

# INTRODUCING THE ON-LINE CONTRACTS REGISTER SERVICE



## SUPPORTING SHARED SERVICES

### THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

All local authorities are now faced with getting more for less from their budgets and delivering cashable savings through efficiency gains. This can be achieved in several ways, collaborating with neighbouring authorities and other public sector organisations is clearly one of the best ways to achieve this. However every local authority is faced with barriers to meeting this challenge. These include:

- Knowing when a neighbouring authority is contracting for services or products at the same time as yours
- Discovering details of an existing contract which you can legitimately access and which will reduce your costs
- Finding out who manages the contract in another authority
- Ascertaining where it is worth creating shared interest groups on specifications, performance and service quality

Even the ability to allow potential suppliers to view details of existing and forthcoming contracts can prove a major headache for many authorities without large scale technology investment.

### MEETING THE CHALLENGE

The Contracts Register Service (CRS) was specified by a team of operational and procurement staff in the Procurement Agency for Essex (PAE) [www.paessex.gov.uk](http://www.paessex.gov.uk) in 2004 and the service was then developed by independent ICT company, New Information Paradigms [www.nipltd.com](http://www.nipltd.com). It was designed to support the sharing of information on current and existing contracts using the Internet, and more importantly to support the Shared Services initiative. The PAE piloted the service and went live with it at the beginning of November 2005. Shortly after this the West London Alliance (six London Boroughs), on behalf of the London Centre of Excellence, successfully piloted the CRS which is now being delivered to all 33 London Boroughs.

Having visibility of existing contracts, expiry dates and contact points allows authorities to plan and align their work with a view to collaboratively approaching the market. This supports the achievement of many objectives such as increased buying power, informing people in service areas of the availability of corporate contracts and the sharing of scarce contract management resources. For high value and/or high risk contracts, it also supports the sharing of knowledge and information to underpin better contract relationship management and best practice procurement.

The service can be used by a single authority, to allow contract information to be shared internally; in collaboration with a group of neighbouring organisations, or regionally through your local Centre of Excellence. The service is designed to be intuitive, require no technical input and is available for a very modest annual subscription.

The benefits of the CRS to its subscribers include:

- One annual fee (minimum term two years) with no need for user licenses or other hidden costs
- Provision of information to support the planning and coordination of future contract activity including the alignment of renewal dates and the facilitation of potential collaboration and shared working
- Provision of internal visibility so that individuals and departments can see the availability of corporate contracts and benefit from negotiated rates or improved service levels
- Ability to upload existing contract data from standard spreadsheet on request
- Automatic alerts to contract manager and department when contracts are due to end
- Standard procurement classification (ProClass) and contract definitions facilitating the ability to locate and compare like contracts. This will also be adopted by the main providers of Expenditure Analysis.
- Visibility of national and regional contracts which could provide reduced unit costs
- Support for the National Procurement Strategy requirement to make contract information accessible to all stakeholders and 'stimulate markets'
- Minimum training and familiarisation



*"The contracts register is a truly collaborative service; an extremely cost effective tool which enables colleagues from the most sophisticated purchasing environment to the smallest embryonic function to plan, control and knowledge share. It is at once a planning tool, a facility to enable informed networking and a snap shot of our contractual obligations and forward looking windows of opportunity."* **Peter Quinn**, Director - Procurement Agency for Essex

## NEXT STEPS

Using the system couldn't be easier - all you need is access to the Web with a browser (Internet Explorer 5.5 or above) and off you go. Data can easily be entered; comprehensive help text comes with the system but this can be easily changed to reflect local terminology or descriptions.

To get started visit our website ([www.contractsregister.com](http://www.contractsregister.com)). Here you can register to see a detailed demonstration of the system, request a free one month trial of a test system, or simply ask us to contact you to discuss your specific requirements and obtain a quotation.

## ABOUT NIP

New Information Paradigms (NIP) is an award-winning software company with a difference, combining best-of-breed technology, innovative business models, a wealth of experience and a responsive, fresh way of working.

NIP commonly addresses high-level business challenges, such as:

- New business structures and needs due to a realisation of the Internet's potential
- The need to focus on core competencies, and work with other companies doing the same
- Disparate resources and parties needing to come together, often virtually and across traditional functional or organisational boundaries
- Competitive pressures for greater efficiency and reduced costs

Over the last 15 years, NIP has delivered these rich collaborative solutions to the Pharmaceutical Sector, as well as delivering high profile, award winning projects for the Financial Times, the London Stock Exchange and most recently the Waitrose Supermarket Group.

## ABOUT THE PAE

The PAE is the first genuinely self funding UK cross public sector regional procurement organisation working to exploit the full benefits available from collaborative procurement. It was launched in April 2004 after over eighteen months in planning. The concept was developed early in 2002 when the Association of Essex Chief Executives accepted that there was a convincing case for collaboration between public sector organisations in the County. The key themes of this were the need to create capacity to help the smaller organisations that could not justify investing in a dedicated procurement manager and the need to tap into cashable savings/efficiencies that could only be accessed through collaborative working.

## CONTACT POINTS

If you would like to more information about the CRS please contact either:

Technical Enquiries

**Phil Mannion**

[support@contractsregister.com](mailto:support@contractsregister.com)

01344 753744

Commercial Enquiries

**Alison McCreath**

[sales@contractsregister.com](mailto:sales@contractsregister.com)

01344 753711