

NHS Shared Business Services

# Setting and sustaining the highest ethical standards

NHS Shared Business Services' (NHS SBS) commitment to excellence and being a force for good put ethics at the heart of a programme to build commercial capability and procurement professionalism. Combining the CIPS Corporate Ethics Award with a first-rate awareness raising campaign enabled the business to enthuse employees and embed the highest standards of ethical procurement and also gain company-wide engagement and a reputational boost among partners and potential customers.



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Achieving the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark is about the continuation of the development and professional journey of procurement colleagues and being clear across the organisation and beyond that we are ethical in how we operate and take our responsibilities seriously.”

**Sarah Parker**

Sustainability, Policy & Capability  
Director, NHS SBS



## Significant responsibilities

NHS SBS is a unique joint venture with the Department of Health and Social Care. It was created in 2004 by the Department of Health and Social Care and Sopra Steria to provide corporate services to the NHS. Its purpose is to help the NHS increase efficiency and enhance quality to make life easier for NHS colleagues and enable better care for patients.

As a commercial organisation serving public healthcare organisations and the wider public sector and operating in a complex regulatory environment, NHS SBS has responsibilities and obligations demanding outstanding performance. So when it came to the ethical and sustainability components of its capability building programme, NHS SBS turned to CIPS and its Corporate Ethics eLearning and test

NHS SBS valued the comprehensiveness of the train-and-test route to achieving the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark. It highlighted additional steps and practices that can be taken to foster ethical procurement, and enable delivery of environmental and fair labour practices to the highest professional standard.



## Prominent initiative

The procurement team at NHS SBS started making the most of the certification process from its very first step: adopting the principles of the **CIPS Corporate Code of Ethics**. By breaking the Code down into its component parts and undertaking a gap analysis, the team learnt that while it was doing everything necessary there were some areas that could be strengthened.

These insights convinced the team to do two things to maximise the initiative's impact across the organisation and stakeholder groups. First, extend the e-learning and test to all in procurement involved in the selection and management of suppliers, sustainability and social value. Second, launch internal and external communication campaigns to spread the word about its scope, significance and success.

These actions ensured leadership and cross-departmental buy-in and enthusiastic employee engagement and feedback. This strategy continued through to the awarding of the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark with the ceremony attended by senior procurement leaders at NHS SBS and CIPS representatives.



## Continuous journey

NHS SBS is determined to maintain this momentum by including the CIPS Corporate Ethics e-learning and test in induction plans and displaying the Corporate Ethics Mark in email signatures, bid documents and prominently in its offices across the country.

For the 108 employees who took the CIPS Corporate Ethics test, benefits range from taking a step towards Chartered Status for fully qualified CIPS members, to offering development opportunities for administrators. For many, the training sparked a fresh interest in how CIPS can help their careers.

Procurement Capability Leads at NHS SBS are committed to supporting their colleagues through learning and development opportunities, including supporting CIPS studies that can help to progress colleague procurement professionalisation plans.



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We made it really clear to procurement and organisational senior leaders why we were working to achieve the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark and why it was so important for them to take - and promote - the training. Their buy-in was really crucial,”

**Lee Morgan**  
Procurement Policy Manager  
NHS SBS

## Key Statistics

99%

Of NHS Trusts use at least one NHS SBS service

>£1bn

Delivered in savings to the NHS since 2005

200+

People in the procurement team

£17.3bn

Total spend under management (procurement)\*

£422m

Total NHS savings facilitated by procurement teams\*

90%

Of UK's healthcare funding is distributed by NHS SBS

## The benefits for NHS SBS

- Strengthened its reputation via communications and listing on CIPS Corporate Ethics Register
- Compliant with the ethical and sustainability requirements of multiple regulatory regimes
- An ethically knowledgeable, empowered and motivated cohort of employees
- Safeguard against supply chain malpractice and disruption, and financial risks
- Consistency, ensured by embedding ethical practices and behaviours into everyday business
- Reassurance – for customers to know they are partnering with a values-led, ethical organisation
- Ahead of regulatory changes, emerging issues and societal expectations through annual review and renewal.

\*For more information visit  
Procurement Services | NHS SBS

# The CIPS Global Standard

## Our unique competency framework for performance excellence

Our Global Standard defines what best practice looks like in reality across every aspect of procurement and supply and at every level of the profession anywhere in the world.

### **Best practice ethical practices and behaviours woven throughout**

With ethical procurement now a vital capability, a recent refresh of our Global Standard has elevated ethical understanding, practices and behaviours to ensure the framework's relevance in our ever-evolving world.

By transforming ethical procurement from a standalone theme into a thread woven throughout our competency standards, the refreshed Global Standard brings clarity to how best to apply ethical principles and behave ethically across all activities and roles.

### **A vital resource for the procurement community worldwide**

By providing a clear roadmap detailing the skills, knowledge and capabilities required for performance excellence, CIPS Global Standard is an essential resource for professionals and companies.

To find out more about how CIPS Global Standard could help with your ambitions and challenges, whether you are delivering, managing, leading or influencing procurement, visit [www.cips.org](http://www.cips.org).



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It is a great, positive story for any organisation to achieve the CIPS Corporate Ethics Mark and NHS SBS made the most of it, through public relations and ensuring the kitemark is highly visible in offices and email signatures - it was nice to see the company making it so important,”

#### **Emma Cole**

CIPS Head of Corporate Sales,  
UK, Europe & Americas



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can develop your  
procurement and  
supply team?**

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