Commissioning and adoption stage

Procurement frameworks guide

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Procurement frameworks are agreements that enable NHS organisations to buy services and goods from one or more suppliers. New suppliers cannot be added to an agreed procurement framework, except the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). These agreements usually last a maximum of four years before a tender for a new framework is published. You can access the procurement and savings calendar for an overview of upcoming tender activities. This enables new or existing suppliers to forward plan for procurement frameworks which are coming up for tender.

There are other places you can go to search for upcoming tenders and opportunities:

- Find a Tender for high-value opportunities or awarded contracts across the whole of the UK
- Contracts Finder provides contracts and opportunities for the whole of the UK and globally
- Public Contracts Scotland
- Sell2Wales
- eSourcing NI and eTendersNI for Northern Ireland

The suppliers must pass rigorous selection criteria to become part of a procurement framework.

Procurement frameworks that are already implemented within the NHS:

- Health Systems Support Framework. This enables NHS organisations to buy supportive services from innovative third-party suppliers including advanced analytics, population health management, digital and service transformations
- G-Cloud Framework. This enables providers to sell cloud services including hosting, software and support to the public sector including the NHS
- DPS. Unlike the other purchasing frameworks, suppliers can join this electronic system at any time. It is an 'open market' solution designed to give NHS organisations a pool of suppliers who they can buy works, services or goods from. This system is particularly beneficial for small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who want to become NHS suppliers but have little or no experience in tendering for work with the public sector. Several DPS procurement frameworks are recommended by NHS England for purchasing digital goods and services. This includes the Medical Technology DPS for Innovative Products (Innovation DPS). The Innovation DPS is open to innovations which have been submitted to the NHS Innovation Service, reviewed and accepted by NHS Supply Chain or have been referred to NHS Supply Chain by the HIN. The technology must also meet national policy objectives and have a NICE recommendation.

The Innovation DPS currently includes:

- Orthopaedics, Trauma and Spine
- Ophthalmology
- Audiology
- Cardiology
- Interventional Radiology
- Endourology
- Endoscopy
- Neuromodulation inclusive of IDDP
- Perfusion
- Ablation
- Minimally Invasive Surgery
- IVDR products/ tests (Pathology and Point of Care)
- Radiology

There are four NHS procurement hubs which provide procurement support:

- London Procurement Partnership
- North of England Commercial Procurement Collaborative
- East of England Collaborative Procurement Hub
- NHS Commercial Solutions

Contact the relevant procurement hub to find out more about becoming a supplier of services or goods in the NHS.

Guidance on appropriate frameworks for digital services – Procurement pillars

Due to the wide range of frameworks and agreements in place for similar products, particularly for digital and IT services, NHSE has developed guidance for suppliers and providers, grouping digital services into 6 pillars covering 32 framework agreements.

Procurement pillars:

1. Hardware – clinical
2. Hardware – non-clinical
3. Software/Saas/Apps – clinical
4. Software/Saas/Apps – non-clinical
5. Services – clinical
6. Service/IaaS/PaaS – non-clinical

These pillars and their sub-categories represent the recommended route to market for digital technologies and services. Each of the pillars also details the regulatory and technical requirements for inclusion within the frameworks. Further support is provided through england.ceopframeworks@nhs.net.