

REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM BY JANINE WHITE SCHOOLS PROCUREMENT OFFICER

This report contains a summary of the work undertaken over the past 12 months.

COLLABORATIVE PROCUREMENT

The following collaborative procurement exercises have been undertaken to bring savings to all Schools utilising the agreements.

Defibrillators

These have all now been delivered to the Schools and refresher training is being organised through the Health & Safety team with the Lifeguards who are able to provide this service

Further work undertaken with the British Heart Foundation and North East Ambulance Service on CPR training for children which was circulated to all Schools

Eco Printers

Worked with a group of Schools to consider the savings available to them by switching their printing. The Schools who switched have seen considerable annual savings and the scheme is working very well.

OTHER PROCUREMENT

Catering Services

Have helped Schools to understand some of the costs included in the catering SLA around adult meals which has allowed them to challenge this and reduce their SLA costs substantially – around **£5,000 per Primary School**. Schools have also been asked to consider a longer term contract as there is sometimes a further saving available.

Woodlawn

Continued support to Woodlawn School.

Norham

Providing Business Manager support to Norham High School in the absence of someone in this role. Training other staff to take on the role.

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| Asset Management | Investigating suppliers of software capable of managing assets and arranging demonstrations for Schools to come along to and see the system. |
| Supply Insurance | Supporting Schools with quotations on staff absence insurance and understanding the different policy offerings and underwriters. |
| Energy Management | Supporting schools looking to bring BEMS in house which could result in savings if managed correctly. |
| ICT Equipment | Supporting Schools with the purchase of interactive touchscreens instead of whiteboards and projectors through demonstrations and information dissemination. |
| Contractors | Identifying new contractors for undertaking works in Schools for example plumbers for reactive maintenance requirements in Schools as larger, well-known companies too slow to react for small quick repairs. |
| Minibuses | Supporting Schools in the procurement of minibuses either through direct purchase or leasing schemes and understanding Section 19 permits. |
| Photocopiers | Supported a number of Schools in procuring a new photocopier by analysing current practice and seeking quotations for future requirements. Further support offered in supplier meetings where staff felt they were baffled by technology and contract terms. My presence allowed for questioning of information to understand offerings clearer. |
| Uniforms | Identifying and meeting with potential new suppliers and putting arrangements in place for both cash and online ordering arrangements. |
| Newcastle United Foundation | Understanding using PE grants compliantly and the support the foundation can offer schools around fundraising events and PE staff support. |
| Visitor Management Systems | With Ofsted's looking favourably on electronic visitor management systems, some work has been done on providers and cost implications which is shared with schools. |

FUTURE PROCUREMENT

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| Contractor Compliance | <p>Continuous updating of the compliant contractor register on behalf of all Schools. All information is kept centrally and disseminated to Schools as required / requested. Schools are encouraged to only seek quotations from compliant contractors.</p> <p>This exercise is intended to reduce any risk to a School but also to assist a contractor in that they will not need to complete for each School prior to undertaking any work.</p> |
| Gas Inspections | <p>Looking into collaborative procurement to undertake gas inspection testing in science laboratories in Schools as currently does not appear to be undertaken on a regular basis – liaising with the Local Authority on this area and awaiting updates.</p> |
| Asset Management | <p>Potential procurement based on collaboration of Schools looking to invest in this area.</p> |
| ICT Provision / NGFL | <p>Investigations into alternative providers once the Northern Grid for Learning contract ceases during the summer 2017. Liaison with the Council on the resources they are putting into the continuation of supply and what it could mean to Schools. Liaison with other companies on their services and potential opportunity for large tender.</p> |
| Accounting Packages | <p>Starting to look into options for Academies for managing their finances and liaison with the Council for options available from the SIMS team.</p> |

TASKS UNDERTAKEN

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| Collaboration Groups | <p>Collaboration Groups are now underway in North Shields, Whitley Bay, Wallsend and Killingworth as well as the Roman Catholic Schools collaborative. The idea is to remain as an informal group, but to share good practice, arrange joint procurements, undertake joint training and generally get to know each other to share common problems and seek common solutions.</p> |
| Contract Registers | <p>Schools are being encouraged to utilise a Contract Register template created which will allow for all</p> |

contracts to be logged and reviewed in a timely manner to ensure notice dates are not missed for contract renewals. I offer to start completing this for Schools and have undertaken a few this year.

Maintenance Schedule

A timeline of all statutory and best practice maintenance programmes has been created for use by schools to simplify what needs doing, when and by whom which can be shared between the Business Manager and Site Manager.

Supplier Reviews

Working with suppliers to resolve issues and to try to manage contracts effectively.

Audit

Liaising with the Audit Team at the Council on various elements around public sector procurement and working together to agree strategies for Schools.

CSBM

I have also decided to undertake the CSBM course to further my knowledge of the Business Manager role enabling more professional advice to Schools around other areas and not just procurement.

Procurement

Meeting with the Local Authority Procurement team to identify ways in which they can support myself and in turn the Schools. Consideration being given to a Schools Procurement option on the LA intranet to display templates and catalogues available for schools to use. Further information around translation services and washroom services will be sent around all Schools.

Energy

Working with Procurement to issue Schools with a guide to asking the right questions should they be considering moving away from the NEPO contract which will allow for a more accurate comparison against what another provider is offering. Schools, however, are not encouraged to move away from the NEPO arrangement as it is believed this offers best value.

Academisation

Have attended various conferences on behalf of Schools to understand more around the implications for School Business Manager and passed any information on. Arranged a presentation by Anthony Gollings to a group of Business Managers on the process

Apprentice Levy

Investigations to further understand the implications to Schools and facilitating a meeting of High Schools who this levy will more likely affect.

REASONS TO CONTINUE THE FUNDING OF THE ROLE

- More than half of school leaders are looking to reduce costs over the coming year, with the government's funding policy and recent changes to special educational needs (SEN) provision cited for the growing pressure on school budgets by senior school staff. This role will help to support these cuts.
- Procurement for Schools previously undertaken by the Council is not always an available option and a lot of the work is now automatically directed to myself. Should the position come to an end, consideration needs to be given as to who will resume this work to ensure continuity of supply and will there now be cost implications which will need to be funded from somewhere? This will be the same for the compliant contractor database held and how will this be managed going forward?
- Contracts instigated for Schools originally may be coming up for review / renewal
- The role forms a link between the Schools, the Council and their partner companies, and a link to the Consortia and Department for Education, disseminating information as required. This is becoming stronger all the time with queries coming to me from Audit and Finance.
- There are significant time savings for all Schools in one person undertaking research or work on their behalf which is unquantifiable in terms of cashable savings. Most issues are duplicated in Schools and one person resolving rather than multiple trying to resolve is often easier and quicker.
- The role is valued by the Schools as can be seen from the feedback detailed below.
- Support for Schools during the Academisation process and supporting schools tendering for Accountants, Insurance, Legal and Finance packages.

COMMENTS FROM SOME SCHOOLS ON THE SERVICE

Your communication, networking and generally keeping us all linked is immeasurable. I like that we have a central contact who can offer us sound advice with regards to suppliers, services and what our peers are up to in other schools. An example of this would be Eco printers!

Nicki Battensby
School Office Manager
Sir James Knott Nursery School

I'm really grateful for your organising the area meetings which helps keep me up to speed with what is available procurement-wise and I know you are available to contact if I have any queries or problems."

Linda Franklin
Office Manager
Backworth Park Primary School

Your organisation of our local SBM cluster meetings has facilitated the building of excellent working relationships with the other SBM's in the area leading to successful collaboration; sharing of ideas, knowledge, and experience; and discussions around innovations and current issues facing education.

I have very much appreciated your co-ordination of the NT SBM Conference, which has provided excellent speakers/workshops and networking opportunities with local suppliers.

During the last year your liaison with the British Heart Foundation enabled all the school in the area, that wanted one, to obtain a School Defibrillator at a reduced price and joint staff training.

As co-ordinator of the Bursar's Forum you have provided all schools in the NTC area with the opportunity to work together and help each other with advice and suggestions. It is always most helpful that on the rare occasion that you cannot answer a question, you can always point me in the right direction.

Thank you most especially for always being so professional, warm and approachable. You really are a most important and invaluable part of our school community.

Cecilia Owen
School Business Manager
Wallsend St Peter's CE Primary School

Janine is very helpful in all respects providing a prompt and informative service for which I would not like to be without.

Patricia Simmons

**School Business Manager
Greenfields Community Primary School**

Janine is a great help as she provides a contact point particularly when I need advice about procurement regulations. She also is very helpful if I require quotes as she often knows which companies have a good record or providing high quality and reliable service to

schools. If requested, she can even obtain quotes on our behalf and also source opportunities for us to obtain best value.

Janine also arranges our termly group meetings which I am sure would stop if Janine did not organise these. These opportunities to network with colleagues are very helpful because, as she also hosts meeting with other groups of school staff, she is able to share concerns and good practice with us based on discussions that have taken place at other group meetings.

She has also arranged demonstrations of educational resources i.e. interactive screens, and invites company representatives to join us to share information about their product/services.

I do feel that if Janine left this important networking opportunity for School Business Managers/Finance staff would be lost which would be detrimental to the sharing of best practice and obtaining value for money.

Maureen McKenzie
Office Manager
Percy Main Primary School

Not only does Janine support and advise on matters of procurement, but she continues to use her specialist knowledge to support schools across the borough with advice on contracts and tenders. Janine supports school business managers' collaborative groups in all areas of the borough, facilitating meetings and helping them to develop their own procurement strategies. She provides regular updates and support to schools via email and newsletters. Janine has developed a database of reliable and recommended suppliers, which schools find invaluable. She continually reviews and updates this database.

Janine has undertaken tremendous work leading on the introduction of defibrillators into schools, researching joint sourcing opportunities. Janine led this project, supporting fundraising, working with Hearts with Goals charity and the North East Ambulance Service towards this achievement. Since then, Janine has organised training and refresher training for relevant staff. She has also organised how this will be delivered moving forward, via the Lifeguards at Waves Leisure. She encouraged schools to take part in the recent British Heart Foundation's Restart a Heart Day. Over half the students at Churchill Community College took part in this important event.

Fantastic support to Norham High School in helping them to manage and monitor their budget when the Business Manager left to go to another school, and was not replaced. She has supported non-finance colleagues to develop their knowledge and skill in this field, to eventually take over in the role.

Janine is extremely knowledgeable in her field, but is also uniquely placed to support schools in developing their own systems, processes and strategies. Schools benefit greatly from her expertise and value the unique service she provides, which otherwise would not be available to them.

Gillian Allen
Business Manager
Churchill Community College