



# On a mission *to retain talent*

## CIPS People Development Programmes

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is a British government department whose mission is to protect the UK. With 2,000 commercial staff, it is one of the biggest public procurement organisations in Europe, managing some of the most complex and technologically-advanced requirements in the world. Attracting, developing and retaining talent is fundamental to achieving its mission. For many years, CIPS has supported the MOD to do just that, with the relationship strengthening thanks to new educational initiatives developed to suit the organisation's unique needs.



Manages a  
defence budget  
of around £50bn



Single largest  
customer for UK  
industry



Employs nearly  
60,000 civilian  
personnel



# Developing the profession

On appointment to the role of Chief Executive of the Civil Service, John Manzoni set the challenge to upskill the entire government's commercial function, which is responsible for procurement.

*The vision was to establish a structured pathway to develop commercial staff from entry level all the way to senior leadership.*

That change of focus led to CIPS training and accreditation becoming an integral part of the Ministry of Defence's process of granting licenses to staff to procure goods and services.

Fast forward a few years and MCIPS accreditation has become the recognised standard for Government Commercial Function staff at managerial level, while CIPS Diploma or Practitioner level has become the standard for roles with less procurement responsibility.

## Shaping the partnership

The early days of the partnership saw CIPS provide a training needs analysis of MOD staff, based on the Global Standard in Procurement and Supply, a competency framework that sets out what skills are needed at all levels within the profession.

This highlighted the core skills required by the workforce, and what gaps existed, so the Ministry was able to identify the best available courses and develop their own supplementary programmes, making the most of their training budget. New recruits continue to undergo a competence test that ensures a common standard is reached before they are permitted to commit to contractual spend.

*The MOD's goal is for 100% of commercial staff to be trained to, or working towards, at least CIPS Diploma level by 2020 and multiple learning programmes are now running to help reach the target.*

The most popular learning programmes are the traditional qualifications, offered as either self-study or with face-to-face workshops according to location and circumstance, and Corporate Award applied learning programmes, which relate theoretical learning to real-life organisational challenges.

*In just 4 years, over 900 Ministry staff have been supported and funded through a qualifications programme and over 400 have been supported through an applied learning programme.*

## New educational initiatives

The applied learning approach has been tailored to add a defence industry context through case studies and assignments. It has also been mapped to MOD objectives and is compliant with DSAT (Defence Systems Approach to Training) quality standards.

This appears to have gone down particularly well with learners, evidenced by an excellent first-time pass rate. Programme variants have also been developed to minimise time away from work and to provide fast-track options for graduates to get qualified quicker.

The most recent innovation has been the introduction of a senior leadership programme that takes professionals beyond MCIPS to Executive Diploma – the same level of learning as a Master's degree.

## Driving excellence across the sector

Together with other organisations in the sector, the MOD is a member of the Aerospace and Defence Procurement Group (ADPG), a CIPS special interest group for senior leaders to drive excellence.

The group is a driving force for professionalisation in the sector, working collaboratively to continuously stay ahead of trends, discussing emerging forces, opportunities, challenges, and the talent development agenda.

The group established the Aerospace and Defence Academy, a procurement training programme tailored specifically to address the learning and development needs of companies across the entire industry's supply chain.

The Academy has seen over a thousand learners – many of whom are experiencing the same issues in their different places of work – develop key skills and network with professionals across the sector.