



Technical background information to accompany Department for Education and its executive agencies' spend using ePCS procurement cards over £500

Background information

In June 2015 the Department for Education adopted electronic Purchasing Card Solution (ePCS) procurement cards, replacing government procurement cards (GPCs). The ePCS procurement cards use a Mastercard based purchasing and payments system; they are not a credit card. Cards are issued by the Royal Bank of Scotland plc (RBS).

ePCS procurement cards are simple to use and make the process of obtaining goods and services for low value transactions efficient.

Key benefits

The key benefits of using ePCS procurement cards are:

- Fewer invoices as card transactions are consolidated and paid centrally, with no risk of interest charges
- Electronic cardholder statements, supporting sustainability by reducing paper and resultant waste
- Access to data enables effective monitoring of spend and budgets.

The key benefits of ePCS procurement cards for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are:

- Prompt payments in line with Government initiatives
- Improved cash flow
- Reduces bad debt and late payments
- Reduced administrative costs.

Transparency

In support of the Government's Transparency Agenda, the DfE are publishing details of all transactions of £500 and over. The data published includes:

- entity
- transaction posting date
- merchant / supplier name

- transaction amount
- description of purpose

Data is published by the last working day of the following month.

Since 1 April 2013 nil returns from the DfE's executive agencies are included as an additional row showing £0.00 value. Prior to this, any executive agencies or arm's length bodies with nil returns were simply excluded.

Useful links

All DfE Government Procurement Card and ePCS Procurement Card spend over £500:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dfe-government-procurement-card-gpc-over-500>

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