

# **Procurement Policy**

## Contents

<b>Document Control</b> .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
<b>1. Statement of Aims and Objectives</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2 Scope of Practice</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>3 Responsibilities</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4 Associated Trust Documentation</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>5 How the Team will ensure compliance with Public Procurement Regulations</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>6 Code of conduct</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>7 How we will protect all forms of sensitive data</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>8 How we will undertake supplier sourcing, contracting and achieving VFM</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>9 How we will ensure we maintain an accurate and up-to-date contract register</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>10 How we will support the organisation manage contracts effectively</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>11 How we will deliver and/or contribute to responsible procurement</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>12 How we will upskill the Team and the wider organisation</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>13 Adherence to procurement thresholds and the waiver process</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>14 How will the Procurement Team drive continuous improvement</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>15 Financial Checkpoint</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>16 Equality Analysis</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix A – Procurement Thresholds</b> .....	<b>18</b>

## **1. Statement of Aims and Objectives**

- 1.1 South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) has an overall purpose of saving lives and serving our communities. This Procurement Policy aims to assist with enabling our three strategic aims of delivering high quality care, creating an environment that people enjoy working in and being a sustainable partner:
- Delivering High Quality Care – demonstrated by ensuring we procure fit for purpose medical equipment and medical consumables in a timely and efficient manner
  - Our People Enjoy Working at the Trust – demonstrated by procuring the right contractors to maintain and clean our buildings and restock our ambulances
  - We are a Sustainable Partner – demonstrated by producing tender evaluation reports which evidence compliant procurement activity and achievement of overall best value which will demonstrate evidence of inclusion of criteria such as sustainability and social value.
- 1.2 The Procurement Team (“the Team”) have developed a Procurement Workplan of anticipated work including open and competitive flexible tenders, further competitions (against public sector buying organisations (PSBO’s) frameworks<sup>1</sup>) and, in exceptional cases, direct awards against frameworks and SFI waivers. This Workplan details the requirements and timescales for all procurement activities that the Team expect will need to be undertaken, which will be achieved through exploiting frameworks and collaboration with other NHS bodies, most notably, the Southern Ambulance Services Collaboration (“SASC”).
- 1.3 The Team will work closely with all stakeholders across all directorates and most notably those in Finance, Estates, Fleet, Logistics and Digital Services to ensure capital is spent compliantly, timely and in line with the capital plan.
- 1.4 In 2025 the Team will draw together all the procurement practices and procedures into a new Standing Operating Procedures.
- 1.5 This policy is applicable to all employees and third-party consultants such as building surveyors who are acting on the Trust’s behalf and engaged in purchasing activity or dealing with third-party suppliers and sets out the scope, rules, procedures and behavioural standards.
- 1.6 This Policy is authored and owned by the Associate Director of Procurement. The Policy will be reviewed every three years to synchronise with the review of the Procurement Strategy.

## **2 Scope of Practice**

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<sup>1</sup> PSBO Frameworks such as NHS Supply Chain, NHS Commercial Alliance, Crown Commercial Services, SBS etc

- 2.1 This Policy articulates how we will ensure that our procurement procedures, processes and practices adhere to the applicable Public Regulations 2024 (“PR24”), arising from the Procurement Act 2023 (“the Act”) and Public Contract Regulations 2015 (“PCR 2015”) so we are legally compliant as well as conforming to our organisation’s Standing Financial Instructions (SFI) and Scheme of Delegation.
- 2.2 The Procurement Strategy focuses on intent, by contrast the Procurement Policy states at high level how the Procurement Team will deliver against its objectives. The Standing Operating Procedures will provide the finer detail.

### **3 Responsibilities**

- 3.1 The Team will work proactively with directorate stakeholders as well as SASC colleagues to deliver against the Trust’s and SASC’s Collaborative Workplan.
- 3.2 The Associate Director of Procurement will be responsible for ensuring the Team comply with this Policy and to alert the CFO if compliance concerns arise across the Trust.
- 3.3 The Associate Director of Procurement will be accountable to the Trust Board through the Finance & Investment Committee and Audit & Risk Committee.
- 3.4 All employees are responsible for adhering to this policy and to this end the Associate Director of Procurement is available to offer training to directorate employees in relation to this policy.
- 3.5 Periodic review by Internal Audit will report on the effectiveness of this policy and the degree by which it is being complied with.

### **4 Associated Trust Documentation**

- 4.1 This policy is linked to the Procurement Strategy.
- 4.2 The policy will also be linked to Procurement Standing Operating Procedures which will be developed in 2025.

### **5 How the Team will ensure compliance with Public Procurement Regulations**

- 5.1 Where the Team are amending/varying contracts awarded under the PCR2015 we will continue to ensure compliance with PCR2015. Similarly, where we are running further competitions or direct awards from PSBO frameworks awarded under PCR2015 we will continue to observe and comply with these regulations. The Team will need to publish details of all contracts awarded, that fall below threshold<sup>2</sup> contracts, in line with two publishing thresholds:

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for details of the Procurement Thresholds

- £30,000 (incl VAT) for contracts awarded under PCR2015; and
- £12,000 (incl VAT) for contracts awarded after 24th February 2025 under the new Act.

5.2 The Act came into force on 24th February 2025, the Team has undertaken detailed eLearning training with regard to the Act and will ensure compliance with these regulations for all new procurement activity that is not already covered by PCR2015.

5.3 Members of the Team will support each other so there is a shared understanding and practical implementation of the new regulations and will observe all the notice and transparency requirements which the Act imposes.

5.4 The Team will utilise the eProcurement platform of Atamis to administer its formal tendering activity to ensure it remains fully compliant with legislative and regulatory obligations.

5.5 The Associate Director of Procurement will ensure that the Team is updated on the implications of relevant case law through Team discussion, input from our retained legal services provider and, where appropriate, amendments to our procedures and processes which will be documented in our Standing Operating Procedures. We will also be mindful to comply with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

## **6 Code of conduct**

6.1 The Team will observe public procurement ethics, and an audit trail of our activity is therefore essential to demonstrate this. The Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply has a Code of Conduct which the Procurement Team complies with. The basic test is "Could I defend this action in public?"

6.2 There are four key principles underpinning our high standard of ethical behaviour:

- employees do not allow (or foster any suspicion of) any conflict between official and private interests
- employees are not influenced by any gift/consideration, or show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation
- dealings with suppliers are always honest, fair and even-handed
- the standards are promoted and supported by systems and procedures.

6.3 The Team members will maintain the highest standard of integrity in all business relationships, by:

- rejecting any business practice which might be deemed improper
- never using their authority or position for their own financial gain or that of friends, acquaintances or family
- declaring to their line manager any personal interest that might affect, or may be seen by others to affect, their impartiality in decision-making

- ensuring that the information they give in the course of their work is accurate and not misleading
- never breaching the confidentiality of information, they receive in a professional capacity
- striving for genuine, fair and transparent competition
- being truthful about their skills, experience and qualifications.

6.4 Our core values of integrity, courage and kindness reflect in this code of conduct and our behaviour; we also need to demonstrate:

- fairness
- honesty, openness and transparency
- efficiency and effectiveness
- professionalism.

6.5 The Team will ensure that we are fair and seen to be fair, to potential providers, suppliers, contractors by:

- competitive tendering: treating all firms invited to bid equally, not give any information, or relax conditions, to one firm unless all of them have the same treatment
- being non-discriminatory: employees must be honest, fair and impartial in dealing with suppliers and, in particular, not discriminate against the employees of contractors on any grounds; the legitimate interests of both the supplier and the Trust should be recognised in negotiating and administering contracts
- avoiding casual contacts: avoid casual enquiries from potential suppliers; all requests should be based on a serious intention to buy something unless there is a legitimate need to benchmark costs or undertake market engagement
- being a good customer: we must maintain a reputation as a good customer, so we should take all possible steps to make it as convenient as possible for suppliers to deal with us; we should deal with them promptly, courteously and professionally
- aiming to build good working relationships/partnerships with core, key and prominent suppliers, providers and contractors
- preparing for meetings with representatives of suppliers: the way we behave at meetings with outside organisations reflects on us; employees should brief themselves fully on matters to be discussed at meetings and we should be punctual, take notes and record a file note if appropriate and necessary
- ensuring that all conflicts of interest in relation to procurement activity, whether actual, potential or perceived, are monitored, recorded and resolved in an appropriate manner.

- 6.2 The purchases we make using the Trust's funds are under constant scrutiny. Expenditure is subject to internal audit review to ensure probity and propriety. We will retain all key purchasing documentation in electronic format and keep it secure in accordance with our retention policy. This is to make the audit trail clear.
- 6.7 We separate duties to make sure that the same individual cannot make a requisition, purchase and authorise payment for goods or services. This is embedded within the Trust's Standing Financial Instructions.
- 6.8 Additionally, our code of conduct requires that:
- those involved in the purchasing process make others aware of suppliers' anti-competitive behaviour, for example, evidence of cartels
  - those involved in the purchasing process make others aware of any conflicts of interest as the need for impartiality is key to the integrity of the process
  - we should not use suppliers where there is evidence that they exploit people unfairly (for instant, flout the Modern Slavery Act)
  - we should not use suppliers where there is evidence that they disregard health and safety legislation
  - we should not use suppliers where there is evidence that they cause excessive damage to the environment
  - we should not use suppliers where there is evidence that they pirate or breach intellectual property laws
  - we seek to minimise the environmental impact of our sourcing decisions
  - any organisations working on our behalf are aware of our code of conduct and act similarly.
- 6.9 As public servants, the Team will observe and adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life:
- **Selflessness** – We will act solely in terms of the public interest; we should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for ourselves, our family or our friends.
  - **Integrity** – We will not place ourselves under any financial or other obligation to individuals or organisations that might seek to influence us in the performance of our official duties.
  - **Objectivity** - In awarding contracts and undertaking procurement activities we will make choices on merit and VFM.
  - **Accountability** – We will be accountable for our decisions and actions to the public and must submit ourselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to our roles.
  - **Openness** – We will be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that we take. We will give reasons for our decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it or when there are commerciality restrictions.
  - **Honesty** - We have a duty to declare any private interests relating to our public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

- **Leadership** – We will promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## **7 How we will protect all forms of sensitive data**

- 7.1 It is important that Procurement employees protect intellectual property rights and commercial information from unauthorised access by third parties, or misuse by the parties bound by a contract. Our terms and conditions of contract will show what we require. The Team may suggest having a separate confidentiality agreement if the information that the supplier/contractor will have access to is highly sensitive.
- 7.2 Where a supplier or contractor will have access to the Trust's personal data it will be regarded as a 'processor' as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. In such cases it will be the responsibility of the Team to approach the Trust's governance employees for advice. A data protection risk assessment will need to be completed as part of the process and a further Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) might be deemed appropriate in certain cases. Once any personal data risk has been assessed, the Team will arrange through governance colleagues for a Third-Party Data Processing Agreement to be drawn up and included with the contract award documentation for the supplier or contractor to sign and commit to.
- 7.3 Contract records should be retained for six years beyond contract expiry in conformance with the [National Archives Records Management Retention Scheduling for Contractual Records](#). The Trust will look to retain records in electronic format via MS SharePoint or file drives in registers designated for this purpose.

## **8 How we will undertake supplier sourcing, contracting and achieving VFM**

- 8.1 The Team will advertise the Trust's supply requirements where the procurement thresholds show competition or formal tendering is necessary. The Team will advertise via Atamis, so we are compliant with the relevant procurement regulations. A summary of the procurement thresholds is appended at Appendix A. If the anticipated contract value is above the relevant tender threshold Atamis will automatically publish the requirement in the Find a Tender service unless we are accessing a regulatory compliant framework as this will be a 'closed' competition.
- 8.2 We will conduct a closed mini/further competition if our requirement can be met through a pre-existing framework; one that might have been awarded by us or a public sector buying organisation (PSBO) such as Crown Commercial Service or NHS Supply Chain for example. We prefer to use a mini/further competition against a framework approach as it means that the suppliers are pre-approved (i.e. due diligence undertaken), maximum charge rates should be known and apply, and terms and conditions of engagement are pre-agreed and would protect our interests better than



suppliers' own terms – thus using frameworks is our preferred route to market. Furthermore, this approach can be more efficient in that timelines for tendering activity can be reduced.

- 8.3 When the Team awards 'call-off' contracts from framework agreements, we will seek approval of the relevant budget holder and once the 'call-off' has been placed we will issue an instruction to the customer to raise a Purchase Order so as to capture the financial commitment in SBS. We will follow a similar process when we have completed a tender process.
- 8.4 Under the new Act we must award contracts on the basis of the bidder who has provided the most advantageous tender (MAT). This is one where it is not only the cost that is important, but also consideration of issues such as capability, quality, delivery, social value and added value. Additionally, it is contrary to regulations to permit any deliberate disaggregation of a procurement need to circumvent the procurement thresholds. Disaggregation is where an organisation has, for example, a requirement for 200 laptops and intently reduces the quantity so that it can use different suppliers or come below the procurement thresholds which would have necessitated formal tendering procedures to be adopted.
- 8.5 Formal contracts will be documented and issued by the Team for all supplies, services and works which go through the Team. The Associate Director of Procurement should execute all formally tendered contracts up to £250K in value. The CFO will be approached for those that exceed this value. Contracts can take various forms, for instance:
- if we are 'calling off' from a framework then we would use the framework call-off terms
  - for service contracts we could use NEC3 or 4 Term Service Contract
  - for capital works projects we would tend to use the JCT suite of contracts
  - there's an expectation that all other contracts will use NHS standard terms & conditions unless the Team agree that a supplier's terms can be used.
- 8.6 For capital works projects we would expect to engage a Building Surveyor or other building expert from our expert panel to scope the project, assist in the tender process (for instance, scope the technical requirements, host site visits, etc) and complete the tender evaluation and then draft the JCT contract and project manage the works.
- 8.7 Where there is an issue concerning contractual terms & conditions, whether our own or a suppliers', then the Trust's employees should refer these issues/concerns to their directorate's Procurement Contract Manager, in the first instance, for advice/direction. The Associate Director of Procurement will be able to seek formal commercial law advice from our retained lawyers if this is required.
- 8.8 We have a responsibility to ensure that when procuring goods, services, consultancy support and works from external providers, these providers have eliminated unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. We strive to deal with suppliers fairly and ethically.

- 8.9 We ensure that suppliers, contractors or service providers accept their legal duties in this area and take them seriously. We do this by:
- including terms and conditions in contracts which requires that a contractor does not unlawfully discriminate and positively promotes equality and diversity in supplying and delivering goods, works or services and in employment
  - ensuring that, for procurement exercises for appointing consultants or contracting services which will involve high levels of people interaction with the Trust's employees or patients, the selection/award questionnaire and/or the Invitation to Tender documentation include questions about equality and diversity for completion by the tenderers
  - identifying which of them are likely to be at risk of falling foul of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 in terms of trafficking or using slave labour and we would carry out additional due diligence checks such as asking them to complete a detailed questionnaire and having sight of their policies in this area.
- 8.10 The Associate Director of Procurement will determine which suppliers will have 'preferred supplier' status. For instance, those suppliers who have been awarded Trust-wide framework agreements and contracts or specific 'call-off' agreements will be afforded this status. This status is as a result of a competitive tendering process or clear evidence of providing great value for money, for instance, through benchmarking. The Master Preferred Supplier List (MPSL) will be made available to Trust employees via the Procurement intranet page and the Team will review the MPSL quarterly. Suppliers on the MPSL will be awarded a place for their contract term. For suppliers on the MPSL there will be no requirement for the Trust to observe the procurement quotation thresholds as long as the Trust are procuring goods, services, consultancy or works that are within the financial and technical scope of the contract awarded.
- 8.11 The creation of the MPSL is to help the Trust employees use suppliers which have been formally scrutinised by the Team and been subject to competitive activity or benchmarking to evidence the suppliers offer value for money and the use of them will be compliant with regulations. The MPSL will offer a direct source to market for the goods and services these suppliers offer without the need to go back out to market for the period of time the suppliers are listed on the MPSL.
- 8.12 In addition to formal tendering, which the Team should be directly involved with and administer, there are other means of purchasing which are decentralised:
- electronic requisitions/purchase orders (these must be raised using SBS and approved by the budget holder and only if there is adequate budget provision; the Team will review these) NB the Trust has a NoPONOy policy which is documented in the SFIs

- the Trust has precision pay and virtual credit cards for unavoidable emergency needs and one-off low value purchases.

8.13 The Team has responsibility for the verification process of setting up new suppliers – the process includes:

- verifying details of the 'new supplier' set-up form, completed by the Trust (if supplier used is not on SBS already)
- completing a credit check
- seeking the completion of an anti-slavery questionnaire if deemed necessary
- passing to SBS for the final checks in relation to bank account details and setting up the supplier.

## **9 How we will ensure we maintain an accurate and up-to-date contract register**

9.1 The Team will oversee the recording of contracts on a centrally maintained contract register which should log all of the Trust's commercial contractual commitments. The contract register will record the following key information on the Atamis eProcurement Platform:

- Contract name (summary description of goods, services, consultancy or works) and Type, i.e. contract, 'call-off', catalogue, Framework Agreement
- Procurement Regulations which applied
- Procurement route
- Justification for direct award (if this has been used)
- Short description
- Contract award value
- Social value applicability (plus further information if it doesn't apply)
- Framework title (if a framework was used)
- Procurement lead (owner)
- Contract owner (directorates employee who manages the day-to-day activities of the services/contract)
- Business Unit, Budget Holder and Cost Centre
- Date requirement advertised
- Supplier name
- Business continuity (criticality of goods/services, ease of changing suppliers, and size of supply market)
- Contract reference (to be used on all requisitions/POs)
- Primary and Secondary Categories (category that best describes the goods or services used in the contract)
- Start date
- Expiry date
- Applicable extension terms (maximum dates for extension period, i.e. 1-year, 2-years etc)
- Exit Notice Date and Exit Review Date

- 9.2 It is important to have an up-to-date contract register for the following benefits:
- an accurate overview of all our contractual commitments
  - an assessment of contractual financial obligations
  - a list of our main suppliers and who should be managing these contracts
  - an understanding of when these contracts are expected to expire and if they have an extension option
  - an understanding of what notice needs to be given to terminate the contract to ensure it doesn't automatically roll over
  - helps us comply with SFIs and Procurement Regulations
  - allows the Team to plan for tendering activity to leverage and/or collaborate our spend and get better value for money and release funds for front-line patient care
  - minimises risk of auto renewal on unfavourable terms and poor value for money.
- 9.3 It is also important that the contract register is reviewed on a monthly basis for accuracy, completeness and to identify those contracts coming up for expiry/renewal in six months' time or prior to renewal notice period. Where contracts are up for expiry or renewal, a member of the Team will instigate a discussion with the Contract Owner to ascertain if the contract needs to be retendered, extended or will lapse on expiry. If the contract is to lapse on expiry a Notice will need to be published.
- 9.4 When a new contract is entered on the contract register it is crucial that the Team determine if a corresponding entry needs to be entered on the Workplan so that when the contract is coming up for renewal or ending that it is properly reviewed and if there is a need to continue in some way with the contract requirements that there is a procurement strategy for dealing with this and the resulting activity is captured.

## **10 How we will support the organisation manage contracts effectively**

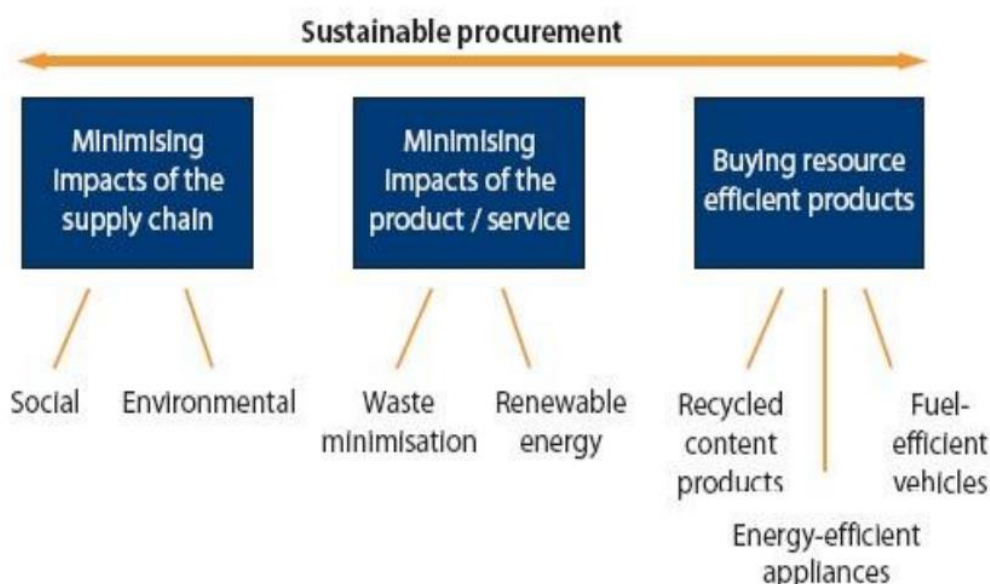
- 10.1 Responsibility for managing service, consultancy and works contracts rests with the immediate customer of the service. For instance, Digital Services will manage network services contracts, Estates & FM will manage cleaning and waste management services, etc. Contracts for major building works may have multiple inputs but these contracts are likely to be project managed by a qualified building surveyor, overseen by Estates & FM; the extent of management involvement should be agreed at a pre-start meeting with the main building contractor.
- 10.2 Service contracts should have performance or service targets, and these tend to be documented in the form of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and/or a schedule of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It is the responsibility of the 'contract owner', i.e. the person designated to manage the contract, to ensure the SLA and/or KPIs are met in a consistent manner and to address any deficiency in service with the contractor in line with the requirements of the contractual relationship.

- 10.3 Service contracts which are across multiple sites within the Trust are likely to have been tendered and awarded by the Team and these contracts, such as site cleaning will have a Procurement Contract Manager assigned to oversee the ongoing management and service delivery. This does not detract from the local responsibility for managing the day-to-day relationship with the contractor.
- 10.4 For multi-site contracts the Team will look to engage with local contract owners through focus groups and eliciting feedback via survey. The Team will also ensure joint reviews between the contractor and the contract owner have taken place to assess the extent in which the SLA and/or KPIs have been achieved. The Team will attend a formal review of performance with the contractor so that corporate and local issues are tabled and addressed, and any themes of deficient performance are identified and action planned. Ongoing contractual compliance will be assessed as well as the achievement of best value including a review of what social value initiatives and innovations have been explored.
- 10.5 The Team is on hand to offer contract management advice and guidance as well as intervention support if contractors are failing to perform in line with contractual expectations.

## **11 How we will deliver and/or contribute to responsible procurement**

- 11.1 Sustainable procurement is about avoiding depleting natural resources. The Team (and wider Trust's employees) should take account of environmental, social and economic factors when making purchasing decisions. It is about looking at what products are made of, where they have come from, and who has made them. We will need to ascertain if the purchase needs to be made at all.
- 11.2 We will encourage suppliers to remove packaging at the point of delivery to us. This eliminates waste and lets the supplier re-use the packaging. It is particularly relevant for IT equipment and other goods such as furniture.
- 11.3 We apply the principle of 'whole life costing' to promote sustainable procurement. This looks at all life-cycle costs (including disposal costs) of a product or service and makes sure they are minimised. Making procurement sustainable also involves challenging the repeat purchase demand and examining business processes to be sure that a justified business need exists. The Team will ensure this challenge is made.
- 11.4 The Team will use sustainability criteria, for instance, the [Government Buying Standards](#), and will consider supplier policies for waste, transport, energy, procurement and employees awareness of environmental issues in its selection/award questionnaire and specification. We will also use the criteria in the evaluation of tenders, for instance, asking bidders to submit alternative goods or services that are more sustainable.

- 11.5 Where sustainability factors in the supply chain are particularly important, the Team will speak to our direct supplier to understand the sustainability risks and how they are managed and mitigated. We'll also need to understand the social and environmental impacts of making a particular purchase if there is a notable concern.
- 11.6 We will encourage our supply base to investigate and minimise the environmental impacts of supplying us, including resource use, waste, energy consumption and carbon emissions. We will also improve our understanding of the social considerations of our purchasing decisions, so we can become an environmentally and socially responsible purchaser. The Team is cognisant of the NHS requirement to have 10% of the evaluation criteria assigned to Net Zero and Social Value.
- 11.7 The diagram below, sourced and reproduced from 'Sustainable Procurement – making it happen' by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), usefully summarises how sustainable procurement can work in practice and how the Trust sees it:



- 11.8 In summary, the Team will have to consider the following areas when undertaking responsible procurement:
- compliance with the Modern Slavery Act
  - sustainability
  - decarbonisation & net zero
  - waste management
  - minimum wage legislation
  - diversity, equality & inclusion
  - social value
  - supply chain due diligence and robustness
  - artificial intelligence

## 12 How we will upskill the Team and the wider organisation

12.1 The Team intends to develop an intranet page, which will be available to the whole organisation. We will also look to enhance our outward facing website to help inform suppliers on how to engage constructively with the Trust. Our intranet page is expected to provide details and links to the following:

- Overview of the services the Procurement Team offer
- Organogram and details of responsibilities
- Training material
- Current priorities
- Procurement Strategy
- Procurement Policy
- Master Preferred Supplier List and how it should be used
- Procurement forms
- Our Workplan (pipeline of procurement activity)
- The Act's notices roadmap
- the Trust's Modern Slavery Statement

12.2 The Team has a training programme (and are happy to deliver this to any team or directorate) to give an insight into the workings of the Team. This programme covers the following areas:

- Our Procurement Strategy and how this translates into our aim and objective and the Procurement & Supply Cycle
- Who works in the Team and what are their roles and responsibilities
- Definition of category management & stakeholder engagement
- The Standing Financial Instructions (SFIs) and where they relate to procurement
- In what circumstances are waivers justified and the process
- The new Procurement Act and Procurement Regulations which became effective from the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- What are frameworks, who provides them and how do we use them
- What procurement processes we follow and stakeholders' engagement in these
- Net Zero & Social Value
- An insight into contract management
- Preferred suppliers and new supplier requests

## **13 Adherence to procurement thresholds and the waiver process**

13.1 Appendix A details our procurement thresholds. Where multiple quotations are sought these must be from different suppliers for the same specification to be able to compare like with like. All quotations must be obtained by directorates/teams and provided as evidence with the requisition. Quotations should be obtained for a single-use or purpose and should not be recycled for repeat business at a later date. Quotations would usually have a time window in which they are valid; if no time limit, then we should assume they automatically expire after three months and will not be accepted unless specifically agreed. Where the procurement thresholds refer to a minimum number of quotations, this is for the minimum number of quotations which must be received (not an indication of number of suppliers

to be invited). Therefore, it is advisable to invite at least one or two more suppliers than required to submit a quotation to reduce the risk of nil or an inadequate number of responses.

13.2 The requirement for multiple quotations or a formal tender may be waived if exceptional reasons or circumstances are apparent and approved by the appropriate management levels. Waivers (i.e. no competition) - this should normally be where only one company/individual is asked to quote/tender for the work. It is generally discouraged, as a competitive process is more likely to achieve better value for money (VFM). However, a waiver may be justified in a few specific situations:

- Sole supplier (service only available from one supplier, for instance, due to intellectual property)
- Extension of similar existing competitively tendered contract
- Unforeseen urgency and beyond the control of the Trust (failure to plan effectively does not meet the grounds of Unforeseen Urgency, for instance, a tight deadline has been imposed by the Government or other regulatory authority which means there is insufficient time to compete the work, or a serious health & safety or safeguarding concern has arisen and needs to be addressed urgently)

13.3 Additionally, the Associate Director of Procurement can support a waiver if exceptional value for money can be demonstrated by benchmarking cost.

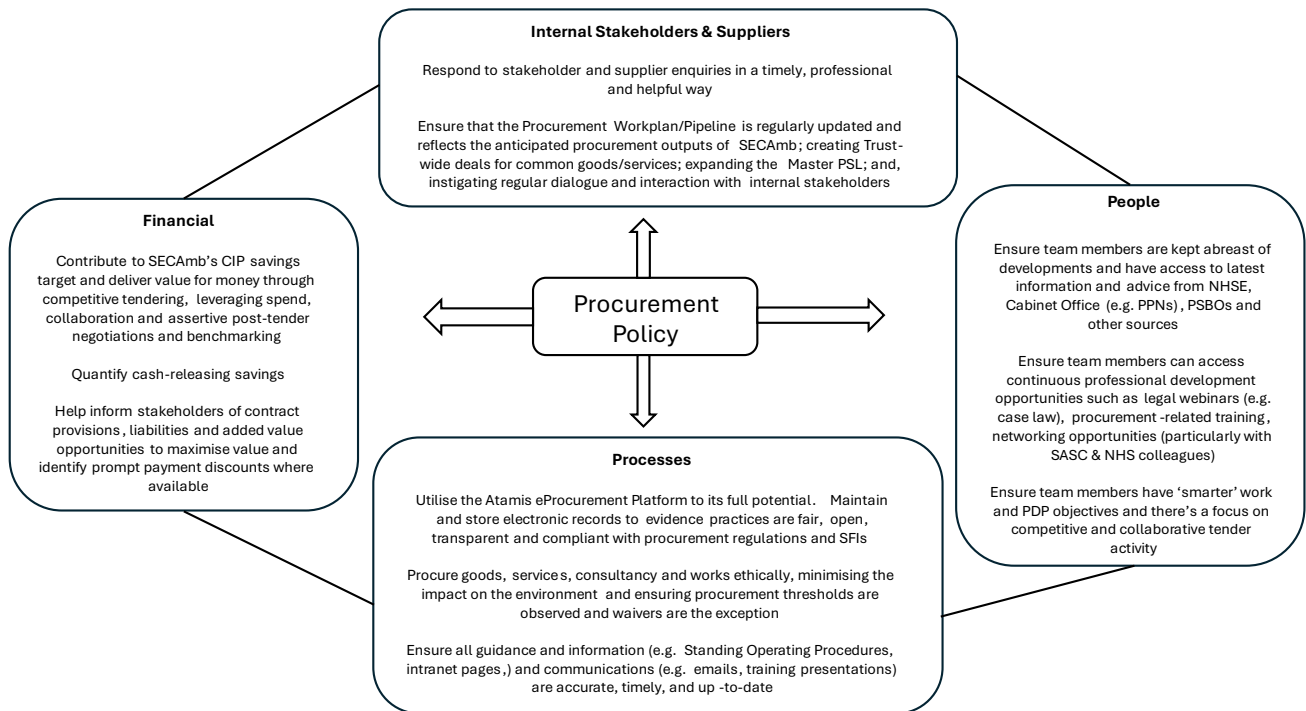
13.4 The Team should be consulted on all waiver requests. The Associate Director of Procurement is required to report a summary of waivers approved to the Audit & Risk Committee, on a quarterly basis.

## **14 How will the Procurement Team drive continuous improvement**

14.1 The diagram below demonstrates the Team's performance expectations in the form of a high-level balanced scorecard which, if achieved and applied, will lead to continuous improvement. Evidence of this will become apparent via periodic audits and reviews. The Team is expected to achieve annualised cash releasing savings as part of the Trust's wider Cost Improvement Programme.



## Procurement Policy



- 14.2 Additionally, the Team will be set challenging work objectives linked to specific procurement projects and will be subject to performance reviews to evidence success and compliance and continuous improvement is being achieved. Savings will be quantified and documented and be subject to periodic review and challenge.
- 14.3 The Team will regularly interact and network with directorate colleagues as well as PSBOs, other ambulance trusts, NHS England and other NHS bodies as well as suppliers to understand markets, needs, best practice, gain learnings, etc and to better meet customer expectations and demonstrate professionalism and solid understanding and application of public procurement.

## **15 Financial Checkpoint**

- 15.1 This document has been confirmed by Finance to have no unbudgeted financial implications.

## **16 Equality Analysis**

- 16.1 The Trust believes in fairness and equality, and values diversity in its role as both a provider of services and as an employer. The Trust aims to provide accessible services that respect the needs of each individual and exclude no-one. It is committed to comply with the Human Rights Act and to meeting the Equality Act 2010. This policy outlines where equality issues are impacted and being dealt with.

## Appendix A – Procurement Thresholds

**Procurement thresholds** (ex VAT) as detailed in Standing Financial Instructions:

Quotation Thresholds:

Up to £10,000 – 1 quotation

£10,001 to £50,000 – minimum of 2 quotations to be received

£50,001 to £116,400 – minimum of 3 quotations to be received

Tender Threshold:

£116,400 (ex VAT) – formal tender or further competition (or exceptionally, direct award) from a PSBO framework

NB As of January 2024 the Supply & Services Contract PCR tender threshold is currently £139,688 (incl VAT), and £5,372,609 (incl VAT) for Works.

The tender thresholds are usually reviewed/amended every 2 years. However, tender thresholds may be amended at any time.

The new Act has changed the publishing details thresholds, and under The Act the Trust now falls under the definition of a “central government authority”. This means any contracts awarded under The Act (i.e. awarded after 24 February 2025), that fall below the above Tender Thresholds with a value £12,000 and over (incl VAT), need to have the contract details published.

Similarly, any contracts awarded under PCR2015 that fall below the above Tender Thresholds with a value £30,000 (incl VAT) need to have the contract details published.