

Purchasing and contract management

Purchasing and contract management is about managing the process of tendering for the supply of goods and services, awarding contracts and ensuring they run smoothly.

In this area of management, you'll be working with a host of external suppliers as well as internal departments to get the best products and services within the resources available to you.



Working life

In purchasing and contract management, you could have a role:



- related to internal logistics (the movement of stores, receipting and distribution)
- in information management
- in materials management.

You'll need an understanding of the complete supply chain from understanding an identified need for a service or product, through knowing the provider market, the tendering, selecting and awarding process to asset management.

Roles in purchasing and contract management

Job titles and roles will vary but here are some examples of job roles in purchasing and contract management.

You'll work with staff across your organisation including managers of finance, estates and facilities, clinical areas, as well as external suppliers

- deputy head of procurement
- contract management
- associate director of procurement and supplies

Deputy head of procurement

In this role, you'd be required to:

- manage a large and varied contract portfolio
- visit a number of sites within the local area
- undertake and manage OJEU procurements from identifying a requirement to the awarding of the contract using procurement and sourcing principles
- analyse and report on a range of subjects including, products, suppliers and tender evaluation
- organise product trials, analyse product use and supply, investigate savings opportunities and implement and report accordingly.

Contracts manager

In this example, you'd be based within the supplies department of an acute (hospitals) trust. You'd be:

- maximising cost savings and efficiencies in the contracting and procurement process
- developing and managing a range of suppliers
- and improving on service delivery through the use of "best practice".

Associate director of procurement and supplies

Working in an NHS trust of over 5000 staff your key responsibility would be to re-develop and re-engineer the supply chain business for the trust. You'd be heavily involved in the strategic direction of the trust.

Want to learn more?

- [Find out more about the entry requirements, skills and interests required to enter a career in purchasing and contract management](#) ^[1]
- [Find out more about the training you'll receive for a career in purchasing and contract management](#) ^[2]
- Pay and conditions

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Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the [Agenda for Change \(AfC\)](#) ^[3] pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. In purchasing and contract management, your career in the NHS would typically start at [Agenda for Change](#) ^[4] Band 5, with opportunities to progress to positions at Bands 6 and 7, and the most senior roles rising to Band 8c for example.

Staff in the NHS will usually work a standard 37.5 hours per week. They may work a shift pattern.

Terms and conditions of service can vary for employers outside the NHS.

- Where the role can lead

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With further training and/or experience, you may be able to develop your career further and apply for more senior managerial roles – potentially at director level, with a broader remit.

Progression for those with ability is typically via general management with a large healthcare provider

Relocation for promotion is common.

More diverse routes are now opening up, for example, jointly-funded posts between health and social services.

- Job market and vacancies

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When you're looking for managerial jobs or apprenticeship vacancies, there are a number of sources you can use, depending on the type of and level of work you're seeking.

Check vacancies carefully to be sure you can meet the requirements of the person specification before applying and to find out what the application process is. You may need to apply online or send a C.V. for example.

Key sources relevant to vacancies in the health sector:

- vacancies in organisations delivering NHS healthcare can be found on the [NHS Jobs website](#) [5]
- opportunities in the Civil Service can be found on the [Civil Service Jobs website](#) [6]
- vacancies in local government can be found on the [Local Government Jobs website](#) [7] and the [Jobs Go Public website](#) [8]
- vacancies for apprenticeships appear on the [Gov.uk website](#) [9]

As well as these sources, you may find suitable vacancies in the health sector by contacting local employers directly, searching in local newspapers and by using the [Universal Jobmatch tool](#) [10].

[Find out more about applications and interviews](#) [11]

Volunteering is an excellent way of gaining experience (especially if you don't have enough for a specific paid job you're interested in) and also seeing whether you're suited to a particular type of work. It's also a great way to boost your confidence and you can give something back to the community!

[Find out more about volunteering and gaining experience](#) [12]

- Further information

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For further information about a career in purchasing and contract management, please contact

- [The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply](#) [13] (CIPS)
- [CIPS Be a buyer website](#) [14]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Estates manager](#) [15]

- [Project manager](#) ^[16]
- [Strategic management](#) ^[17]
- [Experienced paramedic](#) ^[18]

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