

Healthy spending in the NHS

When the NHS England Commercial Team achieved CIPS Corporate Certification Standard, it helped to drive effective commercial behaviour across the organisation and acknowledge them as a credible source of procurement expertise.



About CIPS

CIPS, the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply, is the world's largest organisation dedicated to the profession of procurement and supply, with a voice that is recognised across the globe. CIPS works in partnership with governments, businesses, public sector entities and international development agencies to support organisations to achieve sustainable value.

“ The work towards achieving accreditation enabled us to challenge our own processes and make improvements, where necessary. Ultimately, our customers are the ones who will benefit from working with a commercial team that has demonstrated it has the framework in place to provide exceptional professional commercial support. ”

KEVIN BATES, HEAD OF NHS ENGLAND COMMERCIAL TEAM

Why CIPS Corporate Certification?

The NHS England Commercial Team was established in 2015 after internal audits revealed that the existing commercial processes should be improved. The team has been tasked with redefining and re-establishing the role of commercial expertise; introducing a new end-to-end commercial process; establishing robust governance processes for £3 billion worth of spend on non-clinical goods and services; and bringing about a cultural shift to ensure staff engage with and follow the new processes.

Globally recognised, CIPS Corporate Certification Standard is the only independent, comprehensive procurement-specific assessment of its kind. Examining an organisation's procurement and supplier management procedures in targeted detail, it highlights where improvements and efficiencies can be made, ensuring that procurement becomes an essential value driver and organisational influencer.

The results

Achieving CIPS Corporate Certification Standard demonstrates that the team has the expertise to implement NHS England's Procurement Policy efficiently and effectively. It has also strengthened the case for a cultural shift in behaviours across NHS England and a halt to the 'go-it-alone' procurement behaviours being demonstrated by budget holders.

Traditionally, visibility of commercial and procurement support across NHS England has been low. Promoting the accreditation is an important part of a wider piece of work to raise the profile of the Commercial Team across the organisation, encouraging engagement from colleagues in other departments.

The benefits

- **Process efficiencies** – the business case approvals process has been reduced from 45 to 17 days
- **Better planning** of the procurement pipeline
- **Reduced exposure to supplier risk**
- **Customers are reassured** that policies and processes are robust
- **Reduced maverick spending** – increased spend influenced by the procurement team
- **Demonstrates best practice** in procurement
- **Establishes robust governance** for £3 billion spend

About NHS England

NHS England leads the National Health Service (NHS) in England and sets its priorities and direction. The organisation shares out more than £100 billion in funds and holds organisations to account for spending this money effectively for patients and efficiently for the taxpayer. NHS England directly employs approximately 6,000 people and oversees eight Commissioning Support Units which employ a further 10,000 staff.

The background

Annually, NHS England spends £3 billion on non-clinical goods and services much of which has been fragmented, non-compliant and inefficient. The Commercial Team – with around 65 members – is responsible for the governance of that spend. It also supports NHS England staff with planning their procurement pipelines, leading the procurement process and providing contract management and supplier relationship support to achieve best value and quality.

The team's greatest focus and challenge is to ensure compliant procurement practice and best-in-class commercial behaviours. They are leading a shift in activity towards robust contract management and the use of purchase orders, which were previously only used for half of all spend. This is being driven by the implementation of electronic tools, stakeholder engagement including nationwide workshops and training sessions, and support from the Commercial Team's business partners.

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