

Sustainable ICT Procurement for Schools and MATs

A practical guide to buying
technology responsibly



Schools and trusts are making ICT decisions in a difficult environment.

Budgets are under pressure. Devices need to last longer. Software costs are rising. Cyber security expectations are higher. At the same time, schools are expected to take sustainability seriously and show that public money is being used well.

In this guide, we look at how schools and MATs can make ICT procurement more planned, sustainable and cost-effective. We cover current technology, unnecessary spend, whole-life cost, supplier conversations and secure disposal.

Everything ICT can support that process through practical procurement support. Depending on the value and nature of the purchase, this may involve sourcing independent quotes in line with local procurement policies or supporting a more formal process through a compliant framework route. In either case, schools have clearer options, better evidence and a more structured way to make responsible ICT buying decisions.

Why schools need to act now

- ✓ The Department for Education has made sustainability a clear priority for the education sector. Its **sustainability and climate change strategy** sets expectations for schools and trusts to reduce environmental impact and support progress towards net zero.
- ✓ **DfE digital and technology standards** also expect schools and colleges to have technology that is safe, secure, reliable and well managed.
- ✓ For ICT procurement, schools should be able to show that decisions are planned, proportionate and based on value over time.





Start with what you already have

Good procurement starts with a clear view of the current ICT estate.

Many schools have partial records. Some information may sit with ICT, finance or a supplier. In a trust, each school may have a different level of detail.

Before buying, schools should review their devices, software, contracts and infrastructure. The purpose is to understand what is still fit for purpose, what needs attention and what can be planned over time.

For MATs, this gives leaders a clearer picture across the estate. It helps identify uneven provision, overlapping contracts and areas where schools may be solving the same issue separately.



Look beyond the initial price

The purchase price is only one part of the decision.

Schools should consider how long the product or service is likely to last, how it will be supported and what it will cost to manage. They should also consider what happens when it reaches the end of its useful life.

A product that is cheap to buy can become expensive if it fails early, creates extra workload or needs replacing sooner than expected.

A whole-life view supports better budgeting and reduces emergency buying, which is often where value and sustainability are hardest to achieve.



Reduce waste and duplication

Software and cloud services are a common source of hidden cost.

Licences can renew each year with little challenge. Different teams may buy separate tools for similar tasks. Old systems may stay in place after their main use has ended.

Schools and MATs should review usage, renewal dates and contract terms regularly. Products with low use should be challenged before they renew.

Equipment should also be considered carefully before replacement. Some devices can be reused, redeployed or refurbished where they remain secure, supported and reliable.



Ask suppliers the right questions

Sustainability should be included early in the buying process.

The questions should match the size and type of contract. For a device purchase, it may be enough to ask about warranty, repairs, packaging and responsible disposal. For a larger project, schools may need more detail on carbon reduction, supply chain practices and social value.

Suppliers should be asked for evidence. Broad statements are less useful than clear information about how a product will be supported, how long it should last and how equipment will be handled at end of life.

This helps schools compare options more fairly and makes expectations clear from the start.



Plan disposal properly

The end of a device's life needs proper control.

Old equipment may contain personal data. It may still be connected to management systems. It may also have licences or accounts linked to it.

Schools should have a clear process for wiping, recycling or disposing of equipment. Asset records should be updated, and suppliers handling disposal should provide suitable evidence.

The [National Cyber Security Centre](#) provides guidance on secure sanitisation of storage media. Schools should take particular care where laptops, tablets, servers or storage devices leave the site.



Governance and trust-wide planning

ICT procurement affects budgets, safeguarding, cyber security, teaching, workload and continuity. Senior leaders need enough information to understand the main risks and upcoming decisions.

Governors and trustees do not need detailed technical reports. They do need assurance that ICT is being managed in a planned way.

For MATs, sustainable ICT procurement depends on visibility and coordination. A trust-wide view helps leaders plan replacement cycles, align standards and reduce duplication.

Procurement routes

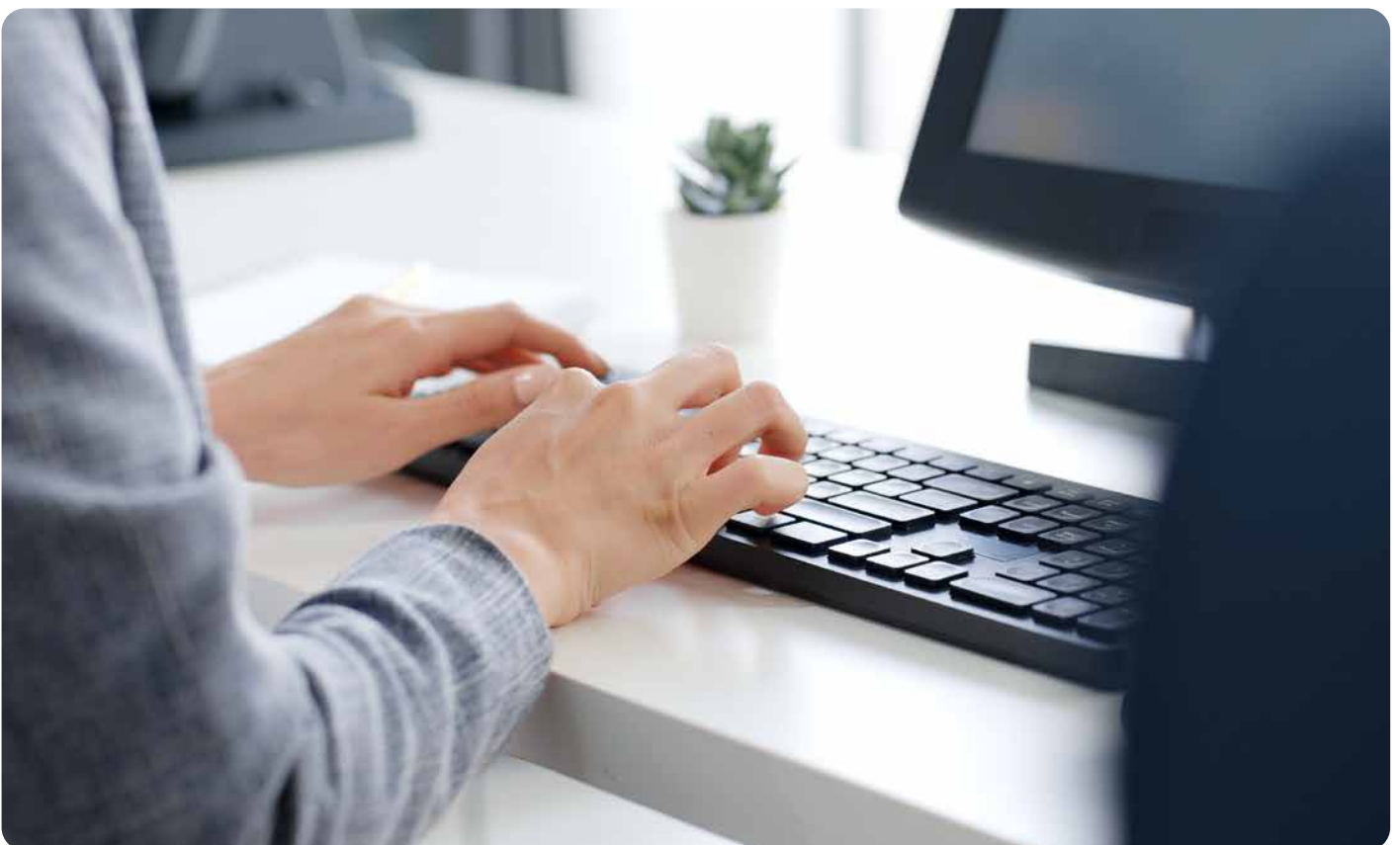
Schools and trusts should use procurement routes that are compliant and suitable for the purchase.

The **Procurement Act 2023** changed the public procurement rules from February 2025. For larger or more complex ICT purchases, schools should make sure the route, process and evidence are appropriate from the start.

DfE buying guidance encourages schools to use approved buying options where appropriate. These routes can reduce procurement workload and help schools access suppliers through established, compliant processes.

The procurement route still needs a clear requirement. Schools should know what outcome they need, how options will be assessed and what evidence suppliers must provide.

For sustainable ICT procurement, that evidence should include value over time. Where relevant, schools should consider support life, warranty, repair arrangements, disposal, supplier commitments and social value.





What schools can do now

Schools can start by improving visibility.

An up-to-date view of assets, contracts and renewal dates will make future decisions easier. It will also help identify equipment that can be reused, software that can be retired and purchases that need to be planned earlier.

Schools should also review disposal arrangements. Secure data handling and responsible recycling should be part of normal ICT management.

Small changes can make a meaningful difference. Better records, earlier planning and clearer supplier questions can all improve value and reduce waste.



How Everything ICT can help

Everything ICT provides practical procurement support for schools and MATs buying ICT products, solutions and services.

For below-threshold purchases, we can help schools source independent quotes that meet their local procurement policies. Schools can then compare suitable options and keep a clearer record of the decision-making process.

For above-threshold purchases, we can support schools and trusts through our compliant framework route. This provides a structured way to procure ICT products, solutions and services where a more formal process is required.

For MATs, we can also support a more coordinated approach across multiple schools. Trusts can use this to align procurement with refresh planning, budget control and sustainability priorities.

Whether schools are reviewing devices, software, infrastructure or managed services, Everything ICT can help schools take the next step with a clear process and the right evidence behind the decision.



Frequently asked questions



Where should we start?

Start with visibility. Schools should know what equipment, software and contracts they already have, and what is due for renewal or replacement.



Do we need a full sustainability strategy before buying ICT?

No. Schools can still make practical improvements by planning earlier, reducing waste, reviewing licences and asking suppliers better questions.



Are we checking software usage before renewal?

Unused licences can create avoidable cost. Schools and trusts should review usage, renewal dates and contract terms before renewing.



Can we consider refurbished or reused equipment?

Yes, where it is suitable. Reused or refurbished equipment should still be secure, supported and reliable.



Are we considering the full cost over time?

Purchase price should be considered alongside support, warranty, management, replacement and disposal.



What evidence should we keep?

Schools should keep a clear record of the requirement, the options considered, supplier responses, evaluation notes and the reason for the decision.



Do we have a secure disposal process?

Old devices should be wiped, removed from systems and handled responsibly. Schools should keep suitable evidence from any supplier handling disposal.



Does the trust have enough visibility across schools?

A shared view helps MATs reduce duplication, plan budgets and manage risk across the estate.

➞ **Speak to the team**

➞ **How it all works**