



Government
Commercial
Function

Contract Management Capability Programme

Initial guidance and signposting for new in role contract managers

Guidance as you get started

Learning & development available

Good practice guidance

Sites providing additional resources

Communities of practice and networks



Introduction

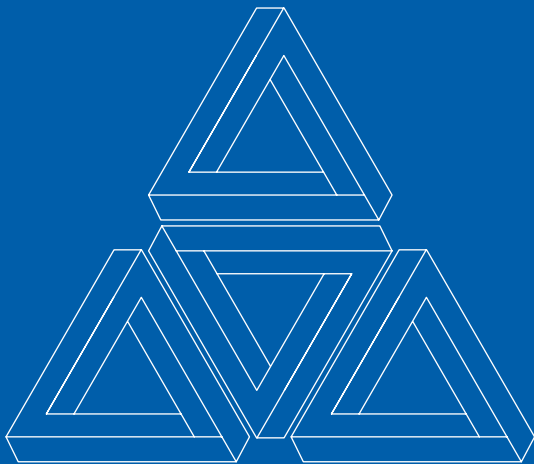
As roles and organisations change in the public sector, and the Procurement Act 2023 comes into place, demand for new personnel to manage public contracts and suppliers continues.

For some, this could be a stand-alone role in a smaller public sector organisation. For others, it could be starting to manage contracts as part of a wider role or starting in a new position within a larger contract management or commercial function. This can bring a new environment, new tasks and activities, and a new team of colleagues.

This desktop companion guide aims to help with the transition into a new role within the first few months by signposting to some of the resources, learning & development, and support that are available within the contract management space. It doesn't however provide operational guidance – which is the responsibility of your organisation.

This guide signposts to:

- Guidance as you get started
- Learning & development available
- Good practice guidance
- Sites providing additional resources
- Communities of practice and networks



Guidance as you get started

Likely duties and responsibilities

The Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply suggests that your role will likely take responsibility for managing contracts within your organisation, and adopting good practice for managing suppliers after the procurement processes.

In your role as a contract manager, you'll need to ensure suppliers conform to contractual terms, service level agreements (known as 'SLAs') and key performance indicators (known as 'KPIs'). You'll also identify key areas of opportunity and maximise commercial and service benefits, whilst minimising risk and delivering continuous improvement.

The sector professional body also suggests that as a contract manager your responsibilities will be varied. Depending on your influence across areas of the contract management lifecycle, they could broadly include:

- Providing procurement expertise to other colleagues and manage suppliers both pre-contract and post contract
- Delivering savings through a robust risk and issue management process
- Implementing the policies and procedures your organisation has put in place in the first instance, then looking to develop good practice as your role progresses
- Analysing internal processes and performance
- Understanding new technologies, trends, and their challenges
- Developing, measuring and monitoring KPIs and SLAs for categories of expenditure through supplier reviews
- Improving supplier performance through internal feedback
- Monitoring compliance with supply agreements by requesting supplier reports
- Managing central agreements by maintaining a central register of contracts, pricing, details and any associated documents
- Developing and maintaining processes for contracts that are due for renewal and provide feedback on recommended action
- Maintaining all systems information with current and updated supply terms

A typical contract management role

Key elements of a typical role within the public sector (such as at DEFRA, the source of this role chart) managing contracts and suppliers could be:



Skills and attributes

The **Contract Management Professional Standards** have been designed to guide contract management professionals within central government departments in their roles, and be adapted and used by wider public sector and local authority contract managers within their roles for consistency. These will help you by means of:

- Providing clarity on the skills and competencies required
- Setting out the business acumen, leadership skills, and technical knowledge needed to carry out contract management-related activities
- Highlighting key areas for learning & development
- Promoting the sharing of information and good practice

The Standards also champion working collaboratively, and building cross-functional relationships with colleagues from wider disciplines. This helps to strengthen expertise all across the sector – with the extent of working relationships varying according to the nature of the contract and the supplier relationship.

The criteria for the Contract Management Professional Standards

Technical skills

- Design and ongoing development
- Procurement and mobilisation
- Change control
- Managing contract delivery and exit & transition
- Stakeholder and supplier engagement
- Risk management

Business acumen

- Contract literacy
- Financial literacy
- Risk mindset
- Political insight

Relationships and leadership

- Tenacity
- Decisive and clear thinking
- Relationships and stakeholder management
- Supplier market understanding

Capabilities

The Government Commercial Function technical capability guidance suggests that these capabilities are fundamental to contract delivery and performance management:

Market development

Able to analyse supply markets to understand key characteristics of new markets to inform whether market making or development is required.

Framework management

Able to manage the framework and procurement processes via use of a framework, including specific maintenance activities and interaction with suppliers through the tender process.

Contract mobilisation

Able to:

- Allocate the contract to a tier in accordance with the commercial governance framework
- Agree roles and responsibilities for managing the contract
- Agree the budget for the contract and processes for committing and monitoring contract spend
- Create a contract management plan
- Create and track the mobilisation plan

Intellectual Property Rights

Able to embed Intellectual Property Rights throughout the implementation processes

Contract delivery & performance management

Able to:

- Ensure the necessary resources, processes (to include disputes) and systems are in place and are used in the management of the contract and supplier performance
- Review supplier performance in line with the contractual obligations, and deals with under-performance in line with the contract
- Provide reports to the senior business owner against the Contract Management Plan, KPIs and Obligations Matrix

Contract change control

Able to justify, control and record changes to the contract to ensure requirements continue to meet business needs.

Contract transition and exit

Able to define a transition plan in accordance with contractual provision to include responsibilities for each party, manages contract exit through updating contract documentation and approvals, ensures timely and comprehensive provision of handover data, assets and guidance from incumbent supplier and a smooth transition to the new provider/ in house/ cessation of provision by an authorised representative and considers all measures to minimise cost and impact of exit.

Re-procurement

Able to support colleagues in the commercial function by contributing to re-procurement and new sourcing exercises, using information sources – ensuring contract governance is set up and drawing on lessons learned.

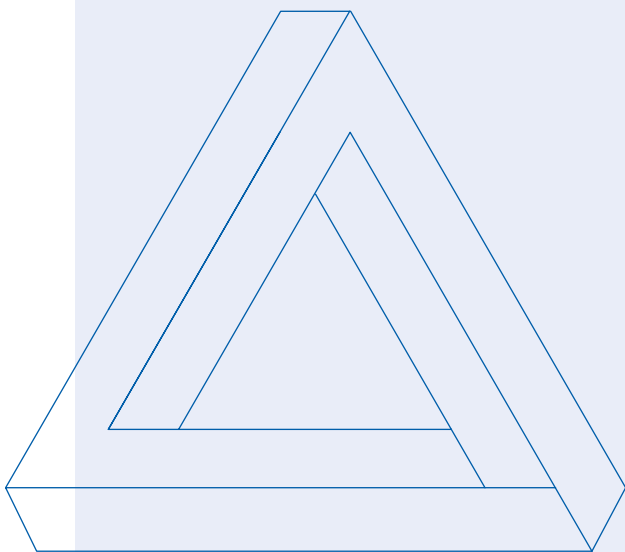
Systems expertise

Able to understand the specific systems underpinning commercial activity and strong working knowledge of how to use these systems.

Operational good practice

If you are based within a larger team, seek out the organisation's contract management policy, and guidance such as any toolkit or tiering guide. If you are in a stand-alone role or small cross-functional team, here are some helpful examples of a **contract management policy**, toolkit and register (within the 'Good practice' folder in the 'Resources' tab on Central government and wider public sector contract management network on K-Hub) as developed by the Cabinet Office & HM Treasury's contract management function, and also the Contract Management Capability Programme's **contract tiering guide**.

These all cover likely key areas of activity; contract implementation, tiering categories, operations, performance management, risk, contingency, managing change, supplier relationships, disputes, escalations, finance, value for money, continuous improvement, benchmarking, contract exit and transition.



Learning & development available

Foundation accreditation

An ideal starting place for your learning and development when new to managing public contracts is the Contract Management Capability Programme's **Foundation** accreditation course.



The programme of modules sets the baseline for knowledge of the principles of public sector contract management. It acts as a basis for further development and progression and provides a fundamental understanding of all elements of the contract lifecycle.

It is a flexible online programme that offers e-learning to suit your circumstances, workload and time constraints. Achieving the accreditation (after passing the short end assessment) will provide recognition for your emerging contract management expertise, knowledge and skills.

A series of concise (60-90 mins) modules cover:

- **Contract design and ongoing development;** sustainable contracts, records and data, building relationships, performance management
- **Procurement and mobilisation;** the essentials of procurement regulations, supporting a commercial team, planning for the mobilisation of a contract
- **Managing contract delivery;** mobilisation, ensuring optimum performance, managing disputes, exit or transition to a new contract
- **Change control;** the change process, governance, stakeholders, tools & documentation
- **Stakeholder engagement;** stakeholder mapping, interest and influence, effective engagement, communications
- **Managing risk;** risks and issues, risk management, common risk

Modules are taken individually, and as the course is centrally funded it comes at no cost to you or your organisation. Foundation accreditation is needed as a base to progress to Practitioner (operational level) or Expert (strategic level) accreditations.

Other learning & development

There are other learning activities you can consider to help expand your knowledge.

Beyond Foundation

A 'dip in, dip out' **programme** containing a number of stand-alone modules pitched at helping you take steps upward from the Foundation baseline accreditation, ready for the technical requirements of the next stage.

SALSA ('Stop, And Learn Something About...') and SAS ('Skills And Solutions') webinars

An annual series of short & sharp (50-60 mins) free-to-attend webinars held every two or three weeks by the Contract Management Capability Programme. Invited presenters cover a range of subjects such as stakeholder engagement, managing contracts in difficult circumstances, the fundamentals of contract management, benchmarking and CPD. These are publicised in the monthly Contract Management Bulletin and via the 'Events' tab on Central government and wider public sector contract management network on K-Hub.

Master-classes

Government Commercial College offers stand-alone **master-classes** in key areas such as social value, modern slavery, commercial standards, or diversity & inclusion.

Transforming Public Procurement

The **Transforming Public Procurement** programme offers learning modules based on the changes brought about by the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023. These will provide an overview of, and insight into the material changes under the new Act, the regular interactions with procurement colleagues needed, and can help with your fundamental understanding of the new legislation.

Skills for the civil service and wider public sector

At a more fundamental level, the essential skills you can develop for working within the civil service and the wider public sector are set out at **Government Campus**.

Many are common to all public sector organisations. You can find guidance **here** as a base, ready to help you then develop a broader range of core and specialist skills.

Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply (CIPS)

CIPS, a professional association with a focus on procurement through to contract management, offers a number of introductory **e-learning products** for interest to new contract managers such as contract administration, contract negotiations, financial management.

WorldCC

(Previously the International Association for Contract & Commercial Management) WorldCC, another professional association with a focus on global contract management, also offers short courses on the **Fundamentals of Commercial and Contract Management**, and **Commercial and Contract Management Certification**.

Good practice guidance

A useful first port of call signposting summary of the good practice resources and information available all in one place is the **Contract Management Good Practice Guide** from the Contract Management Capability Programme.

The **Contract Management Playbook** [published Autumn 2024] developed across 2023/24 provides commercial, finance, operational, project delivery, policy and other professionals with practical guidance on the guidelines, rules and principles that will help them to avoid the most common errors observed in managing contracts, and help optimise the benefits that can be realised through the contracts they manage.

It covers:

- Strategic contract management
- Contract management in the pre-award stages
- Mobilisation
- Managing contract delivery and exit
- Change management
- Managing stakeholders
- Risk management
- How contract management aligns with the Procurement Act

There are also a number of sources across the public sector for obtaining information on contract management good practice. Some prominent sources are:

The **<https://khub.net/web/government-contract-management-network>** (stored on Central government and wider public sector contract management network on K-Hub [see below] with its own tab called 'GCF CM Guide') is a cross-government reference guide with templates, practical advice and broad guidance. It covers similar key areas to the Playbook, and others such as performance management, escalations and disputes, financial controls and benchmarking & value for money.

Whilst not specific to managing contracts, the **Sourcing Playbook** is nonetheless a useful source of references for stages prior to the award of the contract, and covers; commissioning and managing consultants, key performance indicators, social value, improved delivery model assessments, and the 'Should Cost Model' offering.

The **National Audit Office good practice contract management framework** was first published in 2008, and updated in 2016. It focuses on the activities that organisations should consider when planning and delivering contract management rather than their overarching approach to commercial and contract management.

It has particular relevance to service contracts where service levels and value have to be maintained and improved often across long contract periods.

As a sister guide to the good practice contract management framework, the National Audit Office has also produced **Commercial and contract management: insights and emerging best practice**.

Crown Commercial Services has produced a couple of resources that would be of interest to the new contact manager. As part of their 'Procurement Essentials' series (a series of articles to help you overcome common hurdles, understand key concepts, and make your life as a buyer of everyday goods and services easier) here is an **introductory guide** to effective contract management beyond choosing a supplier.

Based on the National Audit Office good practice contract management framework as above, Crown Commercial Services has also produced a **summary** of the fundamental activities to be undertaken during the operational phase of a contract.

Sites providing additional resources

Here are two useful platforms with which to register and log-in:

Government Commercial College

Government Commercial College is a learning and development platform through which online training and accreditation courses within commercial and contract management capability can be undertaken

Central government and wider public sector contract management network

The **Central government and wider public sector contract management network** platform is a resource with good practice advice, updates, topical items and content, articles, webinar presentations and information training & development opportunities.



It is also an engagement tool; both as a networking forum with scope for 'Ask the members' discussions or putting people together, and also acting as a platform where like-minded colleagues can leave messages or be signposted towards other networks.

Professional associations

Two professional associations which offer information and resources relevant to managing contracts are World Contracting & Commerce (WorldCC) and the Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply (CIPS). WorldCC, formerly the Institute of Commercial & Contract Management, WorldCC offers **access** to good practice, case studies, articles, resources, research, training, events and communities of practice.

These cover for example: **contracting standards**, contracting principles, contract design, relational and collaborative contracting, social value and supply ecosystems.

CIPS has an **intelligence hub** which explores the fundamentals of contract management. It covers the need for effective strategies and processes, how contract management works, pre-award stage, post-award stage, why the contract is being established, and whether the supplier will be able to deliver. This includes service delivery, supplier relationships, contract administration, formal management of the contract and how to draft a contract management strategy.

Whilst more about career development, but nonetheless a valuable resource, the **CPD Standards Office** champions the principles of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as part of your personal development, and to help to foster a culture of good practice across the sector. Information on CPD and your personal development is available on their website.

Communities of practice and networks

Internal networks

There are an increasing number of good practice networks and communities of practice within the field of contract management across the public sector. Many organisations have developed their own internal community.

If you're unsure who is the key contact for your internal network just email the Partnerships Team on gcfengagement@cabinetoffice.gov.uk and they will put you in touch with a senior lead for contract management within your wider organisation who will be able to help.

Wider networks

You can also join wider networks of like-minded colleagues. Your first port of call should be the 'Groups' function on **Central government and wider public sector contract management network** on K-Hub. There are some networks established, and you can also put out a call via this platform to others in the same situation who can signpost or help establish your own.



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