



Government
Commercial
Function

Annual Report 2023-24



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Foreword



Foreword

Striving to become the best commercial function in the UK

The Government Commercial Function has continued to go from strength to strength. In 2023-24, we made significant progress against our seven strategic objectives, in particular we have increased contract performance and have driven efficiency whilst maintaining excellent customer service. We have continued to build commercial capability across the public sector. We also made great strides in our initiatives to:

1 Use innovation to drive continuous improvement of our products and services, to support commercial activity across government and the wider public sector, by launching a digital platform to make the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF) simpler, faster and more efficient for all public sector users.

2 Support business and all stakeholders through a continued, consistent and efficient approach to close out projects which commenced at the start of the strategy period.

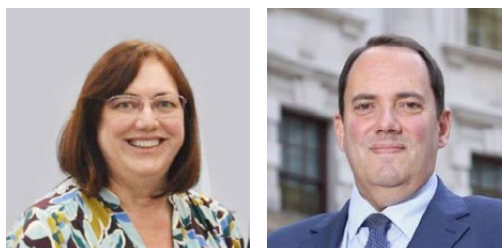
This report can only highlight some of this year's successes. The achievements and case studies illustrate the ongoing commitment and excellence of the members of the commercial function and their collective efforts to deliver: value for money; improved performance from our supply chain while boosting SME spend; innovative and pro-business projects; and an approach which constantly considers social value.

We have continued to deliver against our commitments and objectives despite ongoing economic challenges. These include using government procurement to support small business and drive economic growth and reducing late payments – in both of which the GCF has made strides forward.

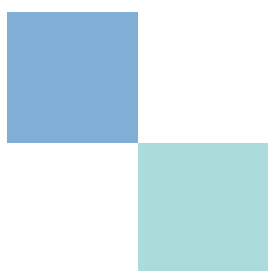
Looking towards the next year:

- We will continue to align with the Grants Function to share best practice, align processes and systems and strengthen governance whilst continuing to collaborate through information and data sharing.
- The Procurement Act and new supporting regime, set to go live in Spring 2025.
- We will continue to simplify and streamline our processes to allow our people to focus their time and skills on the parts of the commercial lifecycle which add the most value to customers.

The work we are doing now will lay the foundations for a genuinely transformed procurement system, enabling us to add more and more value. We are on track to do that. As a function, we can rise to challenges. Everyone involved should be proud of the progress we have made.



Clare Gibbs OBE and Marco Salzedo
Interim Government Chief Commercial Officers





Objectives

Progress against our seven key objectives

01

Be in the top quartile (measured against industry benchmarks) of large organisations for financial benefits and return on investment by March 2025.

In the last financial year (FY23/24), departmental commercial teams realised an additional c£800m of cashable and non-cashable savings compared with FY22/23 – totalling a saving of £3.75bn.

These savings translate into a £4.84 saving on every £100 the government has spent externally on buying goods and services. Overall, we continue to yield approximately six and a half times the return on investment (ROI) compared to the total cost of the function: so for every £1 invested in Commercial, the taxpayer benefits by £6.50, an increase of 50p per pound from the previous year. That means we are not only continuing to recover our costs entirely, we are also delivering a multi-fold additional cost benefit.

£3.75bn saving and commercial benefit in 23/24

02

Make savings while being recognised as leading the way in delivering social value through procurement.

In March 2023 the Cabinet Office implemented social value reporting requirements. All central government departments are now required to report against any commitments made against the Social Value Model.

Departmental data collected in FY23/24 demonstrates strong delivery against the required target of evaluating a minimum of 10% of tenders on their social value offer. This includes the creation of at least 3,000 full-time employment opportunities and around 7,000 full-time training opportunities, as well over £28m of opportunities awarded to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and over £6m to voluntary, community or social enterprises (VCSEs).

3,000

full-time employment opportunities

7,000

full-time training opportunities

£28m+

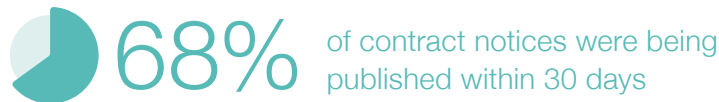
opportunities awarded to small and medium-sized enterprises

03

Drive up contract performance by suppliers and meet our transparency obligations.

At the end of the last financial year, 68% of contract notices were being published within 30 days. This is an increase of 14% from the start of the year, representing positive progress towards our target to publish 85% of contract notices within 30 days of contract award this year.

14,237 KPIs were published for the period Quarter (Q1-Q4) of FY23/24, representing an increase of 21% on the same period in the previous year. Out of all KPIs published, 83% are rated GOOD against our target of 95%.



04

Drive efficiency and speed across the procurement lifecycle.

In FY22/23 we introduced projects to improve our ‘support efficiency’ and ‘timescales’ scores in the Functions Quality Survey. Initial improvements were seen at the end of that year, and we were able to build on this success in FY23/24.

The cycle time for procurement activities below the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) threshold has decreased by 13.3 days and the number of contract challenges remained low at the end of Q4 at 17 challenges (down from 21). Contract disputes at the end of Q4 were 16 lower than the same period in FY22/23 at 39 disputes (down from 55).

05

Benchmark commercial practice across central government departments using our industry-leading standards and playbooks to improve everyone’s performance.

The average Maturity Score is measured by the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF), the benchmarking process for public sector contracting authorities.

Central government departments are projected to see a 2% increase in commercial maturity based on the latest annual re-baselining event. This equates to 70%, 3% higher than the overall participant average and an improvement from a ‘good’ to ‘better’ rating.

The CCIAF programme now involves 183 participating authorities, covering £176bn of spending, representing 59% of all third-party public sector spend.

In FY23/24 we delivered over 30 masterclasses, roundtables and commercial continuous improvement events – reaching 21,000 commercial professionals across the public sector. There has also been an 89% increase in the use of the Government Commercial College to access Commercial continuous improvement content over the last 12 months.

70%

CCIAF maturity rating

183

participating authorities

£176bn

spending

06

Have the most talented and diverse commercial workforce.

We achieved our target to accredit 85% of Government Commercial Organisation (GCO) professionals in March 2023.

By April 2024, nearly 90% of GCO professionals had been accredited. The GCO has climbed six places and is now ranked 20th by 'Inclusive Companies' in their Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers List for FY23/24.

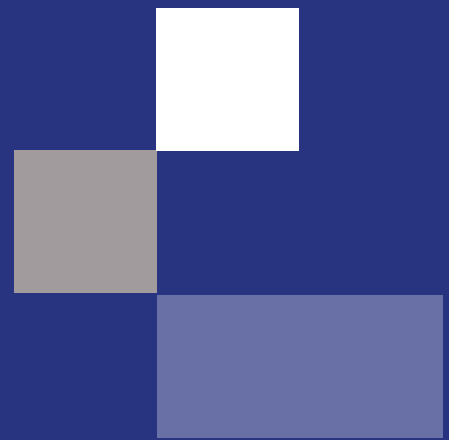
Ranked **20th** by 'Inclusive Companies'

07

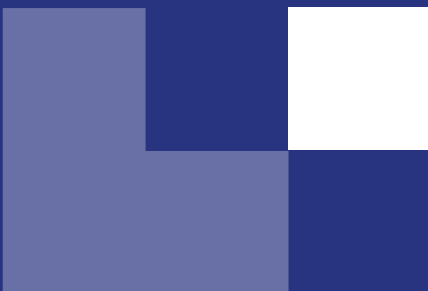
Provide a great service to our customers.

In the annual Functions Quality Survey, people are asked to select five functions that deliver a quality service. Over the last four years the proportion selecting commercial has increased by 6% in line with its increased importance.





Achievements



Growing our commercial community

At the core of our strategy is the aim to extend the benefits and offers of the GCF into the wider public sector, in particular the arm’s length bodies with the highest spending, the NHS and local government.

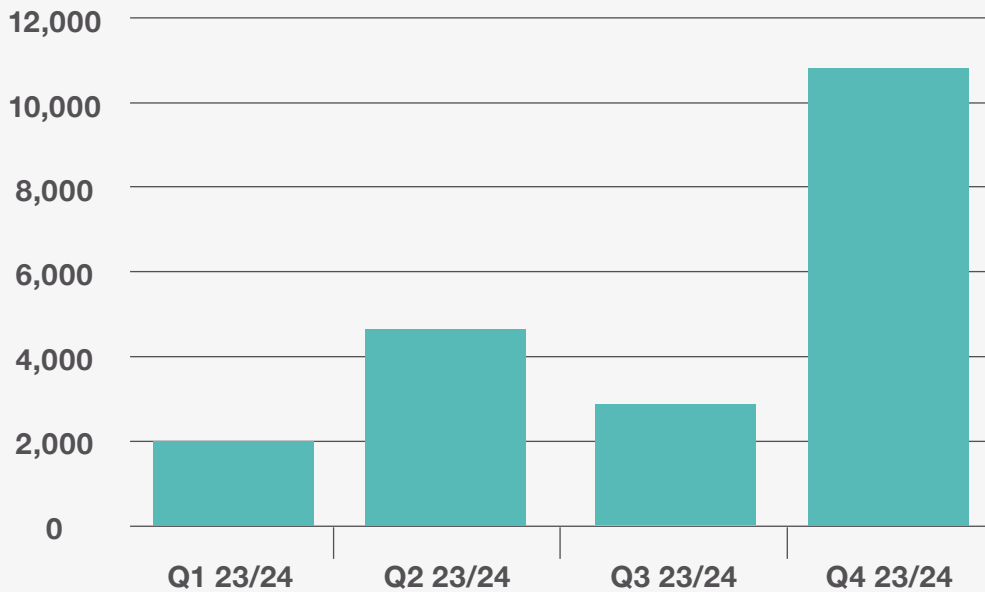
In FY23/24, we continued to make good progress towards achieving this goal, building on the solid start in the previous year.

What are we doing?

- We are working with wider government bodies (WGBs) to extend the reach of our three-tier training offer, accrediting 1,125 colleagues for FY23/24.
- By the end of March 2024, 249 WGB staff had passed through our Assessment and Development Centre.
- More than 21,200 people registered for our Commercial Standards Masterclasses, taking the total to over 56,000.

Commercial Standards Masterclass growth

Number of sign ups



Reporting FY 23/24

Total number of sign ups

21,207

What have we achieved?



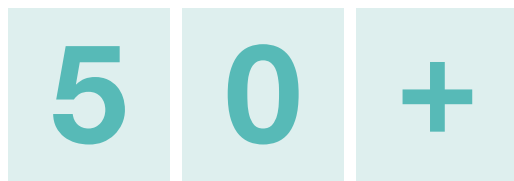
64% of participating organisations have re-baselined their Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF) self-assessments during FY23/24.



4% improvement in the overall maturity ratings for the cohort, from 61% in FY22/23 to 65% in FY23/24.

79% of participating organisations have a continuous improvement Plan in place – a 5% growth on FY22/23. There are around 1,700 active continuous improvement activities representing a 62% increase on FY22/23 – showing that more organisations have an increased focus on improving their commercial maturity.

Wider public bodies are now actively represented in the Masterclass programme **to share best practice from their commercial organisations.**



NHS, local government and wider public sector organisations are actively participating in the CCIAF leading practice activities with over 50 organisations using the CCIAF to benchmark themselves. A further 60+ wider public sector organisations are being onboarded in FY24/25.

70,000

At the end of FY23/24, more than 70,000 individuals accessed either knowledge drops, e-learning or formal Transforming Public Procurement (TPP) training

86%

The public sector Commercial Standards Masterclasses page on Government Commercial College experienced a significant increase in user registrations during FY23/24, with 2,000 new users signing up. This represents an 86% growth in the total number of registered users since the page was launched in September 2021, marking the largest yearly increase to date.

Case Study

UK Health Security Agency and CCIAF: Supporting a new commercial strategy



The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) prepares for and responds to infectious diseases, and environmental hazards, to keep all our communities safe, save lives and protect livelihoods. Since it was launched, UKHSA has been committed to developing innovative commercial practices.

UKHSA's commitment to developing innovative commercial practices has shaped our Commercial Directorate. Using the CCIAF, we benchmarked our commercial maturity shortly after becoming fully operational. The framework has provided an excellent platform for our continuous improvement efforts. Rather than restrict improvement plans to the recommendations in the Cabinet Office's individual CCIAF playback report, we set ourselves a challenging goal to work on improvements across all CCIAF themes.

We have maintained this momentum and conviction to develop our commercial practice by constantly reviewing our improvement plans. In November 2023 we conducted a full internal assessment of our practices. As part of this assessment, we reviewed and collated over 800 pieces of evidence to support our new CCIAF rating. This rigorous process resulted in a notable improvement in 60 criteria, reflecting the directorate's exceptional attention to detail and commitment to excellence.

Over the 18-month period from the initial assessment to the re-baselining, the team achieved a 15% increase in their overall CCIAF score. This insightful approach enabled detailed analysis and interpretation of complex data, leading to significant improvements in our assessment criteria. This achievement underscores the directorate's dedication to enhancing their commercial maturity and capability and strategically positions UKHSA to advance towards the next maturity rating in our upcoming self-assessment.

Sarah Collins, UKHSA Commercial Director, said: "I am incredibly proud of my team who have taken a proactive approach to the CCIAF. The framework is important as it measures our maturity level and benchmarks us against others. The CCIAF is intrinsically linked to our new commercial strategy, enabling us to continuously improve by working more effectively and efficiently."

Transforming public procurement

The arrival of the new Procurement Act 2023 and subsequent secondary legislation is a watershed for GCF. The Act transforms the legislative framework within which we all work. It also provides an opportunity for everyone involved in spending public money to get better value and better outcomes and to do so faster and more efficiently, while enhancing transparency.

Legislation is just one part of the Transforming Public Procurement (TPP) programme. This page shows the goals of each element of our programme, and the great progress we have made in each area.

Planning and preparing for implementation

We are supporting contracting authorities to prepare to operate in the new regime, with work spanning processes, systems, people and transition planning. We have established a network of commercial policy deputy directors in central government departments to lead on implementation and will continue to engage widely with departments and the wider public sector to embed the reforms.

We have also published information on the TPP landing page to share the vision for procurement reform and help contracting authorities and suppliers to get ready.



Next steps

We are confident that the new regime, made possible by the Act and supporting regulations, will go live in February 2025. As part of the rollout of the centrally funded training programme we expect to onboard several thousand new learners to the Government Commercial College (govcommercialcollege.co.uk) to undertake e-learning and access the advanced course of deep dives. The first phase of these e-learning products has been launched.

You can find out more information about the programme by visiting the [Transforming Public Procurement landing page](#) and signing up to our [newsletter](#).



Transforming Public Procurement QR code



UKHSA Newsletter QR code

Policy and legislation

As part of the planning and development of the Procurement Act 2023, policy teams and Cabinet Office legal advisers worked to set a robust policy and legal framework for the new public procurement rules, taking the legislation and regulations through Parliament. The Procurement Act received Royal Assent in October 2023.



Learning and development

We have developed our people's knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence so they can operate within the new regime and exploit its flexibility appropriately. We have developed a comprehensive, formal tutor-led and online learning and development (L&D) offer that will support contracting authorities right across the public sector to get to grips with the new regime.

Thirteen Knowledge Drops (bitesize audible learning materials giving an overview of the changes to the procurement regulations) launched in December 2023. By the end of FY23/24, 43,873 people had accessed these Knowledge Drops, 18,750 had completed formal e-learning and 6,768 had completed the more detailed deep dives.

Platform and systems

We intend to embed transparency by default throughout the procurement lifecycle, and simplify our existing systems by creating a single digital public procurement platform. The vision for the platform that will underpin the reformed system, described in our Transparency Ambition document, is also shaping up.

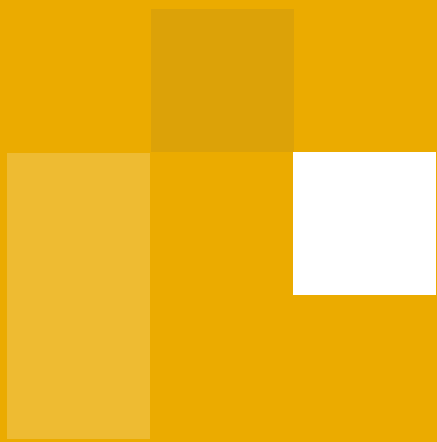
The platform will be delivered through a redesigned and enhanced Find a Tender Service and will be a single place for:

- buyers to publish notices relating to procurement processes and access commercial data
- suppliers to find and access public sector procurement opportunities
- everyone to access data about public procurement.

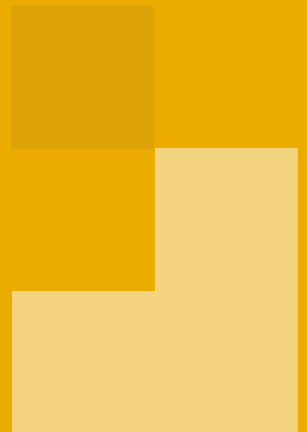
Monitoring and management

We have established a new mechanism for monitoring and investigating compliance with the new regime, including a central register of debarred suppliers.

The groundwork has been completed to establish the structure and ways of operating of the Procurement Review Unit that will have oversight over the new regime, monitoring compliance and managing the new debarment register to support the outcomes intended from the reforms to be realised.



Progress report



Our people

Increasing workforce capability drives delivery, value for money and savings



What are we doing?

Extending accreditation

As of 31 March 2024, the Government Commercial Organisation (GCO) had assessed and accredited 1,454 staff with an “A” at our Commercial Assessment and Development Centre.

In total, 25,002 Civil Servants successfully achieved accreditation at Foundation Level contract management through our online training platform by the end of FY23/24. And 142 people achieved accreditation at an advanced level, gaining the skills to make sure our more complex third-party contracts are managed effectively.

Training more people

We registered almost 60,000 attendances at Knowledge Drops covering our suite of playbooks, as well as completing almost 6,000 deep dives into playbook policies.

The key training product for TPP was launched in April 2024. This is 10 hours of accredited e-learning for all procurement practitioners. Over 10,000 public sector buyers have so far registered with over 4,800 awarded – and the training has satisfaction levels of over 90%.

Covering the country

More than 1,900 professionals attended our regional commercial and procurement conferences, delivered by the Regional Commercial Hubs and Councils in the North of England, South of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The satisfaction rates and feedback were outstanding, with over 97% of attendees being satisfied, while adding value to their career and commercial activities.

The conference in Northern Ireland was a particular success, and was the first face-to-face conference supported by the GCF in Northern Ireland since the Covid 19 pandemic.

Bringing people together

Our online Knowledge Hub community networking platform brings together 7,500 colleagues from more than 800 public sector organisations around the UK, into one commercial community.

Engagement rates are above the national average and the platform is used to host over 35 active groups, sharing best practice, networking and leading initiatives across the community. The GCF has also hosted quarterly All Staff Calls, consistently attracting over 1,000 registrations.

In November 2023 the GCF hosted its annual conference in London, following previous successful events in Harrogate and Leeds.

The GCF Awards 2023 attracted over 200 nominations, its highest ever. The public sector also gained its highest ever number of Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) Excellence in Procurement Awards finalists, with 32 in total.

We also produce a monthly GCF newsletter and GCO bulletins, to ensure communication is regular and timely.

What have we achieved?

Boosted talent support

Last year, we made concerted efforts to boost our talent management and learning programmes. We launched a ‘professions-led’ course for fast-streamers, supported by a programme of greater liaison with departmental mentors, in order to standardise progression through the GCO.

In early 2024 we launched a work experience scheme with accompanying handbooks for the next generation, alongside the first placements being completed in April 2024. GCO talent pools were relaunched in February 2024 and will open up across government departments throughout the year. Our GCO Mentoring Programme has already been re-launched using new software to drive efficiencies.

Improved performance management

In FY23/24 we launched a new performance management process and were pleased to see 93% successful completion by the end of the year. We continue to successfully conduct development programmes with talent selected for new cohorts due to participate in our accredited programmes and external development opportunities. We are also piloting a new executive team coaching offer.

Gained more recognition

Our talented workforce received a total of 211 nominations for the annual GCF awards. We supported Civil Service Live events in both Glasgow and Newcastle, demonstrating our ability to link experts within the Function to the wider Civil Service.



Become more inclusive

The 2023 National Inclusion Week was a great success, building on the foundations laid by the first such event in 2022. In 2023 the theme for the week was ‘Take Action Make Impact’, reinforcing the message that small actions can have a powerful effect. It was great to see so many of our people engaged and interested in working together to make the Function a more inclusive space.



Digital, Data and Transparency

Harnessing innovation to make us efficient and ‘mission-driven’, strengthening trust with citizens and business



What are we doing?

We are providing a Contracts Finder and Find a Tender Services (FTS) across government so that departments can publish awarded contracts in line with transparency standards.

We are delivering the digital component and central platform of Transforming Public Procurement (TPP), ahead of the new regime launching in February 2025.

The Public Procurement Gateway, our single registration and authentication service, is now live. The Crown Commercial Service is managing this service, onboarding suppliers and continuously improving its functionality.

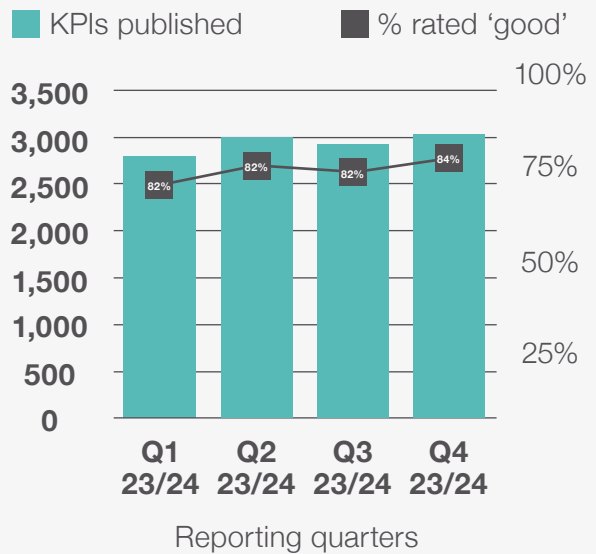
The single Supplier Information Platform has been prototyped and functionality is being improved to align with the requirements of the TPP programme.

Performance against our target for KPIs and contract notice publications continues to improve with further targeted interventions planned for FY24/25.

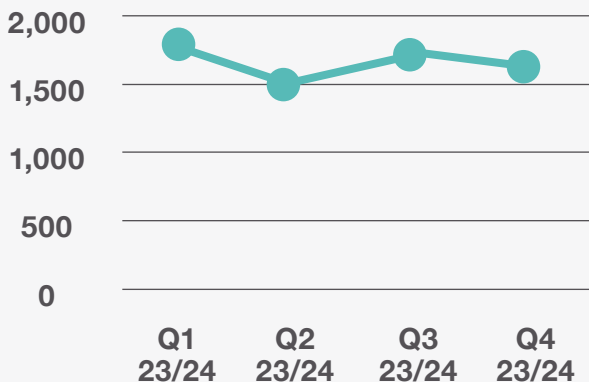
Key performance indicators (KPIs) for our most important contracts

10,636* Key performance indicators published covering

1,577* Unique published contracts



Publishing contract notices



Being transparent about the performance of our contracts is important to us, we are seeing improvements in both.

We are steadily working through the backlog of contract notices and getting closer to publishing all of our contract notices within 30 days of award.

The Commercial Function Leadership Group regularly monitors progress and implements new ways to drive up compliance.

*excluding Q4 23/24 data as the commission is still live

What have we achieved?



Created a data roadmap

We are delivering a Commercial Digital and Data Strategy that will outline a roadmap for effective data collection. The strategy is also being used to drive insight across the GCO. We have taken interim steps to ensure data standards and compliance are being monitored – and we are also closely linked to wider digital programmes.



Built a new platform

We launched a digital platform to make the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF) simpler, faster and more efficient for all public sector users. The new platform has been designed to be scalable and modular so it can be used beyond the CCIAF process. It has already generated significant benefits and efficiencies that are now being explored for roll out across other functions.



Enhanced reporting

Following a Governance Review, we explored current data capture systems and areas of duplication, to understand what data is actually needed, and to reduce duplicative commissioning. A Software-Defined Perimeter (SDP) process is being used for data discovery work. This will allow us to fully understand the data changes that occur and give us a holistic view of contracting authority data requirements – enabling the creation of enhanced reporting capabilities across contracting.



Standardised processes

A key strategy commitment is to converge to common procurement and contract management processes, procedures and tools across the majority of central Government departments. This includes defining and adopting standard source-to-pay processes and data standards through the Government Shared Services Programme.

Following a series of workshops, we developed a revised Source to Contract (S2C) taxonomy, launched on 31 March 2024, with the additional Global Data Areas (GDAs) launched at the end of April.

Case Study

Bringing Find a Tender in line with the new Transforming Public Procurement Act



One of the key aspects of the new Act is the development of the Central Digital Platform. This will be used for publishing procurement data. The project builds on and enhances the Cabinet Office’s existing Find a Tender service.

The current system of data collection is fragmented across multiple systems, making it difficult for central government and contracting authorities to use consistent data to make better, more targeted decisions which drive value for money in public spending.

The new platform will enable new standards of transparency for procurement data, with further functionality in 2025-26 to include new tools to analyse markets and spend, alongside noticing

requirements within the new legislation. It will also include a new registration and system process, so storing and sharing organisational data will be simpler. This will give suppliers a single portal to provide information and integrate existing systems.

The Platform will launch in February 2025, in line with the ‘go-live’ date for the new Procurement Act regulations

How we work

Ensuring social value is at the core of all government delivery goals



What are we doing?

Driving adherence to spend controls

We have delivered on our commitment to drive strict adherence to effective and proportionate spend controls across all central government and health spending, allowing greater autonomy where organisations can demonstrate sustained high performance and compliance. Our focus now is on providing continued assurance and consistent data sharing.

Rolling out common standards

We fulfilled our commitment to roll out a series of Blueprints and common standards, including on CCIAF. These are now being used across central government departments as well as being adopted by the wider public sector – and we will continue to monitor and enhance their use.

Sharing best practice

We have successfully worked with the Grants Function to share best practice, align processes and systems where appropriate, and strengthen governance of general grant funding in departments. Promoting Grants formed a core part of our activity at the 2024 Civil Service Live event. And we are continuing to collaborate through information and data sharing, as well as regular cooperation with core teams.

Removing bureaucracy

We are committed to removing unnecessary bureaucracy and barriers to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary community and social enterprises (VCSEs) by ensuring that our competitions are accessible and our major suppliers pay their supply chains promptly.

What have we achieved?

Launched new assessment tools

The Procurement Act received Royal Assent in October 2023 and the new regime is expected to commence in February 2025. The first L&D products have been launched and departments have assessed their readiness using the self-assessment tool provided by the Cabinet Office.

In November 2023 the Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF) was made available across the public sector. The NHS is looking to mandate its use across NHS trusts and the upper tiers of Local Government are voluntarily approaching the team to participate. The new cycles are in place for onboarding, re-baselining and continuous improvement updates. See the case study on page 12 for details.

Enhanced our understanding

The Government Major Contracts Portfolio (GMCP) enables reporting, progressive assurance and targeted intervention on the central government's 100 most critical contracts.

Our focus has been on consolidating and enhancing the outcomes and benefits realised by the GMCP through our business as usual. This has enabled us to strengthen the quality of our insights to improve our product.

Continued to tackle modern slavery

We successfully delivered on our commitments around modern slavery. We updated our published guidance on Tackling Modern Slavery in Government Supply Chains in March 2024 to reflect the data in the 2023 Global Slavery Index.

Case Study

Social Value Model Delivering social value as standard



We have worked hard to achieve our strategy commitments and embed a standard, cross-government approach to delivering social value and sustainability through the government’s commercial activities, including measuring and reporting social impact.

The policy implementation of the Social Value Model, including a minimum 10% social value weighting for all central government department procurements, and a standard approach to delivering social value, is now complete and embedded as standard practice.

We also rolled out social value reporting of commitments made against the Standard Reporting Metrics in the Social Value Model. We have assisted all the central departments wishing to implement the system, with all but three

being included. We will remain in contact with the three remaining departments in case their circumstances change.

We now monitor practices and promote continuous improvement through engagement with supplier representative bodies on the Social Value Network. All central departments are represented in the network, chaired by the Cabinet Office, with the aim of sharing best practice and supplier feedback.

Influence and scale

By working together we deliver more



What are we doing?

Working with customers

We launched departmental reporting of social value commitments against Standard Reporting Metrics in the Social Value Model. We are also working with customers directly on more social value focused projects to demonstrate a solutions capability in high impact problem solving – delivering bespoke value to customers on a co-design basis.

Helping implement best practice

All departments and associated arm’s length bodies are committed to identifying their strategic suppliers and implementing best practice supplier relationship management (SSRM) techniques in line with our standards. This is to reduce risk and increase value through jointly held plans. At the end of FY23/24, all departments in our central teams were operating a form of SSRM. There are varying levels of maturity, with some now performing to a high standard, but all are on the right track.

Our contracts

In 2023/2024, GCF colleagues in departments awarded around:

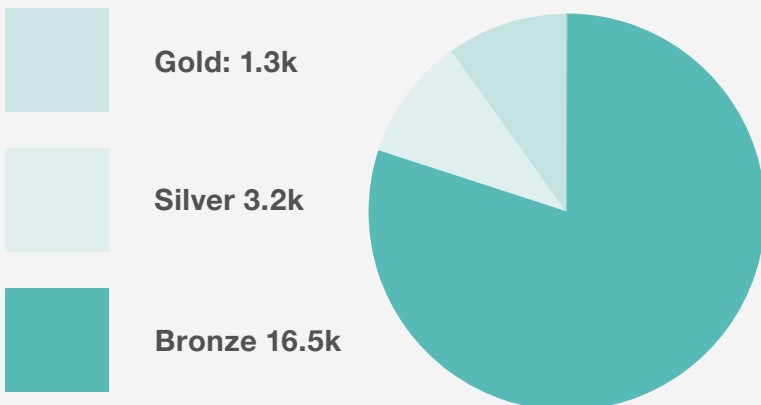


These contracts are split into three tiers, according to their importance

A contract’s tier indicates:

- What level of training a contract manager requires to be responsible for it
- The degree of risk associated with it
- Its strategic importance to the contacting authority and/or the Government as a whole.

Gold contracts are very closely monitored throughout the procurement life-cycle to ensure they operate as planned.





What have we achieved?



Refreshed the construction playbook

We began the refresh of the construction playbook in late 2023 and are working closely with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) to ensure that this aligns with (and responds to) the advice they have sent to ministers on the challenges of the UK construction sector.

This will provide additional help to contracting authorities in implementing the playbook principles, as well as outline the key changes and flexibilities that the Procurement Act will bring into force in Autumn 2024. We are also in the final stages of developing a new contract management playbook and plan to publish early in the year.



Established a commercial infrastructure

Crown Commercial Services (CCS) has established a commercial infrastructure for the public sector to access a Digital Procurement Platform for the purchase of common goods and limited services. CCS has continued to evolve the initial solution in line with customer requirements and is experiencing increasing uptake, benefits and satisfaction.



Reviewed benchmarking tools

The CCS assisted procurement service had previously been asked to increase the value of the procurement delivered on behalf of its customers. This has been measured by the annual contract value of the assisted procurements and the trajectory has been to increase value and reduce volume. This year we reviewed the appropriateness of the annual contract value target and agreed with the CCS Executive Board to stop using it as a benchmarking tool. It has yet to be determined whether the service is to be targeted at specific customers, specific agreements or volume, or a combination of those.



Coordinated risk monitoring

We successfully established a process for the central coordination of the monitoring of risk associated with strategic suppliers to government. We assess risk indicators and appropriate responses, including potential interventions, in relation to other cross government suppliers that present a high level of exposure across multiple departments.

Case Study

NASPO

Working with international procurement specialists



The National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO), the UK, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland commercial and procurement functions signed an agreement to collaborate.

This relationship will seek to focus on:

- 1** Sharing and benchmarking best practice (which links with our own CCIAF work)
- 2** Developing procurement and commercial capability by advancing global standards and sharing programme insights
- 3** Promoting procurement as a career of choice, engaging with young people, and enabling diversity and progression in our profession
- 4** Leveraging academic research and innovation to assist long-term decision making
- 5** Meeting the challenges of modern procurement, doing more with less and exploring new technology

Championing global procurement standards for the public sector is an exciting prospect, and the relationship was further strengthened when the NASPO senior leadership team visited the function. The NASPO delegation were hosted in Parliament, spent time meeting with the function in London, and sought to build upon the positive benefits for the communities we collectively serve.

It was an incredibly useful exercise for building relationships internationally, where the function was connected with state officials from Florida, Arizona, Tennessee, California, Utah, New York and Maryland. There is much we can learn from each other, with areas of strength varying across organisations. It is interesting to note that the UK is at the cutting edge of artificial intelligence (AI), contract management, ethics agreements and commercial playbooks.

What's next?



Our plan for 2024 – 2025

What we deliver is determined by the ruling government. Our job is to ensure our deliverables demonstrate continued improvement and underpin the following core principles:

- ensuring consideration of social value and fairness is mandatory in all we do
- adopting a culture of transparency with zero tolerance for corruption
- promoting innovation in our delivery.

We also want to continue to deliver all of the commitments outlined above, and we have prioritised five additional areas of focus for FY24/25:

Transforming Public Procurement

We are on track for a go-live date of February 2025. We will deliver a smooth and successful transition to the new regime by supporting contracting authorities to prepare to operate successfully, with a focus on process, systems, people and transition planning.

We will make sure the Procurement Review Unit (PRU), the new mechanism for monitoring and investigating legal compliance, is fully operational to ensure we fully realise the outcomes intended by the reforms.

Commercial standards and assurance

We will continue to raise standards through our new Procurement Review Unit and existing Commercial Standards and continuous improvement programme, deliver an efficient, effective and consistent service and maintain assurance efficiency wins.

We will continue to deliver spend controls in an effective manner by consistently applying the six tests. We will maintain and embed improvements based on direct feedback from stakeholders, demonstrating that commercial standards and assurance can take on board suggestions.

Data strategy

We will solidify work on simplifying and standardising common datasets and requirements to help commercial directors and the Commercial Function Leadership Group (CFLG) effectively run the GCF.

We will improve how data and reporting measure performance, outcomes and impact in recognisable terms – e.g. gross domestic product

(GDP), economic growth, social value. We will also continue to reduce the time and effort currently allocated to data collection and analysis, and develop an artificial intelligence (AI) strategy.

Talent and retention strategy

We will increase awareness of location strategies across the GCF. And include commercial entry level grades – EOs, HEOs, SEOs – in a comprehensive talent management strategy. We will update our Assessment and Development Centre (ADC) to bring it in line with the latest thinking on assessments, optimise virtual delivery and create a more agile and efficient system of testing and development.

Contract management capability programme refresh

We will improve the management of contracts, alongside continuing to train contract managers. We will encourage contract management to be seen and feel like it's part of the commercial profession and will ensure services procured are well managed and represent value for money.

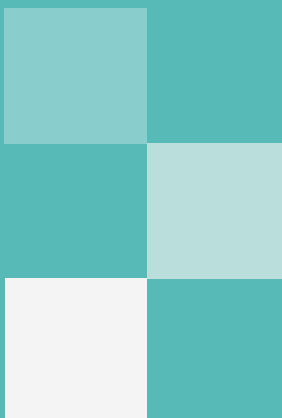
We will be clear that the discipline includes management of delivery, performance and suppliers and not just the service itself.

GCF Awards 2024

The GCF Awards recognise commercial and procurement excellence across the UK public sector in a range of categories. It celebrates the hard work, dedication and achievements of the commercial and public procurement community across the UK.

The GCF Awards 2024 will be held on Thursday, 28 November.

We hope you find this annual report useful. As the Government Commercial Function continues its journey to be ‘the best commercial function in the UK’, we will continue to deliver savings and contract performance for the public sector.





Government
Commercial
Function

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