EVERYTHING ICT

Procurement Act essentials for schools

Know the thresholds. Understand the notices. Choose the right ICT procurement route for your school or trust.



With the Procurement Act 2023 now well established, this guide provides a practical reminder of the key points schools and MATs need to consider when procuring ICT.

If you're running your own above-threshold procurement, one of the main differences from PCR 2015 is the number of formal notices that may need to be published on the Central Digital Platform (CDP), through Find a Tender. That publication trail can begin before the tender opens and continue through award, contract management and termination. Using a framework removes several stages from the process and reduces the notices your school or MAT needs to manage directly.

As a reminder, procurements begun on or after 24 February 2025 generally fall under the Procurement Act. PCR 2015 can still apply where a procurement began before that date or where a school is using a framework established under the previous regulations. Below, we recap the main requirements, the notices you're likely to encounter and where Everything ICT can help.

Start with the contract value

If you're buying ICT goods or services, the current public contract threshold is **£207,720** including VAT. That figure applies from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2027.

Work out the value across the full contract term, including any extensions or options. If you're part of a MAT, add up the combined requirement across the trust where purchases form part of the same procurement.

Construction works and light-touch services have different thresholds, though these are unlikely to apply to a typical school ICT purchase.

Above the threshold, you'll usually need to follow the Procurement Act's requirements. The route may be a school-led competitive procedure, a compliant framework or, where a legal justification applies, direct award.





A note on lower-value procurement

The Act's general below-threshold notice level for non-central authorities is **£30,000 including VAT**, equivalent to **£25,000 excluding VAT** where the standard rate applies.

Schools and academy trusts are exempt from the Act's regulated below-threshold rules. For purchases below £25,000 excluding VAT, your local policy will tell you how many quotes to get, who needs to approve the purchase and what records to keep.

Everything ICT can support lower-value procurement through benchmarking, obtaining and comparing quotes, and maintaining a clear audit trail in line with local policy.

What notices may need to be published

Under the Procurement Act, publication can continue across the procurement and contract lifecycle. The required notices are published on the Central Digital Platform through Find a Tender.

For a school or MAT running its own above-threshold procurement, the main notices are:

Before the tender

- **UK2 Preliminary Market Engagement Notice** applies where preliminary market engagement has taken place. If UK2 is not published, the UK4 notice must explain why.
- **UK3 Planned Procurement Notice** is optional and gives suppliers early warning of the procurement.
- **UK4 Tender Notice** opens an above-threshold competitive procurement to the market.
- **UK5 Transparency Notice** is used before a direct award and sets out the legal justification.

When you choose the supplier

- **Assessment summaries** are sent to successful and unsuccessful bidders before UK6 following a competitive tendering procedure.
- **UK6 Contract Award Notice** is published after the award decision and before entering into the contract. Where mandatory standstill applies, allow at least eight working days.
- **UK7 Contract Details Notice** is published within 30 calendar days of entering into the contract.

During and after the contract

- **UK9 Contract Performance Notice** can apply to statutory KPI reporting and specified breach or poor-performance events.
- **UK10 Contract Change Notice** may be required before making a qualifying contract change.
- **UK11 Contract Termination Notice** is published within 30 calendar days of the contract ending.
- **UK12 Procurement Termination Notice** applies if a procurement is stopped after UK4, UK5 or UK6 and no contract is entered into.

Contracts worth more than £5 million carry additional requirements, including statutory KPI reporting and publication of the contract. Schools and academy trusts are exempt from UK8 payment notices and UK17 payments compliance notices.

Identifying the relevant notices, deadlines and responsibilities at the outset helps keep the procurement on track. Everything ICT can advise on the right route, map the notice requirements and manage the process through to award.



Framework or independent procurement?

The procurement route determines how much of this notice sequence the school or MAT needs to manage. The table below compares a school-led procurement with a Procurement Act framework call-off.

Stage	School-led procurement	Procurement Act framework call-off
Going to market	UK2 may apply, UK3 is optional and UK4 opens the procurement. The school runs the competitive procedure.	No UK4 is published. The statutory UK2 requirements do not apply and UK3 is generally unnecessary.
Award process	Assessment summaries are issued before UK6. Mandatory standstill is at least eight working days.	Assessment summaries and mandatory standstill are not required, although they can be used voluntarily.
Notices that remain	UK6 is published before entering into the contract and UK7 within 30 days afterwards.	An above-threshold call-off will usually require the same UK6 and UK7 notices.

* Above £5 million, the extra requirements above apply either way, including statutory KPI reporting and publishing the contract. You might also need a UK12 Procurement Termination Notice if either route gets stopped before a contract is signed.

Through the Everything ICT framework, schools and MATs can access pre-approved ICT suppliers without running their own open or competitive flexible procedure. We can help shape the requirement, obtain and compare quotes, run a mini-competition where required, support the call-off notices and maintain a clear audit trail.

What has changed for evaluating bids

MAT replaces MEAT as the basis for award. The change makes it clearer that value can include factors beyond price, while many of the principles used to assess tenders will remain familiar.

The Act doesn't set minimum weightings for quality, social value or price, so you can choose criteria and weightings that suit the contract, as long as they're clear, measurable, proportionate and relevant to what you're buying.

For an ICT device contract, the criteria might cover specification, warranty, device management, supplier capability, total cost of ownership and relevant social or environmental commitments.

Your tender documents need to explain how you'll assess bids and how much weight each criterion carries. If you're using a framework, your criteria also need to stay within its award rules.



What has changed for managing contracts

If a supplier commitment influenced the award decision, it should be carried into the signed contract in a form that can be measured and reviewed. That matters most for social value commitments, service levels and delivery promises.

A practical contract schedule should set out the measures, targets, evidence, reporting dates, named contacts, response to missed targets and any contractual remedies.

Above £5 million, the Act requires at least three KPIs, assessed and published at least once every 12 months and again when the contract ends.

Most school ICT contracts sit well below that. Two or three simple performance measures still make the contract easier to manage, and give you a way to check delivery and value throughout its term.

Where to go from here

The contract value and procurement route determine the timetable, notice requirements and amount of work the school or MAT needs to manage.

For a quick route check, download our **ICT procurement decision tree for schools and MATs**

Planning an ICT purchase? Speak to the Everything ICT team about the best route and the support available through to award.

Official guidance

DFE: Buying for schools

Cabinet Office: Procurement Act 2023 guidance

Find a Tender

PPN 023: 2026 Threshold Amounts

