



*Mastering School Procurement:
A Beginners Guide*

Procurement – A Brewing Issue for Schools

In a world where resource is tight and costs are rising, the ability to drive value for money from quality suppliers and deliver this compliantly has never been more important.

Against a backdrop of legal procurement challenges and keeping on top of ever-changing procurement regulations make it extremely challenging for schools to navigate the procurement landscape.

At Constellia, we understand the challenges schools face when it comes to procurement, and it is our job to help you manage the risks. We're passionate about helping schools to procure compliantly, drive efficiencies, and make huge savings. That's why we've developed this guide to help you understand the importance of compliance and what your buying options are when procuring vital goods and services for your schools.

Procurement Challenges Schools are Facing Today

Schools and Trusts are facing stressful and worrying times with rising costs, budget cuts, staff recruitment and retention difficulties. On top of the day job, the risk of high-profile procurement projects going wrong can often keep head teachers and CEOs up at night.

Constellia understands these challenges, and that's why we are here to help.

About Constellia

Established in 2007, Constellia is a leading Neutral Vendor Managed Service Provider in the UK. We manage over £200 million of spend across 130+ public sector organisations, including Multi-Academy Trusts, state schools, universities, and further education institutions.

As a Neutral Vendor, we serve as the bridge between buyers and pre-qualified service providers and suppliers, all whilst providing a fast and compliant route to market. Our solution enables access to a dynamic marketplace of over 1,000 pre-approved suppliers and on-demand procurement support. With three service levels to choose from and supplier-absorbed service fees, clients can utilise our solution for transactional marketplace use, right through to a fully managed service.

By choosing Constellia as your strategic procurement partner, schools and MATs can eliminate the stresses of managing complex procurement processes and regulations, allowing them to focus on what truly matters – delivering quality education to students.

What Schools Need:

SAVINGS | SUPPORT | SPEED | ACCESS | COMPLIANCE

5 Ways We Can Help

1. Savings

Driving Cost-Savings When it is Needed Most

Tight budgets and rising costs are undeniably increasing financial pressures on schools. Constellia focuses on driving the best value for the education sector, including measuring value against budget. The freedom of the Neutral Vendor framework allows us to negotiate and be much more commercial with bids received to get the optimum solution and best price point. Leveraging our negotiation expertise and extensive benchmarking data to secure optimal value, we can save you 12-20% per budget.

2. Support & Procurement Expertise

Procurement Resource at No Extra Cost

With more and more schools choosing the path of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), the transition can often be daunting when scaling and shaping for growth. Our procurement specialists stand ready to support all process stages, addressing schools' shortfalls in capacity and procurement subject matter expertise. This service also comes at no extra cost to you, as suppliers absorb fees. With three service levels available, you can choose the level of support that aligns with your specific needs. Whether it's supplier identification and on-boarding, premarket engagement, running the tender process through to ongoing contract management, we can manage this for you.

3. Speed

Buying At Speed

Speed is a significant benefit of procuring through the Neutral Vendor Solution. If suppliers are already on-boarded with Constellia, direct awards can be turned around in as little as five working days, with mini-competitions possible in ten.

4. Access

Our Diverse and Dynamic Marketplace

Our ever-growing marketplace connects you with a wide range of local suppliers, including large corporations, SMEs, and micro-SMEs, enabling you to find the right suppliers to meet your specific requirements. With over 1,000 pre-approved suppliers, we provide schools access to 400+ subcategories of spend. We are also the UK's only Neutral Vendor to enable public sector client's access to the procurement of Goods, Works, Services and Technology.



Some Projects We Facilitate for the Education Sector

With an increased demand for our unique Managed Service Provider model in goods, works, services and technology, below are just some examples of how we have recently helped universities, schools, and Trusts.

Construction Works & Services: Our marketplace of suppliers have been providing services across architecture, civil engineering, design, and construction project management. Some of these projects have included building new schools, roof repair services and multiple decarbonisation initiatives to strengthen and improve building performance.

Facilities Management: We undertake several facilities-related projects, including laboratory room cleaning, the provision of white goods, PAT testing, fire alarms, and intruder alarm maintenance services for universities.

Governance Services: With governance being a top priority for schools and universities, our solution has helped to facilitate effective governance reviews that comprise best practices and greater compliance success for universities.

Temporary Staff: With the continuous need to ensure schools have exemplary, robust and high-quality supply staff, we have helped schools obtain these professional services via our marketplace of recruitment service providers. Roles have included teaching and learning support assistants, exam invigilators, lab technicians, careers advisors, science technicians, and more.

ICT & EdTech: Projects have included the installation of computer labs, digitally recorded exam systems and the provision of ongoing support of network services to provide a modern, secure, high-speed wired and wireless campus data network.

Catering: Catering projects include sourcing and installing catering equipment and food consultants to develop a healthy, low-carbon school food roadmap.



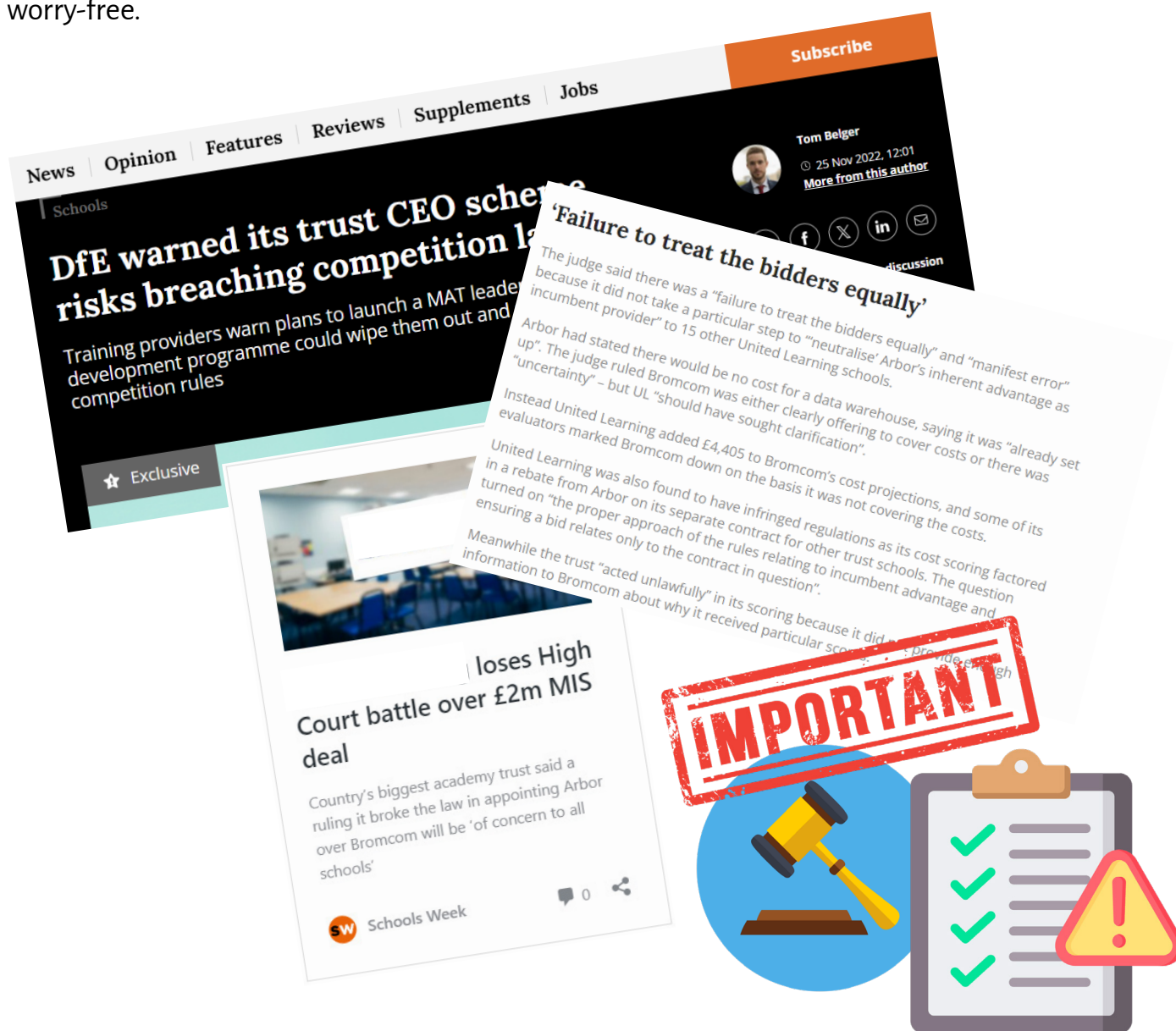
5. Compliance

Making Procurement Compliance Worry-Free

Procurement compliance can be a complex and potentially costly endeavour for schools. Understanding the rules and thresholds of Procurement Regulations is essential, especially when considering purchases above specific monetary limits. Failure to comply can lead to severe consequences, including heavy fines, damages, contract nullification, negative publicity, and legal expenses.

Recent cases have shown that even unintentional breaches can result in damages awarded to bidders. Constellia, as a Neutral Vendor, offers a solution that ensures fair and transparent procurement processes while simplifying the buying process for educational institutions.

By partnering with Constellia, schools and Trusts can save themselves the risk from potential fines, legal costs, and administrative burdens, making compliance more accessible and worry-free.



Constellia - Your Trusted Procurement Partner

The Neutral Vendor Solution

One Route, Endless Possibilities.

With our Neutral Vendor Solution, Constellia simplifies how educational institutions buy goods, works, technology and services. By enabling clients to utilise Neutral Vendor frameworks, we give you the flexibility and choice to buy through one simple route quickly and compliantly without worrying about restrictive monetary thresholds.

Here's how...

- **Compliance:** Our Neutral Vendor Solution is delivered via a compliant Neutral Vendor Framework model, which adheres to Public Contract Regulations.
- **Thresholds:** Our Neutral Vendor Solution allows clients to buy goods, works, technology and services via the following OJEU-compliant, nationally available neutral vendor framework:
 - **AEC Neutral Vendor Framework** – up to **£18 billion** in value.Clients can also buy professional services via Constellia using the following neutral vendor frameworks:
 - **SEWTAPS framework (led by Cardiff Council)** – up to **£300 million** in value.
 - **ESPO MSTAR4 Lot 4 framework** – up to **£4 billion** in value.
- **Award Options:** You can choose to either direct award or mini competition. Whether you wish to choose a preferred supplier via a direct award or test the market via a competitive process, Constellia can run either on your behalf.

Staying Compliant Whilst Scaling and Shaping for Growth

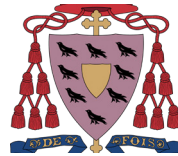
As Multi-Academy Trusts grow, it is essential to note that they must stay informed about the contractual commitments and non-compliant contracts they may inherit during the transition.

Contract management plays a critical role within procurement, as it ensures contracts are executed smoothly, helps to control costs, and guarantees procurement activities remain compliant. Our procurement team are specialists in contract management and can work with you to compliantly align contract end dates before pursuing Trust-wide contracts in the market.

Just Some of Our Clients



Cardinal Hume
Catholic School



Bishop Chadwick
Catholic Education Trust



St Thomas More
Catholic High School

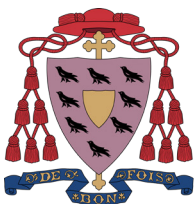
Cardiff Council, on behalf of 127 schools



Following the Welsh government's decision to provide free school meals to all primary school children in Wales, Cardiff Council established that they needed to provide an additional 22,000 free school meals to their students.

Working with Constellia via the Neutral Vendor Solution, Cardiff Council was able to procure a suitable supplier quickly and compliantly to source and install the catering equipment needed to meet government time scales.

Bishop Chadwick Catholic Trust



Constellia helped Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust procure a supplier that was able to provide a robust implementation of their server infrastructure and active directory. The project covered all the Schools within the Trust and the Trust HQ buildings. Following a competitive exercise, the Trust awarded the project to their preferred supplier and achieved an approximate £10k saving for their schools.



Decarbonisation Case Study

Coventry University

Requirements

Coventry University were seeking assistance to develop a decarbonisation strategy for their property estates, including domestic and international sites. Their aim was to minimise their properties carbon footprint. For this project, they expressed the desire to involve a large list of suppliers through a competitive bidding process, particularly with established relationships to participate in the bidding process. Cost consciousness was a significant factor for the client, as they were keen on maintaining strict budget control throughout the process.

Constellia Solution

Constellia conducted a Level 3 Service competition and finalised the project within six weeks. This included involving and bringing on board a substantial list of potential bidders, which generated seven bids and one no-bid—a rarity in a demanding market. Constellia used RFIs (Request for Information) to screen the long list based on essential criteria to enhance efficiency, reducing supplier time and effort. The supplier was selected with just 44% of the initially proposed figure, saving 56% of fees in the process.

Impact

In addition to delivering a quick turnaround to enable the project's swift implementation, Constellia actively negotiated and secured a **£300k** saving within the selected supplier fee. Furthermore, Constellia has now capped future fees to mitigate the risk of rate inflation in the current market environment.

Delighted Stakeholders and £300k Saving

“Working with Constellia enabled us to rapidly filter down a long list of potential consultants, so we could focus our efforts only on those which had a credible chance of winning. They then secured a substantial fee reduction, whilst ensuring bidders were still excited to be working with us.”

Lead Project Manager, Coventry University

What Our Clients Say

"This is the best procurement process I've participated in for over ten years."

CIO, University of Sussex.

"We are delighted to be working closely with the team at Constellia via their Neutral Vendor Solution this year after being awarded £5m for school expansions within our Trust for two of our large secondary schools.

As a Trust, our mission is to help our schools get the most value out of their available resources and enable them to meet the needs of their pupils and their families. Constellia has provided first-class support and guidance during this project that will definitely enable us to more than meet our mission aims."

CEO, Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.

Endorsement by Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust

Constellia for Schools has received endorsement for their Neutral Vendor Solution from Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust (BWCET), the largest Catholic Trust in the North East of England, after successfully conducting a pilot in 2021.

During the pilot, Constellia appointed local SMEs to deliver three IT infrastructure projects for the Trust that were unavailable on other frameworks.



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust



7 Reasons Why Our Clients Choose Us...



Speed: Rapid Procurement



Access & Choice: Unlimited Access to Suppliers



Meet SME Targets: Source Local



On-Demand Resource: Free Procurement Support



Full Control: Streamlined Spend Management



No Hidden Costs: Supplier Absorbed Fees



Value & Cost Savings: Up to 20% with every budget



CONSTELLIA
procurement, empowered

Sign Up Your School Today

For further queries, or if you wish to learn more about how Constellia for Schools can help your organisation, please email schools@constellia.com or call **0330 320 8020**.