

Education provider: Red Kite Learning Trust

Red Kite Learning Trust is a multi-academy trust which went through a period of significant growth, increasing the number of schools it was responsible for and facing a number of challenges as the organisation became more complex and spend increased significantly.

The challenges included increased compliance requirements and the need to clearly document all decisions made and processes followed. The Trust also needed to demonstrate value for money given that they are in receipt of public funds. They have many large contracts which are cyclical, but accommodating smaller ones was difficult since they only had a small procurement function with limited capacity.

CASE STUDY
PROCUREMENT
EXCELLENCE
PROGRAMME

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The CIPS PEP assessment process came at a time of growth as a Trust and has enabled us to ensure we have more robust documentation and processes in place. ”

James Rant
Chief Finance Officer



Red Kite Learning Trust is a large education provider which groups together 16 state schools across North and West Yorkshire. It has undergone rapid expansion, so that its schools serve over 10,000 children, young people and their families.

It additionally leads a large, school-based teacher training provider called Red Kite Teacher Training and Red Kite Teaching School Hub. It is also at the heart of the Red Kite Alliance, a partnership of 55 schools and educational organisations across the region that encourages the sharing of knowledge and best practices.



**Serves 10,000
children, young
people and families**



**£80 million
annual turnover**



**A Trust of
16 schools**

Key motivation for choosing CIPS

The decision to involve CIPS was motivated by several factors. Firstly, the Trust were already aware of CIPS' leading reputation within the procurement and supply industry. This meant that an award made by the CIPS Procurement Excellence Programme (PEP) would be widely seen as of the highest quality by other professionals. Funding for the PEP was provided by DfE as part of a pilot to increase commercial capability in schools and trusts.

Involving the PEP team was also an excellent way to provide a health check for the Trust's procurement function. They had steadily expanded their capacity, growing from six schools to 13 and then adding a further three. This had the effect of making the organisation's procurement activities more extensive and more complex while also increasing their overall spend.

The solution was CIPS Procurement Excellence Programme (PEP)

The PEP assessors worked with the Trust to make sure there were robust processes and documentation in place that would give them complete control over all of their procurement decisions. By doing so, they would have full oversight of their spend and be better placed to make tactical and strategic decisions about where their budget was allocated and spent. There were some other considerations. By working with the PEP team, the Trust hoped that they would be better able to provide support for the procurement and contracts officer who had been recently recruited to the organisation. They also hoped to place themselves in a position to distribute knowledge across the organisation.

The results

Work by CIPS and the procurement function at Red Kite Learning Trust delivered a wide range of benefits for the growing organisation. It also delivered numerous benefits for a small procurement team who previously found that they were facing a range of challenges with very little capacity.

Strategic function

One of the main benefits was that the Trust was helped to think more strategically regarding procurement and contract management. The assessors' expertise was used to reshape the procurement function and redesign the way that it worked with this strategic view in mind and to provide additional insights based on their experience.

Networking opportunities

Working with other Trusts who were also on the procurement excellence journey brought the Trust into contact with a network of organisations who were on the same journey. This promoted the sharing of best practice and collaboration across the whole education sector and beyond.

Making the organisation more robust

The expert practitioners from CIPS gained an oversight of systems and processes in place at the Trust. Using their expertise, they stress-tested them and got them into a more robust shape. Among other things, this made sure that the loss of key employees would not need to undermine the effectiveness of the procurement function.

Changing the attitude to procurement

Targeted and considered feedback helped change the internal approach to the organisation's procurement function. They were able to reflect on what they have done well and on areas they need to improve. By going through this process of development and improvement, they helped all the other employees to see it as more professional and further built its profile.

Future developments

Achieving the necessary accreditation was not the end of the journey. The Trust used the PEP process to build a more solid platform for the future and built a sense of optimism about the possibilities of procurement. They found themselves looking forward to working with others across the sector, for everyone's wider benefit.

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Having gone through this accreditation we are in a much better position if we were to have any staffing changes in the future ”

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Another key benefit has been thinking more strategically regarding procurement and contract management. Utilising the skills, support and expertise of the CIPS assessors has helped shape our procurement function, providing valuable insights and challenge. The targeted and expert feedback they have provided has meant we've been able to develop, improve and professionalise our procurement function ”

James Rant
Chief Finance Officer



The CIPS Procurement Excellence Programme is an independent and comprehensive assessment of your procurement team function designed and delivered by world-class, leading experts.

- Globally recognised award
- Demonstrates how well your procurement function is performing against an internationally recognised standard
- Helps your organisation build a function fit and ready for future challenges



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