systems **MK**

APUC is working with a tender working party to agree the scope for the retender for similarity detection software. The Framework has been rebranded and the strategy has been agreed and the focus will be on two lots:

- Lot 1 - Academic Integrity – 3 Suppliers
- Lot 2 - Assessment Management Systems – 5 Suppliers

The standstill period is complete and contracts are being progressed for signature. The Framework agreement will commence ASAP and a Buyers Guide and documentation will be available shortly.

#### Computing- Desktop and Notebook Agreement - National ('NDNA') – ITS5071 LU **MK**

Individual price lists and buyers' guides on behalf of the recently commenced agreement continue to be added to the HE Contracts database on a regular basis and are available together with both the evaluation and the bidder responses in their entirety alongside the main agreement buyers' guide and other materials relating to the agreement. Management

**Services** has broad take up across the sector. The strategy is approved with a UK-wide user group, with market engagement involving both established and new suppliers taking place. The ITT is being issued imminently with a forecast start date being end October 2024. The existing framework agreement will be extended in line with the replacement.

APUC has invoked the final extension for the **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and Associated Services** agreement, which will now expire June 2025.

With the present **OCRE cloud framework** due to expire 30 November 2024, its five-year replacement is presently being tendered with responses being evaluated. Buyers can continue to use the OCRE cloud framework which is based on the previous GÉANT IaaS framework with an expanded scope, established by the OCRE (Open Clouds for Research Environments) project consortium led by GÉANT, to help accelerate cloud service adoption in the education and research community. For further information please contact [cloudframework@jisc.ac.uk](mailto:cloudframework@jisc.ac.uk).

Jisc also recently published an **Electronic Research and Laboratory Notebook** DPS to enable their Members and Customers to purchase Electronic Research and Laboratory Notebook [products](#) from Suppliers that have been approved to join the service.

Jisc are in the initial application window for bidders; further updates on this DPS will go out to customers in due course. Jisc are aiming for this DPS to go live beginning of November.

#### **eProcurement System – ITS5058 LU AR**

This agreement expired on 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2024, and has been superseded by ITS5081 LU, which went live on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2024.

#### **eTendering Software Platform – ITS5081 LU AR**

This agreement went live on 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 2024, and is currently being onboarded.

Unlike its predecessor agreement (ITS5058 LU) which was a single supplier framework (with Merzell, trading name of EU Supply), this iteration of the agreement is a ranked, multi supplier framework. The suppliers are In-tend (1<sup>st</sup> ranked), Cimple (2<sup>nd</sup> ranked) and Merzell (3<sup>rd</sup> ranked), and all can offer the same scope

#### **Jisc Digital Preservation Systems Purchasing Service MK**

The Digital Preservation DPS has now been live for over six months with interest shown by many customers, as well as other engagement activity. For any organisations who would like further information or are interested in using this DPS, please contact the Jisc team on [preservation-dps@jisc.ac.uk](mailto:preservation-dps@jisc.ac.uk).

This DPS agreement provides Buyers with a compliant route to market to purchase Digital Preservation systems. This DPS is designed for institutions across the HE sectors to

use in helping procure these systems. Digital preservation systems would be of particular interest to individuals involved in library services as well as procurement/finance individuals.

All awarded Vendors can be found at [Research management systems DPS – Jisc](#)

Further information is available here: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/all/new-streamlined-purchasing-system-helps-organisations-buy-digital-preservation-solutions-more-quickly>

#### **Jisc Network Equipment Framework – ITS5063 LU MK**

The new Network Solution Framework is currently in progress, the Jisc procurement team are working on completing this Framework. Further updates on this tender will go out to all customers in due course. The current Jisc Network Equipment Framework has been extended to 31 October and customers can award to suppliers for their requirements.

Service reviews covering the July-Sept 2024 quarter are being held in October with each supplier, covering the areas of performance, reporting, invoicing, and framework usage updates.

#### **Jisc SMS Framework – ITS5053 LU MK**

The Janet Text SMS F service reviews covering July-Sept 2024 quarter are being held in October with each supplier, covering the areas of performance, reporting, invoicing, and framework usage updates.

#### **Jisc Telecommunications - ITS5086 LU MK**

The Telecommunications framework service reviews covering the July-Sep 2024 quarter are being held in October with each supplier, covering the areas of performance, reporting, invoicing, and framework usage updates.

#### **Software License Resellers (SLRA) – National – ITS4042 SU MK**

Tender documentation has been revised and is going through its final checks. This includes updates to the framework and call off templates to make engagement more user friendly.

It is anticipated that the ITT will be ready to be issued w/c 14 October, which should permit sufficient time in the process to ensure to completion of the award ready for a start date of 22 February.

## Insurance

#### **Insurance – Regional MK**

The ITSG continues to meet monthly with representatives from both Gallagher and RMP with the last meeting held 25 September, which discussed the likely tendering

programme for H1 2025, and the next set for 23 October. The LUPC Corporate Membership with Airmic was renewed in August for the next 12 months.

The LUPC Category Lead presented to NUIG (Northern Universities Insurance Group) members on 20 August. This followed recent meetings where their members asked further about different approaches to the market including the LUPC Insurance Group; a consortium approach based on savings and associated benefits delivered by economies of scale.

The annual insurance service reviews have been arranged for 17 December in London, which will include a review of the comments and conclusions drawn from the LUPC Insurance Group member survey. Following a review of the previous open questions, this was issued on time in early October to all IG members with an 8 November deadline for all responses. An analysis and commentary will be presented to all parties on 13 November ahead of the reviews.

## Laboratories and STEMed

#### **Engineering Machines, Tools, and Associated Products and Consumables – LAB2011 NE AR**

A PIN was published for this procurement on 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2024 to alert the market of this opportunity, as this exact Commodity has not been tendered by UKUPC before. A Supplier Day was planned for the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, 2024 as part of the pre-engagement activity,

#### **Laboratory Consumables and Chemicals - Inter-Regional (IRLA) – LAB4043 SU AR**

This agreement went live on 2nd August 2024 and was replaced by LAB4043.

The launch webinar was carried out on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September, which included two of the suppliers. Of the enhancements included was the inclusion of new SME suppliers, a new Organic Chemicals lot, and a greater focus on Sustainability.

#### **Laboratory Consumables and Chemicals - Inter-Regional (IRLA) – LAB4040 SU AR**

This agreement expired on 1 August 2024 and was replaced by LAB4043 (covering the same technical specification, and in addition, some enhancements), which went live on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024.

#### **Lab Gases (IUPC) – National – LAB4041 SU AR**

SUPC will be retendering this agreement in the next few months, and are currently in the research phase for the next iteration.

The remaining extension will be invoked to ensure members can access this agreement until its replacement framework is live. This is anticipated to happen in the summer of 2025.

**Lasers and Associated Equipment Framework Agreement – LAB1032 AP AR** In September 2024, APUC carried out a review of this framework, as they are analysing spend or customer demand to assess if it should be re-tendered.

## Office Supplies & equipment

#### **Office Supplies – National – OFF3068 NW RD**

NWUPC are working on the replacement framework OPELS Tender (for the Supply of Office, Paper, EOS, and Library Supplies). The tender evaluation is in its final stages. Three of the four lots have been finalised. NWUPC will award when remaining lot has been completed.

A further two-month extension with all but one supplier for the current agreement up to 31/10/24.

Commercial Ltd (under Lot 2 - Computer Supplies) is no longer available for use as they chose not to extend so this agreement ceased on 31/07/24. Members with current call-off agreements with Commercial Ltd will be unaffected and any call-off end dates beyond the framework expiry date of 31/07/24 will be honoured.

#### **Paper – Print and Specialist - OFF3117 NW RD**

NWUPC are working on the replacement framework OPELS Tender (for the Supply of Office, Paper, EOS, and Library Supplies). The tender evaluation is in its final stages. Three of the four lots have been finalised. NWUPC will award when remaining lot has been completed.

A further two-month extension has been agreed with all suppliers for the current agreement up to 31/10/24.

Further information on the agreement can be found [here](#). If you have any feedback, please contact Roy.

## Professional Services

#### **Executive and Senior Strategic Search and Recruitment Services – PFB1037 AP RD**

APUC will be extending the current framework to its fourth year, ending 29<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

#### **Financial Services- National – PFB3114 NW RD**

This framework has expired. NWUPC will be reviewing the service and share any further developments with members in the near future.

#### **Global Workforce Mobility Services – PFB3135 NW RD**

NWUPC have extended this framework to its fourth and final year (2025). NWUPC are starting the work with a TWP on the next iteration of this framework.

Further information on the current agreement is available [here](#).

#### **Legal Services – PFB5069 LU RD**

LUPC are now working on its replacement. Members who would like to input to the next iteration should contact Roy, especially those from legal teams or experienced in procurement of legal services.

Further information on the agreement can be found [here](#).

**Temporary and Permanent (TAP) Recruitment Services – PFB4037SU RD**

SUPC extended the current framework to 30 September 2024. The new framework is due to enter standstill and should be available to members in September 2024.

**Other Activities**

**Events**

- LUPC Early Careers Network Meeting #1 5 November 2024
- LUPC eTendering Software Platform Framework Launch 21 November 2024
- LUPC Member Induction 14 November 2024
- LUPC New Office Breakfast Meeting for HoPs (in person) 27 November 2024
- LUPC RP Morning Part 1 – 5 December 2024
- LUPC RP Morning Part 2 – 10 December 2024
- LUPC Procurement Act 2023 Q&A Webinar #4 with Mohamed Hans – 13 December 2024



For further information and to register, please see the [events page on our website](#).

**Publications**

E-bulletins are issued monthly around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Linked magazine is published quarterly at the end of every January, April, July and October.



A brand-new Linked Podcast (launched in April 2024) accompanies the quarterly Linked Magazine.

[LUPC's Corporate Strategy for 2024-2028](#) was published on 9 October 2024.

**Website**

The [Jobs Board section](#) of the LUPC website is available to advertise any procurement vacancies at member organisations.

Please use the [Discussions Boards](#) on our website to generate procurement related conversations across the LUPC membership to help with your procurement activities.

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To find out more get in touch with [Giorgia Varriale](#).



**Let's talk...**

John Shaile, Director of Procurement & Supplier Management at Jisc talks us through his career procurement to date.

**How long have you worked at your organisation?** 9 years

**How did you get into procurement?** By chance! I graduated university realising that I didn't want a career linked to my degree (BSc Human Physiology & Pharmacology) and I was looking for a job that had some longer term prospects. By chance, a good friend of mine was working in recruitment and knew my situation, he suggested I look at a graduate procurement role as it might be a good fit. At that point I had no idea what 'Procurement' was, but once I researched it, I applied and and have been working in Procurement ever since (19 years!).

**What skills from your previous roles helped you in your procurement journey?** I feel my eye for detail and being analytical have

been helpful, but I think it's been more the soft skills I have developed over the years that have really helped me move forward in my career.

**What do you most enjoy about your job?** The opportunity to develop a procurement and supplier management strategy for my team that helps support Jisc and its members to achieve their aims. Alongside this I really enjoy supporting colleagues develop and progress in their careers.

**What's the worst thing that happened in your career and how did you overcome it?** Being taken to court by an aggrieved supplier following a tender process! At the time I was convinced we had done nothing wrong in the tender process I had run but the supplier wasn't going to back down. So, we went to

court over a period of several days and fortunately the judge dismissed the suppliers claim and we were successful. Through a significant amount of extra work and sticking to my core principles I did manage to navigate it. Even though we had a positive outcome, the anxiety / stress of the situation did impact me and it's something I have been very keen to avoid ever since.

**If you weren't in procurement, what would you be doing?**

I would love to say professional rugby player but probably more likely the team mascot!

**What's the most interesting item or service you've had to buy?**

From a number of years ago, the procurement of a dementia care home. This involved a number of elements including the design and build and care service provision. It was a complex and challenging process but very interesting and something that would provide much needed support to the local community.

**In your view, what value can working with the Procurement team bring to other areas in Estates, IT etc.**

A procurement team can help areas of the business to get more value for money, ensure they work with quality suppliers, navigate the procurement regulations, mitigate numerous risks and ensure positive relationships with their suppliers.

**What advice would you give to people new to the sector?**

Be inquisitive and willing to learn as the reach of procurement is so broad. Focus on building strong relationships with your stakeholders and prioritise what they want to achieve over your own internal procurement team targets.

**What are the key challenges ahead for your organisation, particularly in the current climate?**

As with our whole sector, finances are a challenge. Alongside this remaining innovative and providing quality services to our members. For my area managing the changes and impact of the Procurement Act are a particular focus.

**What achievement are you most proud of (and why)?**

Becoming the Director of Procurement & Supplier management at Jisc. A culmination of all my efforts and hard work over the years as well as the trust to take the team forward.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Love spending time with my family, watching live sport (rugby, cricket) and I have recently started paddleboarding which is great fun!

**And finally, what would be your favourite book and luxury on a desert island?**

A crime thriller book and as a luxury, a bottle of bourbon.



**AGREEMENT SPOTLIGHT ON: ETENDERING SOFTWARE PLATFORM FRAMEWORK**

With the new eTendering Platform framework available to members since 1 October 2024, we hear directly from the three suppliers on the framework, **cimple.** ; **in-tend** ; and **MERCELL** ; on the current issues relevant to eTendering portals.

**Framework Summary**

This framework went live on 1 October 2024 for an initial period of two years, with two optional extensions of one year each. Whilst the previous agreement (ITS5058 LU) was a single supplier framework, the new agreement now offers three different systems, providing customers with more choice and the

opportunity to run mini competitions based on their singular requirements.

**Let's hear from the suppliers: Broadly, how has the supplier base been reacting to the forthcoming changes with the new regs?**

"At Cimple, we have anticipated significant changes in the public sector procurement landscape since

the Government’s Green Paper on Transforming Public Procurement was published. Since then, we have been designing, testing, and building solutions for our users as the regulatory framework evolves.”

**cimple.**

“As with everyone involved in the implementation of PA23 requirements, our users have sought assurances that we are able to provide a compliant system. The answer to this is, of course, a resounding yes, and we believe that we are at the forefront of producing both the new notices and the workflows associated with them. As we go to press, we are awaiting further development information (Release 8), which is due for release

to eSenders w/c 21 October 2024. We will then be able to further refine our interactions with Find a Tender Service (FTS) and the Central Digital Platform (CDP).

In-tend users are constantly informed of our progress on the delivery against PA23, and we are utilising a number of communications channels including weekly bulletins, weekly Procurement Act specials, In-procurement publication, and the soon to be released Procurement Act special book, ‘A Practical Guide to the Procurement Act 2023.’”

**in-tend**

“For Mercell, and the creation of our new upgraded Mercell Tendering & Bidding Platform, the upcoming regulations have been a challenge due to the shifting dates and ever-

changing scope of requirements from the Cabinet Office. The final specifications have now been provided, but at a late date, which has created a pressure to accommodate the resource work required. In terms of creating the new workflow processes in the system, Mercell are in the final stages. However, the movement of the implementation date to February 2025 has meant further additional work required to conform to the current regulations but does allow time for users to adjust over the coming months.”

**MERCELL**

**How will you / your systems be supporting your clients and users over the next few months until roll out day?**

“A key focus has been supporting our suppliers in understanding the implications of the new regulations. Together with our supplier users, we are developing updates to the supplier interface through which they submit bids, aiming to maintain as much consistency as possible with their current experience.

The supplier community can be divided into three groups regarding these changes:

- Those who are clear on what the changes mean for them;
- Those who are unsure but willing to adapt;
- Those who are unaware of the changes.

A shared concern among all groups is the use of the Central Digital Platform and the transition to a platform like Cimple. We are working with suppliers to make this transition as seamless as possible, guiding them through the end-to-end journey between the two solutions.

Since early 2022, we have also collaborated closely with our customers to co-design solutions that automate transparency requirements, deliver the Competitive Flexible Procedure, publish pipelines, and manage contracts.

Our customers have helped us develop a unique solution tailored for the Competitive Flexible Procedure, which we are excited to reveal once the new regulations are implemented.

We will continue supporting our customers leading up to the go-live date and beyond, following the implementation phases outlined by the Cabinet Office. Our customers have access to:

Thought pieces and webinars related to the Procurement Act;

Help centre guidance and tutorials to assist procurement professionals and stakeholders in maximising the benefits of the Act through Cimple;

Our team and the wider Cimple community for any specific queries, whether related to systems or other issues.”

**cimple.**



“As we reach what we assume to be the final release of information from the Cabinet Office, we are preparing user updates which are being relayed to our community through all communications channels.

We are increasing capacity within core teams to accommodate an increase in enquiries for system demonstrations and training requirements to cover both the new procedures, as well the extension in the elements of contract management now drawn into the Act.

Delivery of specific training programmes for PA23 are in the final stages of preparation, as are a range of consultancy packages to help guide and support buyers through the adoption stage.

We have also prepared a series of training programmes that will help our community of users better

manage their contracts and ensure that their internal processes are both compliant with the legislation and as easy as possible to embed within their organisation.” **in-tend**

“For any new clients on-boarding to our new Mercell Tendering & Bidding Platform, Mercell will provide full training covering the new regulation process templates in the system to ensure all end users are familiar with the workflows and tasks required to create and manage a tender project under the latest procurement regulations. For current users of the Complete Tender Management (CTM) platform, the new process templates are reflective of the current workflows in that any user will be able to follow the checklist easily, without training required. Mercell will readily provide additional sessions if needed. Current CTM system users

will already see the new workflow process templates in their system (new eform notices still in development) and have all received recent multiple communications regarding this and how it will work. Our Client Success Manager supports each customer with



regular updates and will continue to do so as the works finishes and the new process templates can be utilised.” **MERCELL**

**Briefly describe your Social Value commitment to the framework**

“At Cimple, we blend the best elements of both the private and public sectors to form our organisational DNA. We prioritise both profit and purpose, enabling us to innovate continuously and improve the digital experience and services we provide, while caring for our people, our place, and our planet. This commitment is evidenced by our Living Wage membership and B Corp status.

We have made specific social value commitments within our framework, focusing on creating new jobs, particularly through apprenticeships and digital literacy upskilling.” **cimple.**

“Mindful of our social value obligations, location is no barrier to employment with In-tend and we have purposely chosen to base our offices within an area whereby we can provide initiatives and opportunities to target those who might face barriers to employment,



promoting inclusivity and reducing inequalities within the region; whilst at the same time offering a number of remotely based opportunities.

Our social value commitment to the framework is to continue to employ across all business areas, both locally and nationwide; to offer apprenticeships, and to offer work experience opportunities to disadvantaged groups such as the long term unemployed. Furthermore, we seek to promote employment opportunities to forces leavers and welcome any opportunity to promote internships and graduate positions within each organisation. We also offer clients’ procurement apprentices the opportunity to attend one of our supplier themed seminars for a supplier perspective to tendering.” **in-tend**

“Merzell is committed to minimising the impact of its activities on the environment with methods that are socially responsible and sustainable. Merzell UK are accredited to ISO14001. In line with this, we aim to:

Reduce energy and fuel consumption in the provision of the contract by means of virtual meetings and remote working;

- Minimise waste through re-use and recycling, such as office-based ink and paper products;
- Share documents electronically (unless required by law) to reduce paper;
- Use environmentally friendly goods to minimise pollution such as green energy hard drives and equipment;
- Save energy e.g. using energy efficient lighting and equipment within our offices.

Our policies are reviewed annually and comments and non-conformity observations are recorded in the audit report which is then followed by establishing an action plan to remedy and improve on those.

To promote local skills and employment, Merzell UK are looking to expand their team and are exploring the option to employ apprentices, subject to achieving its business growth targets. We are a diverse company with team of

employees spanning 20 different nationalities, and we work to support the objectives of the Equality Act to promote equal opportunity and rights. The company is committed to an inclusive work culture, based on diversity, equal employment opportunity and fair treatment of all employees.” 

**Any key observations on how the HE and the wider public sector operate?**

“A fundamental commitment of our organisation is to enhance the procurement landscape for everyone, especially for the millions of informal buyers across various organisations and the smaller businesses essential to our economy. A significant proportion of suppliers on our platform are SMEs and the feedback from this community is that the user experience and usability far surpasses other platforms making it easier to identify, qualify and bid on specific opportunities.

The upcoming changes for procurement teams will be

substantial, especially amid increasing budgetary pressures and rising demands for public services. We are here to support you through this transition and well into the future.” 

“Whilst a number of our user organisations are well underway with the Procurement Act requirements and how it needs to be implemented within their own areas, there does not seem to be the same awareness of the implications for Contract Management that are brought about by the Act.

As highlighted in our ‘A Practical Guide to the Procurement Act 2023’, a number of key changes will come about on 24 February 2025 that revolve around how public sector organisations manage and report on their contracts.” 

“Merzell now work with a number of HE clients and wider sectors and fully understand the pressures to maintain great value, while managing risk and also remaining compliant

and transparent. The upcoming new regulations, and their delay, add a further challenge to both the buy-side and supply-side of procurement and this has indeed highlighted a hesitance from various sectors seemingly ‘holding out’ until the new regulations are in place before committing to new contracts within the eProcurement industry. We do however also see the UK Public Sector embracing this change as a new and positive challenge to overcome, knowing that these systems will steer users down the needed route and as such, 2025 should see a significant amount of interest in reviewing Public eTendering platforms.” 

Members can find out more about the eTendering Software Platform at the Launch Webinar on 21 November 2024. Members can register here. The framework suppliers will be also providing demonstrations of their portals in due course, we will update you once these have been arranged.

**Contact the suppliers**



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