

Linked

AUTUMN 2025



THE MAGAZINE FOR LUPC MEMBERS AND SUPPLIERS

THE FIGHT TO END MODERN SLAVERY



UUK'S
'TOWARDS A
NEW ERA OF
COLLABORATION'



LET'S TALK... A
REFLECTION FROM
LUPC'S FIRST EVER
APPRENTICE, AMI NAIR


LUPC'S LINKED PODCAST NOW AVAILABLE!

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Meet the team

 **Don Bowman**
Director
Tel: 020 7307 2769
M: 07931 862275
Email: d.bowman@lupc.ac.uk
General consortium direction and management of Ensemble Purchasing.


 **Jasbinder Sandhu**
Deputy Director
Tel: 0207 307 2767
M: 07849 089958
Email: j.sandhu@lupc.ac.uk
Bindi is responsible for the management of the contracting team and tendering activity at LUPC.

 **Antonio Ramirez**
Senior Category Manager
Tel: 020 7307 2764
M: 07932 346741
Email: a.ramirez@lupc.ac.uk
e-Procurement lead, STEMEd and laboratory, electronic components, furniture & soft furnishings, utilities, veterinary supplies.

 **Mike Kilner**
Senior Category Manager
Tel: 020 7307 2768
M: 07932 347182
Email: m.kilner@lupc.ac.uk
ICT hardware and software, insurance, audio visual including photographic and broadcasting equipment, Electronics Watch.

 **Roy Dennis**
Senior Category Manager
Tel: 020 7307 2772
M: 07419 583838
Email: r.dennis@lupc.ac.uk
Library, professional services (including legal, debt collection, intellectual property rights, financial services, occupational health, temporary & permanent recruitment, global mobility), office supplies, paper, print, post, CreditSafe.

 **Julie Gooch**
Senior Category Manager
Tel: 020 7307 2778
M: 07546 050410
Email: j.gooch@lupc.ac.uk
Estates including; estates maintenance & minor works, waste management, cleaning: services, equipment & supplies, security services, doors, lifts, access control, fire alarms, washroom, water quality management.

 **Justin McLoughlin**
Senior Category Manager
Tel: 07568 227 623
Email: j.mcloughlin@lupc.ac.uk
Estates including; catering consultancy, outsourced catering, project management and full design team, PPE, work & sports wear, floor coverings, white goods, electrical materials, taxi services and promotional merchandise.

 **Joyce Kadri**
Administrator
Tel: 020 7307 2763
M: 07884 551949
Email: j.kadri@lupc.ac.uk
Joyce supports LUPC's Senior Category Managers as well as the wider team with their administrative requirements.


 **Mags Shapiro**
Responsible Procurement Lead
Tel: 020 7307 2765
Email: m.shapiro@lupc.ac.uk
Responsible procurement lead; Responsible procurement policy and strategy; supplier risk assessment and development; modern slavery statements; sustainability reporting.

 **Suzanne Picken**
Assistant Director Membership, Marketing & Communications
Tel: 020 7307 2776
M: 07930 595498
Email: s.picken@lupc.ac.uk
Membership; marketing agreements and services; training; conference and events; LUPC website; publications, communications.

 **Giorgia Varriale**
Communications and Digital Marketing Executive
Tel: 020 7307 2771
Email: g.varriale@lupc.ac.uk
Stakeholder communications, ebulletin and Linked magazine, podcast, social media and website.

 **Caroline Ford**
Accounts and Office Manager
Tel: 020 7307 2762
M: 07908 460381
Email: c.ford@lupc.ac.uk
Accounts, general enquiries and admin.

 **Kai Osborne**
Systems Manager & Data Analyst
Tel: 020 7307 2770
M: 07784 312365
Email: k.osborne@lupc.ac.uk
System management and development; collection, analysis and reporting of member and supplier data.

 **Reece Baines**
Purchasing Manager
Email: r.baines@lupc.ac.uk
Professional procurement consultancy and support service to LUPC members, covering all levels of procurement, as required by the relevant member organisation.

 **Amariah Nair**
Procurement Administrator (Apprentice)
Email: a.nair@lupc.ac.uk
Procurement apprentice supporting category managers in their tendering activity through CIPS study and on the job experience.

Nicola Panico
Procurement Administrator (Apprentice)
Email: n.panico@lupc.ac.uk
Procurement apprentice supporting category managers in their tendering activity through CIPS study and on the job experience.

Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn 2025 edition of Linked magazine



Welcome to the Autumn/Winter edition of Linked Magazine. As we approach the end of the year, it's a great moment to pause, reflect and look ahead to the challenges and opportunities 2026 will bring for our members and the wider sector.

You may notice that this edition marks a small but important change: Linked will now be published twice a year, rather than quarterly. As LUPC continues to grow and our work expands across responsible procurement, member engagement, and collaborative projects, we want to ensure that every edition of Linked remains thoughtful, high-quality and genuinely valuable for our readers. As a small team, moving to two editions a year allows us to maintain this standard whilst enhancing all of the ways we communicate with our members. This will include developing the LUPC website to be a more valuable resource for you in the future. We hope you enjoy the depth and focus this new rhythm will bring.

Looking ahead, one of the major highlights on our calendar is the LUPC & SUPC Conference 2026, taking place on 25 March at Convene in the City of London. We're delighted to be returning for our 10th joint annual conference, offering a day of lively discussion, expert-led workshops and networking with peers and framework suppliers. Exhibitor bookings are now open, and members will be invited to book their places in January. Attendance remains free for all full members of LUPC and SUPC. We are continuing to explore the possibility of a merger with SUPC and further

communications on this will be issued when the Boards of both organisations have made their decisions in early 2026. If changes to the way we operate are required, we will of course consult further with our members.

In this edition, our main feature shines a spotlight on Unseen's fight to end modern slavery. Modern slavery is one of the world's fastest-growing crimes, embedded in both global and local supply chains. Unseen works with businesses, policymakers and communities to uncover exploitation, support survivors and help build a slavery-free future. Their insights serve as an important reminder of the role we all play in responsible procurement.

We also take a sector-wide view of Universities UK (UUK)'s report, 'Towards a new era of collaboration'. UUK's Chief of Staff, Ed Castell, outlines the organisation's ambitious programme to help higher education institutions reduce costs, transform their operations and enhance resilience, with procurement playing a central role in this journey. We have been working on a joint procurement consortia response to the report, as UKUPC, and this will be communicated to you all shortly

Finally, I'm delighted to share an interview with our apprentice, Ami, who reflects on her learning and development at LUPC. Her perspective brings to life the value of nurturing new talent within the sector, and we're proud to support her professional journey.

As we bring 2025 to a close, I want to thank all our members, suppliers and partners for your continued collaboration and support. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a restful festive season. I look forward to working with you all in the New Year.





LONDON - 25 MARCH

Exhibitor & Sponsorship registrations for UKUPC suppliers now open!



Save £200 by booking before 23rd December

Click on the hyperlinked titles to find out more

LUPC Annual Membership Survey Report 2025

The annual [LUPC Membership Survey Report 2025](#) is now available. Thank you to our members who took the time to participate. Their input gives us a clearer picture of what matters to them and where we can improve, providing both strengths to build on and opportunities to do better. The insights will guide our decisions in the months ahead and help us focus on the areas most important to our members.

Key highlights include:

- 100% of respondents would recommend LUPC to other organisations
- 98% are happy with the range of events we provide
- 94% rated our customer service as good or excellent



New LUPC members: OHC&AT & RICS

We are delighted to welcome two organisations as full members of LUPC: [the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors \(RICS\)](#) and the [Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust \(OHC&AT\)](#).



LUPC renews CIPS Corporate Ethics certification

Being awarded the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) Corporate Ethics Mark once again, demonstrates our continued effort to enhance our position as leaders in Responsible Procurement.



UKUPC

UK Universities Procurement Consortia

October 2025 UKUPC Member Update - your collaborative procurement wrap-up

From strategic developments across all our regional consortia to the latest on collaborative frameworks and responsible procurement initiatives, [this October 2025 UKUPC Member Update](#) keeps you connected to the work happening across the UKUPC network.

UKUPC Quarterly Market Insight Documents November 2025 now available

The latest UKUPC Market Insight reports as well as the Market Indices and Graphs, an additional resource to assist you in identifying factors that could influence pricing for certain key markets or commodities, are now available at the link above.

Stay Connected with Jisc Procurement & Supplier Management - Sign up for their monthly digital update

We're excited to invite you to

subscribe to a new monthly digital update from the Jisc Procurement and Supplier Management team, designed specifically for procurement professionals across HE and FE institutions. Each edition will bring you:

- Key updates on sector-wide digital technology procurement frameworks and dynamic markets
- Insights into Jisc-negotiated content and software agreements which meet the needs of the sector and are available through Jisc's platform
- Opportunities to collaborate and share good practices.
- News on upcoming events and webinars

Whether you're looking to stay informed, get involved, or simply keep a finger on the pulse of procurement in education, this update is tailored for the procurement professionals in the tertiary education sector.

Interested in joining the digital update list?

Just click on the title above to sign up and be part of the conversation.

News

Click on the hyperlinked titles to find out more

LUPC Launches Training Programme for 2025-26

LUPC has unveiled a comprehensive training programme for 2025-26, at no cost to our members and designed to support at every stage of the procurement journey. Click on the title above to find out more!

Annual Bespoke Events Attendance Report Now Available

Your 2024-25 LUPC Events Attendance Report is now ready to download from the [My LUPC](#) section of our website.

The report includes all events you've attended - both LUPC-hosted and external ones advertised via our Events page - and is particularly useful for recording CPD activity, including for those maintaining CIPS Chartered Status (30 hours per year).

You'll find your annual report in [My Documents](#) under Your Member Benefits or My LUPC (visible to anyone who attended more than one event).

[My Events](#) is a current update of the LUPC events you have attended. Please ensure you're logged in to access this and contact us if you experience any issues.

Events

Click on the title to book your place



[SUPC Laboratory Gases and Associated Equipment Framework launch webinar](#)

12/12/2025 10.00 - 11.00

[LUPC Non-Contracting Authority Meeting](#)

13/01/2026 10.00 - 11.00

An initial meeting to explore how LUPC can support its non-contracting authority members

[UKUPC Commodity Mapping Tool Launch](#)

15/01/2026 10.00 - 11.00

A webinar for UKUPC Members to find out more about the UKUPC Commodity Mapping Tool and how to use it in practice

[Introduction to Contract Management](#)

22/01/2026 10.00 - 12.00

A 2-hour training course for full LUPC members covering the basics of contract management

[Heads of Procurement Monthly Meeting - Jan 26](#)

30/01/2026 09.30 - 10.30

For LUPC members only. LUPC hosts a monthly meeting for Heads of Procurement typically on the last Friday of every month

[Senior Procurement Professionals Network Meeting - February 2026](#)

03/02/2026 11.00 - 12.00

Join us for the first Senior Procurement Professional Network meeting for LUPC members.

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LUPC LINKED PODCAST

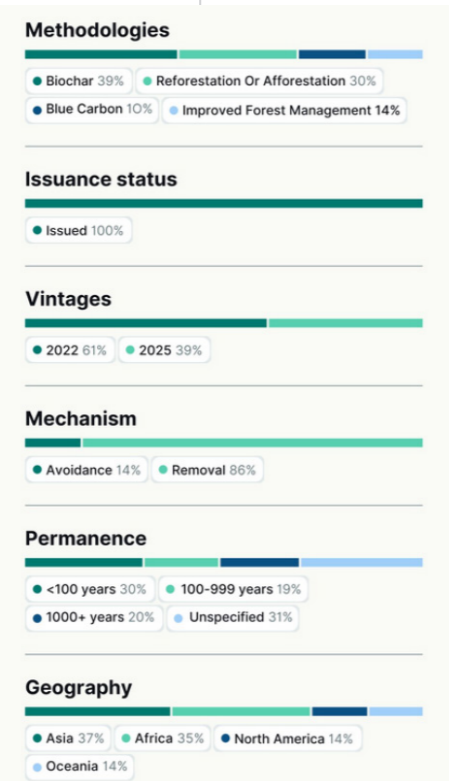
procurement conversations across the not-for-profit sector

LUPC Carbon Footprint

Building on improved data gathering systems refined each year, LUPC has once again concluded a carbon footprint calculation, with our GHG Inventory externally verified by My Carbon.

	FY24	FY23
Scope 1	0	2.2
Scope 2	0.24	0.04
Scope 3	117.86	73.14
Total	118.11	75.38

Our overall carbon emissions measured for FY 24 were higher than those measured for FY23 largely due to a significant increase in Scope 3 emissions brought about by our office move, which included refurbishment of our new space and repairs to our old space. The UKUPC conference hosted by LUPC during the financial year also added significantly to scope 3 emissions. In both cases increases were seen in the Purchased Goods and Services Category. While the move resulted in a short-term increase in emissions, the long-term savings in Scope 1 and 2 are a result of a change in energy to fully electric, utilising renewable sources.



- **Delta Blue Carbon** - (Pakistan): The world's largest mangrove restoration project, protecting coastlines, enhancing biodiversity, and strengthening local livelihoods through nature-based resilience.
- **Indian Carboneers** - (India): Carboneers partners with farmers to turn agricultural waste into biochar, locking away carbon for over a thousand years. This process mitigates climate impacts on farmland and provides farmers with extra income through carbon sequestration - tackling climate change, waste, and livelihoods all at once.

• **Trees for Global Benefits** - (Uganda): A community-driven reforestation program that empowers smallholder farmers, restores degraded landscapes, and generates lasting income opportunities.

• **Kootznoowoo Native Community Forest** - (Alaska, USA): A Native-owned improved forest management project protecting old-growth forests, preserving cultural heritage, and supporting Indigenous stewardship.

- **Yarra Yarra - (Australia)**: A large-scale reforestation effort converting barren farmland into biodiverse native forests, creating wildlife corridors and revitalizing local ecosystems.

Emissions have been offset against the following projects:

- **Farm Gai Kaisa** - (Namibia): A regenerative agriculture project promoting sustainable farming practices, enhancing soil carbon sequestration, and improving farmer resilience.

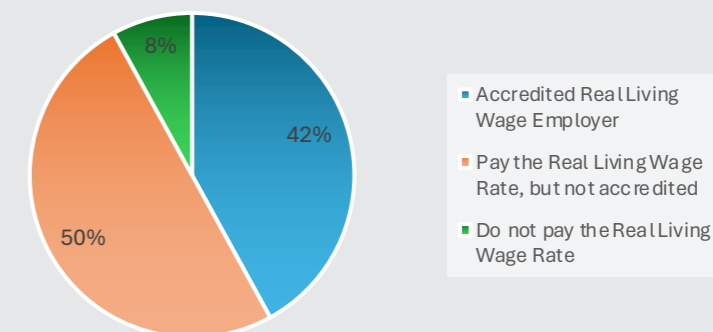
Living Wage

On 22nd October 2025 the real Living Wage rates increased to:

- **£13.45 across the UK**
- **£14.80 in London**

Following the increase, half a million workers receive a pay rise worth thousands of pounds a year more than the Government's 'National Living Wage'. The real Living Wage is the only UK wage rate independently calculated based on what is needed to cover living costs and live with stability and security. With 4.5 million workers in the UK paid less than the real Living Wage and struggling to make ends meet, the Living Wage movement has never been more important. LUPC is proudly accredited as a Living Wage employer and encourages

LUPC Framework Agreement Suppliers Real Living Wage Rate Employers 2025



all framework agreement suppliers to become accredited as well.

Only 8% of suppliers surveyed via the RP Hub supplier due diligence questionnaire do not pay the Living Wage rate, 50% pay the Living Wage rate but are not accredited and 41.67% are accredited Living Wage employers with the Living Wage Foundation.

Employment Rights Bill



The Employment Rights Bill has returned to the House of Commons after the House of Lords rejected several amendments including the proposed "day one" unfair dismissal rights. A shorter six-month period compared to the current two years is proposed instead. A guaranteed hours opt-out for employees who prefer to keep their zero-hour contract terms, an explicit obligation on the government to take account of seasonal work when designing the guaranteed hours scheme for zero and low hours workers, and keeping the current 50% turnout requirement for industrial action ballots are also proposed by the House of Commons.

LUPC RP external engagement

Our Deputy Director, Bindi Sandhu, and RP Lead, Mags Shapiro, attended the International Working Group for Ethical Public Procurement (IWGEPP) in Gent, Belgium where discussions included measuring the impact of ethical practice in public procurement as well as ethical public procurement in conflict zones.

Our [RP Lead, Mags Shapiro](#), was invited to participate in roundtable discussions on public procurement obligations in a proposed new Business, Human Rights & Environment Act facilitated by UNISON and the Corporate Justice Coalition. This legislation would have implications for mandatory supply chain transparency, human and environmental rights due

diligence, grievance mechanisms and access to remedy for affected parties.

We were invited to present our approach to managing the risks of Modern Slavery at the CIPS London Branch CPD event held at London School of Economics (LSE). Our RP Lead and Deputy Director were joined by Electronicswatch and the Open Supply Hub to present our collaborative approach. Unfortunately, Unseen were unable to join us, but their online resources provided a good backdrop to the broader conversation of the effectiveness of a multi-pronged approach, drawing on the expertise of a number of organisations pulling in the same direction.



Legislation, regulation and guidance

EU CSRD and CSDDD

The major changes proposed by the EU Parliament include:

- CSRD will apply to EU companies with 1,750 employees and €450 million in revenue.
- ESRS reporting standards will be simplified and reduced, requiring fewer qualitative details. Sector-specific reporting will become voluntary.
- CSDD will apply to companies with 5,000 employees and €1.5 billion in revenue.
- Out of scope companies will be protected from requests by companies for information greater than that set out in voluntary sustainability reporting standards.
- No longer a requirement for companies to prepare a Transition Plan to make their business model compatible with the Paris Agreement, and shifts liability for non-compliance with due diligence requirements to the national level.

Legislation is due to be finalised by the end of 2025 with further consultation to take place. While many companies are no longer in-scope, a trickle-down effect can be expected for both smaller companies and those supplying companies in the EU.

Social Value PPN

Social Value obligations under PPN 002 came into effect on 1 October 2025,

which requires:

- In-scope organisations must apply a minimum 10% weighting (or an equivalent measurement) of the total score, for social value. Where absolute methodologies are used (for example Price per Quality Point (PQP) or Value for Money index) this will be 10% of the non-price criteria (overall quality score).
- All social value commitments made by suppliers during the procurement process must be reflected in the contract either as contract terms, key performance indicators, or performance indicators.

The scope of Social Value has also been expanded under the new PPN to include themes across responsible procurement, including Modern Slavery.

Transparency in Supply Chains (TISC) Guidance

Updated guidance released by the Home Office aims to help businesses comply with Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 by providing clearer expectations and practical advice. The update provides more practical assistance to encourage more meaningful disclosure from organizations in their Modern Slavery Statements regarding their efforts to combat modern slavery, including outlining processes for risk identification, due diligence processes and setting key performance indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

HOW SXP.AI HARNESSES AI TO ENHANCE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

As universities face growing pressure to deliver seamless, student-centred experiences, SXP.ai is using generative AI to deliver an AI Assistant that helps institutions provide proactive, accessible and integrated support across every stage of student life. Hugh Griffiths, CEO & founder at SXP.ai, provides us with the details.

Formerly known as UniWellBeing, SXP.ai's mission is to enhance the entire student experience through an intelligent AI Assistant, while keeping well-being support at the core of their operations. Their new name stands for Student Experience and it embeds proactive support across every interaction a student has with their university. They provide a generative AI-powered platform to universities to assist students across their entire journey, including well-being, campus services, academic support, and recruitment.

SXP.ai collaborates with leading universities around the UK, USA, Singapore, and Australia, working with renowned institutions such as [The Open University](#) and [The University of Law](#)

The Value of AI in Supporting Student Well-being and Student Services

AI technology can play a transformative role in enhancing student well-being and university services by addressing several key challenges:

- **Early Intervention and Prevention:** Our AI Assistant proactively engage students, identifying signs of distress early and ensuring timely, relevant support.
- **Accessibility and Anonymity:** Students who traditionally avoid support services due to stigma or discomfort can comfortably engage through AI's private, judgement-free interactions.
- **Scalability and Efficiency:** Universities face increasing demand for services. Our AI Assistant provided scalable, round-the-clock support without the proportional increase in staffing costs.
- **Cost-Effectiveness and Resource Optimisation:** AI significantly reduces administrative burdens by automating routine tasks, freeing university staff to focus on more complex, human-centred work. This efficient use of resources helps institutions lower operational costs and improves overall service quality.
- **Embedded Well-being Support:** Our

AI Assistant integrates well-being into every aspect of student life, encouraging engagement from students who might otherwise avoid active participation in well-being initiatives. This seamless integration contributes to improved student retention and success.

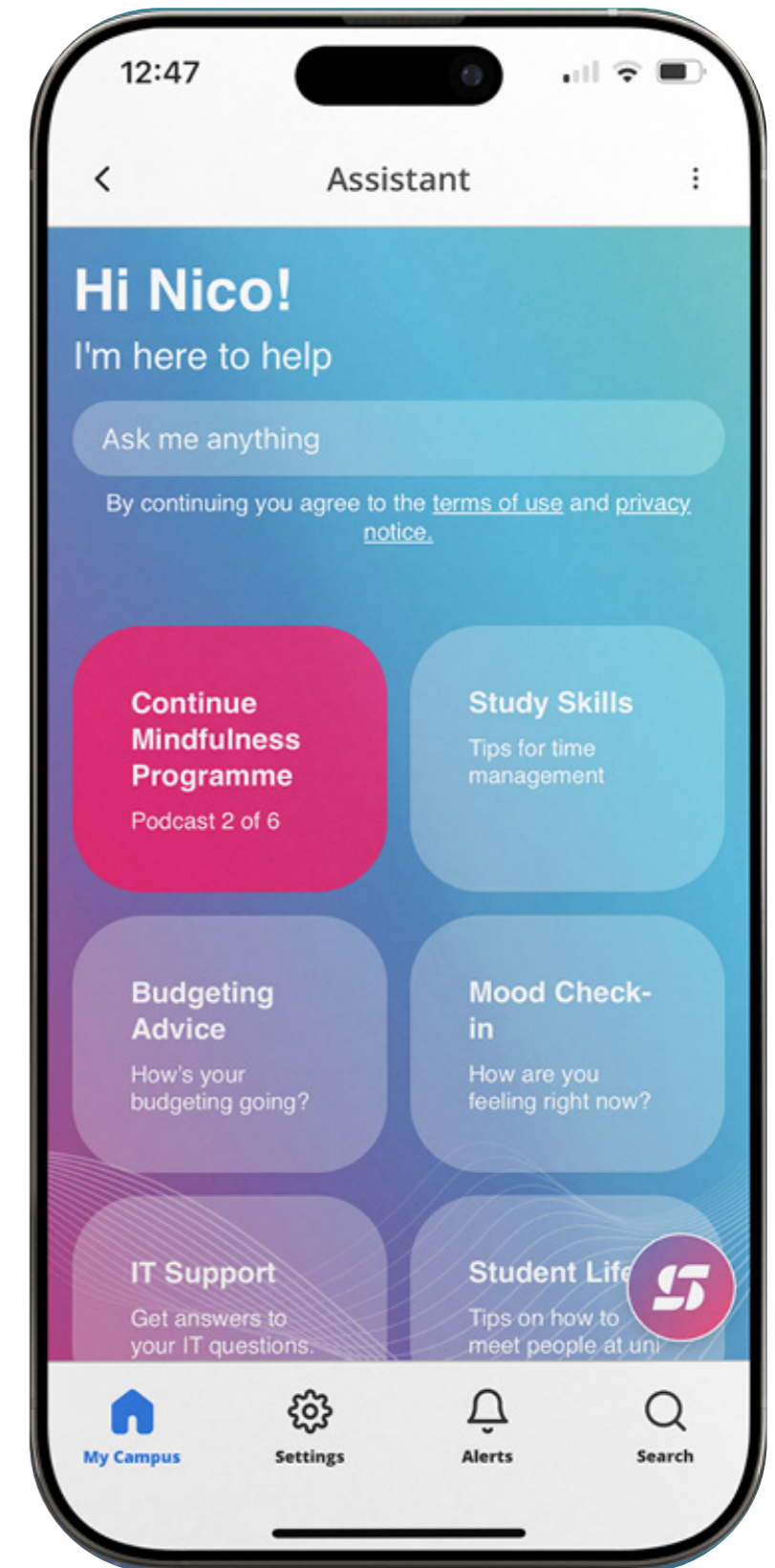
Key Questions

How does the AI Assistant complement existing student support services?

The AI Assistant handles routine and proactive tasks, allowing university staff to focus on more complex student needs, creating a balanced and effective support ecosystem.

How does embedded well-being support help students?

Embedding well-being support across our platform allows students to effortlessly engage with services, often without conscious effort, enhancing participation and improving overall student retention and success.



Feature



How does SXP.ai ensure data privacy and security?

We maintain strict data protection standards with ISO27001 and ISO27701 certifications, utilise secure Amazon Web Services (AWS) infrastructure, and provide anonymised insights to universities while protecting student privacy.

What type of post-implementation support does SXP.ai offer?

SXP.ai provides ongoing support through a dedicated customer success manager, regular system updates, and comprehensive training for university staff, ensuring smooth operation and maximising benefits.



SXP.ai is a supplier on the LUPC Occupational Health framework, lot 7 Student Wellbeing – Digital Assistance under the registered company name of 1stwellbeing Limited. To find out more, contact [Hugh Griffiths](#).



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UNSEEN'S FIGHT TO END MODERN SLAVERY

Modern slavery is one of the world's fastest-growing crimes, embedded in global and local supply chains. Every organisation has a role to play in eradicating it. Unseen partners with businesses, policymakers and communities to uncover exploitation, support survivors and help build a slavery-free future.

Seeing the unseen - How much do you really know about modern slavery and how close it might be to your daily life?

More than 400 years after the transatlantic slave trade, slavery still exists today. It looks different now, hidden in plain sight, yet it continues to devastate lives across the world, including here in the UK.

Modern slavery is the world's fastest-growing crime. It thrives in the shadows of everyday life, in supply chains, private homes and in industries we all rely on. Victims are often subjected to coercion, debt or deceit, stripped of their freedom and dignity. Modern slavery includes forced, child and bonded labour, among others.

Unseen is one of the UK's leading anti-slavery charities, working tirelessly to change this reality. Since 2008, the organisation has been at the forefront of tackling modern slavery and exploitation, supporting survivors, influencing legislation and working with businesses, communities and governments to drive real change.

From survivor safehouses and thousands of calls to the Modern



Slavery & Exploitation [Helpline](#) to shaping national policy and partnering with diverse organisations across the country, Unseen's journey has been a dedication to its mission: to build a world without slavery.

Modern slavery - the hidden crime in our everyday lives

Modern slavery is one of the most

serious and overlooked crimes. Fundamentally, it is the deliberate and forced commodification of a human being for profit; a grave violation of human rights and an economic injustice.

This crime is not something that happens solely abroad or in history books. It's happening today, right here in the UK, often in plain sight.

Recent [estimates](#) suggest that around 122,000 people are living in conditions of modern slavery in the UK today. Using Home Office figures and data gathered through Unseen's Helpline, it is estimated that this exploitation costs the UK up to [£60 billion every](#)

[year](#). This is the equivalent of building around 50 new hospitals or 750 new schools and is a staggering reminder of modern slavery's human and economic toll.

Instances of modern slavery occur when people are exploited and unable to leave due to threats, deception or abuse of power. It can include being forced to work for very little or no pay, working in unsafe conditions, having wages or documents withheld, and having freedom of movement or communication restricted.

Modern slavery affects people of all ages, nationalities and backgrounds. Many victims are deceived by false



promises of employment or a better life, only to find themselves stuck, controlled and stripped of their freedom.

What makes this crime particularly insidious is how deeply woven into the fabric of everyday life it is. From the clothes we wear and the food we eat to the care we receive and the services we use, exploitation can be found across global and local supply chains.

According to Unseen's [2024 Annual Assessment](#), labour exploitation remains the most common form of modern slavery reported. Sectors such as care, construction, hospitality and personal services (like car washes and nail bars) represent a significant proportion of cases.

Modern slavery often goes unnoticed because it hides behind ordinary business practices and complex supply chains. Yet, its impact is anything but invisible. It destroys lives and damages communities.

That's why Unseen continues to raise awareness, support survivors and work with businesses, policymakers and the public to shine a light on this hidden crime and bring about real change.

17 years of impact

In 2008, friends Andrew Wallis and Kate Garbers founded Unseen after hearing stories of human trafficking in Ukraine and discovering that traffickers were passing through UK airports. In realising that modern

slavery was not as distant as they initially thought, Andrew and Kate resolved to give survivors of trafficking a safe place to rebuild their lives.

In an [interview](#) with Andrew, discussing the inception of Unseen, he said: *"It was a gut response to a problem. I think people give up too easily. For me, it's about internal motivation and a commitment to trying to bring some justice."*

From that small start in Bristol, Unseen has become a national force for change, shaping laws, supporting survivors and tackling exploitation across sectors.

By 2009, Unseen had co-founded the [South West Anti-Slavery Partnership](#) alongside Bristol City Council and Avon & Somerset Police, fostering collaboration between local authorities, police and community organisations. In 2011, the charity launched its first safehouse for survivors, followed by outreach services that continue to support people rebuilding their lives after exploitation.

A defining milestone came in 2013, when Unseen's CEO, Andrew Wallis, chaired the [It Happens Here report](#), a landmark investigation by the Centre for Social Justice that directly inspired the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This ground-breaking legislation placed legal responsibility on UK businesses to address slavery in their supply chains, establishing Unseen as a key

voice in shaping national policy.

In 2016, Unseen, in partnership with BT, launched the Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline, a free, independent and confidential service offering guidance and support. By 2023, the Helpline had been contacted nearly 50,000 times, identified tens of thousands of potential victims and informed national intelligence on slavery and exploitation.

Over the years, Unseen has expanded its reach through business partnerships, survivor consultancy and international initiatives. This influence has spanned from major awareness campaigns to strategic collaborations across sectors.

The impact today

Today, Unseen continues to combine purpose with action. In [2024 alone](#), Unseen identified 4,839 potential victims through the Helpline, provided tailored outreach services to 278 survivors and worked with businesses like McLaren Construction Group, Lloyd's Banking Group, and Sainsbury's to combat forced labour

From one safehouse to a national movement, Unseen is driven by the belief that a world without slavery is possible.

Role of businesses

Every organisation regardless of size or sector, is connected to a network of suppliers, business partners, contractors and services that could



knowingly or unknowingly enable exploitation.

For those working in procurement, investments, and supply chains, the risk is especially significant. The complexity of global and domestic supply networks means it's often difficult to trace every step of production, allowing modern slavery to thrive. Perpetrators of modern slavery act deliberately and strategically, exploiting weaknesses in an

organisation's safeguarding measures to identify vulnerabilities and profit from abuse.

Addressing this requires a multi-pronged approach, including verifiable and transparent supply chain mapping, human and labour rights risk assessments, and robust due diligence. It also involves establishing mechanisms to gather the authentic voices of rights holders, alongside a clear business responsibility to provide



remedy where they have been directly involved in rights abuses and to use their influence where they play an indirect role.

Working together for a slavery-free future

Working with Unseen's Business Services team will help you mitigate the risk of exploitation within your operations and supply chains. We offer a range of consultancy and training services to help achieve this and understand how you can strengthen your ethical procurement.

If you'd like to help survivors rebuild their lives, donate to Unseen.

Learn more about modern slavery risks in procurement by listening to our conversation on the LUPC Linked Podcast.

If you would like information, guidance or advice on issues related to modern slavery you can call the [Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline](#): 08000 121 700.

You can access the Unseen UK Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline via the button at the top of our [Modern Slavery webpage](#) or on our Responsible Procurement page. The link includes a webform and the Helpline number for reporting any concerns about modern slavery. This service is confidential, independent, and available to provide

Anti-slavery Day

This year we put out a call to action to our framework agreement suppliers to share the UK Modern Slavery Helpline run by Unseen. Scientific Laboratory Suppliers (SLS) heeded our call with a LinkedIn post, while Stone Technologies shared the message on their intranet and put up posters on site promoting the helpline.

advice and guidance to anyone with concerns. We encourage our members to display Unseen's posters ([poster 1](#), [poster 2](#), [poster 3](#), [poster 4](#)) within their organisations. These resources can be shared digitally or in print. Each poster includes a QR code that can be scanned with a mobile phone for direct access to the webform and helpline.

UUK'S 'TOWARDS A NEW ERA OF COLLABORATION'

Universities UK's Chief of Staff, Ed Castell, gives an overview of their ambitious programme to support the higher education (HE) sector to reduce costs and transform their operations, including the vital role procurement can play.

In December 2024, in response to the severe financial pressures facing universities, Universities UK (UUK), the collective voice of 141 institutions and a full member of LUPC, launched an ambitious transformation and efficiency programme overseen by a taskforce.

Through this programme, we are exploring opportunities for universities to reduce costs and remove barriers to more radical transformation. The main report, ['Towards a New Era of Collaboration'](#), set out the action universities, government and wider stakeholders can take to capitalise on these opportunities.

Why now?

Universities all over the UK are facing significant financial pressures. The [latest analysis from OfS](#) showed that without mitigation, 45% of providers in England were forecasting a deficit for 2025/26. This is the result of long-term, real-terms declines in key income sources. In England, the tuition fee has

lost a third of its real-terms value over the last ten years, with similar – if not more acute – decreases seen in other devolved nations. This, coupled with

real-term decreases in public research funding, acute macroeconomic impacts from inflation, and other cost pressures such as pension costs and increased regulatory burden mean there is real imperative for change.

Yet, our research also revealed a strong appetite for change from senior leaders and others. The sector understands that – alongside making the case for increased investment – we must find ways to operate more efficiently, and to make changes to align with what our communities need from our essential sector. The recent [Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#) made it clear that universities are essential to national renewal, universities stand ready to build on what they already deliver.

Where are the opportunities?

Following a period of extensive research and stakeholder consultation, the taskforce identified seven opportunity areas that the sector can pursue. Acknowledging that one of the strengths of our system is in its diversity, we wanted to make sure they could be applicable to all parts of the sector. We hope that these



opportunity areas act as a prompt for people across all parts of a university to discuss how they can be applied to their contexts, whether that's in teaching, research, or operations – including procurement.

You can read the full detail in [the report](#), but for each opportunity area, we examine the current state of play, conditions for success and identify some specific actions that government, UUK and other sector

organisations can play to help support university success.

The opportunity areas include:

- Pursuing innovative collaborative structures such as federations, group structures, or partnerships around specific functions
- Building on the success of existing shared services and finding new ways to share more services and infrastructure between institutions
- Leveraging sector buying power by maximising savings through current arrangements and developing approaches to emerging significant costs

- Supporting digital transformation
- Adopting common approaches for assessing efficiency and benchmarking costs,
- Developing executive and non-executive leadership skills to support them to respond to a rapidly changing external environment
- Working with government to create a legislative and regulatory environment to help universities go further and faster.

Stronger together

Above all though, it became clear through the research behind the

programme, that key to delivering necessary change is greater collaboration, and not just through the potential of economies of scale through things like shared services or new collaborative models. There is an awful lot of good practice happening across the sector and we need to make sure that we are collectively unearthing it and sharing it where possible. There are all sorts of networks, sector bodies, and organisations across HE that can support this. As I've spoken to people in all sorts of roles, my main encouragement has been to use your networks to identify and learn from what others have done before. We're also not the first sector to go through financial pressures – we should not be afraid to look beyond our walls or learn from our colleagues' previous experience.

The vital role of procurement

Procurement was clearly seen as a significant opportunity area with many senior leaders seeing it as a priority in the survey we ran to support the work. Our chapter on leveraging sector buying power describes how non-staff spend is well supported by procurement staff and processes within institutions, and by the regional and specialist purchasing consortia. There are clear and demonstrable benefits of using existing frameworks with UKUPC reporting that £116m of savings were delivered in 2023-24.

However, many of those we spoke to suggested there were more opportunities to maximise spend and savings through existing arrangements, including by taking a more strategic, cross-institutional approach to purchasing. This could include UKUPC working collaboratively with specialist groups such as UCISA and AUDE to promote existing frameworks or develop new ones. As such, the taskforce asked UKUPC to review the approach to collective purchasing and see where opportunities to maximise savings may lie. UKUPC have been considering this in the development of their new strategy and UUK will be working with UKUPC and others over the coming months to support the delivery of this goal.

It's also clear that there is great potential to leverage our sector buying power in our approach to software licensing. These costs can be significant, and many have seen substantial increases in licensing agreements. Again though, we can learn from what has come before, such as the collective agreement for Adobe Creative Cloud. Following the report, we have been working with Jisc and the purchasing consortia to identify potential candidates for other national purchasing arrangements, with more detail to be shared in the coming months.



While there is an opportunity area specifically around procurement, it's our hope that procurement professionals also consider the other opportunities too, including sharing more services, digital transformation, and adopting common approaches. I have been lucky enough to talk to many of you at various conferences over the last year and have enjoyed hearing how you are using your expertise to drive real change in your institutions.

What's next?

UUK has convened an implementation group to oversee the delivery of the recommendations from 'Towards a new era of collaboration'. This group,

which includes representation from procurement consortia, will ensure that we are able to demonstrate real progress and create an environment that supports innovation in our approach to cost reduction.

Meanwhile, we will be continuing to identify topics and themes to bring our members and wider communities together to discuss and catalyse change. 'Towards a new era of collaboration' was the first step – we must continue to mobilise to protect one of our nation's most valuable assets.

Meanwhile, the change is already happening in campuses, labs, and offices right across the country. I am proud

that our transformation and efficiency programme has given national visibility to some of the amazing and innovative things that have long been happening in our universities, and hope that it continues to do so. I have also been heartened to hear that our report has kickstarted conversations across and between institutions. I look forward to engaging more with the procurement community as we move into the second phase of this work.

How UKUPC and LUPC

are responding The UKUPC Board recently met to ensure their latest national procurement consortia strategy was aligned to support the aims and objectives of the UUK

efficiency and Transformation report. UKUPC is developing plans to support the sector and will be working with UUK and JISC to move ahead with appropriate initiatives. UKUPC will provide further information on this and their new strategy soon.

With the drive within the sector to establishing further shared services, consideration is being given to how LUPC's [Ensemble Shared Procurement Service](#) could potentially be developed as a provider for procurement for all of the English Consortia members. Ensemble Purchasing is an existing shared procurement service for LUPC members that has been in operation for almost 10 years. It is a VAT exempt cost sharing group, as recognised by HMRC and has delivered procurement services for 12 LUPC members over the years. It currently has four members of staff, all at the level of Head of Procurement, delivering procurement services for eight current LUPC members. It is owned and governed by the members receiving the service with users of the service paying for the number of days procurement service they receive, and a proportionate share of the overheads provided. If you would like more information on the Ensemble Shared Procurement Service, please contact [Don Bowman](#).



Newly launched Frameworks

Find full details by clicking on the titles. *Looking for our quarterly commodity updates?*

Find full details on the [frameworks page](#) underneath framework finder.

Apple Equipment & Associated Services Framework

NWUPC has launched the new Apple Equipment and Associated Services Framework, combining the previous Individual and National Apple Frameworks into one agreement. It runs from September 2025 to July 2027 with two possible extensions to 2029. The framework covers Apple equipment using Original Equipment Manufacturers operating systems and provides cost savings, reduced administrative effort, flexible call off options and minimum three-year warranty as standard. Suppliers offer value added services such as consultancy, device management, discounts and asset tagging. Responsible procurement requirements include modern slavery compliance, carbon reduction and adherence to the UKUPC Supply Chain Code of Conduct.

High Performance Computing (HPC) framework

The new High Performance Computing Framework is now live, replacing lot 4 of the SSSNA. It provides a compliant and cost-effective way for universities to procure high performance computers from five specialist suppliers, with the agreement running from September 2025 for two years and extendable to 2029. Key changes include its creation as a standalone framework, a stronger focus on supplier relationship management and the addition of two new suppliers. Benefits include quicker procurement, agreed pricing, improved compliance and long-term support with five year warranties.

ICT News

SCC has been added as a Dell reseller to the National Desktop & Notebook Agreement (NDNA) [ITS5071 LU](#) with immediate effect. Their completed schedules, and a Dell via SCC Buyers Guide and Price List have been added to the contract database ([Hunter](#)).

National Framework for Lifts Consultancy, Maintenance, Refurbishment & Installation Services

NEUPC has launched the new Lifts Consultancy, Maintenance, Refurbishment and Installation Framework, offering a compliant and flexible route for all vertical transportation needs. The agreement runs from August 2025 to August 2028 with an option to extend to 2029. It provides national coverage, flexible call off options and supports sustainability through the Net Positive supplier action tool. The framework covers three lots: lift service and maintenance, installation and modernisation, and lift consultancy. Services include routine maintenance, emergency call outs, full installations, modernisation and compliance advice. NWUPC has launched the Global Mobility Services Framework, providing a compliant route to procure specialist support for international employee movements. The agreement runs from July 2025 to June 2027 with two possible extensions to 2029. The framework covers three lots: overseas taxation, payroll, immigration and advisory services; employee relocation services; and employer of record services. It supports legally compliant global workforce

management and offers benefits such as agreed terms, reduced administration, specialist advice and access to secure digital systems. Responsible procurement requirements include modern slavery compliance, payment of the Real Living Wage and carbon reduction plans.

PPE, Workwear & Sportswear Framework

The new PPE, Workwear and Sportswear Framework is now live, providing a compliant route to procure PPE, workwear, sportswear and related services. It runs from August 2025 to August 2027 with optional extensions up to 24 months. The framework is divided into 15 lots by product type and region, covering general PPE, workwear, lab coats, catering, specialist PPE, sports clothing and one stop shop. Additional services include prescription safety glasses, measuring, personalisation, repair and bespoke tailoring. Purchases can be made via direct award, desktop exercise or mini-competition, with mini-competition recommended for customisable products.

Medical Simulation and Training Framework

The new NWUPC Medical Simulation and Training Equipment Framework (LAB3032 NW) is now available. It provides a compliant route to buy medical simulation equipment across four lots covering manikins, clinical task trainers, dental simulation, ophthalmology and audiology simulation. The agreement runs from August 2025 to July 2027 with possible extensions to July 2029. Mini competition is recommended for the most competitive pricing. Responsible procurement requirements include modern slavery compliance, Real Living

Wage, carbon reduction, supply chain transparency, circular economy measures and WEEE (UK Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regs) considerations.

Lab Equipment (General) and Associated Services

The new Lab Equipment (General) framework has launched for LUPC members, offering a wide range of laboratory equipment and instrumentation for non-specialist university and research labs. It is the fourth iteration of this agreement and runs from October 2025 for three years with an optional 12 month extension. The framework includes ten lots covering centrifuges, environmental control, safety, measurement, storage, general equipment, water purification, robotics and a one stop shop. Benefits include compliant procurement, capped pricing, access to leading suppliers, time savings and options for further cost reductions through mini competitions. The launch webinar was held on 25 November, you can catch up on the recording and the slides on [Hunter](#).

Laboratory Gases and Associated Equipment Framework

The re-tendered Laboratory Gases and Associated Equipment Framework has launched. It provides a compliant and cost-effective route for universities to purchase laboratory gases and related equipment. The agreement runs from November 2025 to October 2028 with an optional extension to 2029. Benefits include access to key market operators, competitive pricing, dedicated category management and a fast, compliant route to market. Call-offs

Framework focus

can be made via direct award or further competition. Responsible procurement covers carbon reduction, equality and diversity, and conflict minerals compliance.

STEMed News

New Nitrogen Product: Linde AMPLIFY™ MAX
BOC has introduced AMPLIFY™ MAX (from Linde, formerly Praxair) - a new product offering three times more Nitrogen per volume through an innovative concentration method, delivering major efficiency benefits for users.

[Key features of AMPLIFY™ MAX:](#)

- Lightweight design for easier handling
- Built-in wheels for improved portability

A demo unit is available to view at Imperial College London until the end of the year.

[Provide your feedback to BOC](#) To arrange a viewing, contact [Lee Healy](#) (BOC Site Services).

TWP call outs

APUC seeks Tender Working Party (TWP) members for the upcoming retender for the Mass Spectrometry and Chromatography agreement.

As the highest spending consortium in this area we are requesting your input. Your industry knowledge could drive real change – please join the tender working party:

- Provide valuable market insight discuss industry standards
- Develop procurement strategy
- Evaluate technical/quality bid responses from suppliers
- Provide end-user innovation

Contact csands@apuc-scot.ac.uk

Recruitment Services framework

The new Recruitment Services Framework

has been launched, replacing the former Temporary and Permanent Recruitment Framework. It offers a compliant, cost-effective route for universities to hire temporary and permanent staff and runs from October 2025 for two years with a possible extension to 2029. The agreement gives members access to 67 experienced suppliers. Key changes include updated role coverage, a stronger focus on strategic supplier relationships, regional sub lots and separate lots for temporary and permanent recruitment. Benefits include agreed pricing, reduced administration and improved compliance.

The new Global Mobility Services Framework

The framework recently commenced its fourth and final year with tendering for the follow-on PA23 agreement commencing in the new year. Members interested in assisting with the tender specification, written and/or technical evaluation are welcome to come forward by contacting [Mike Kilner](#).

Legal Services PA23 framework now live!

The Legal Services PA23 framework has launched, providing a compliant route to procure a wide range of legal support. The agreement runs for three years from October 2025 with an optional two year extension. It features a single lot divided into three sub lots based on average hourly rates, offering full service legal firms at different pricing levels. Benefits include capped rates, direct award options, time savings, retainer schemes and SRA regulated suppliers. The launch webinar was held on 18 November, you can catch up on the recording and the slides on [Hunter](#).

INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING IN LINKED MAGAZINE?

We offer LUPC approved suppliers the opportunity to advertise in our quarterly magazine.

Benefits

- Circulation of more than 300 individual buyers at more than 80 member institutions plus all of LUPC's suppliers
- The magazine (including previous editions) is available to anyone who can access the LUPC website
- Your support demonstrates to customers your commitment to LUPC agreements.

Advertisement Rates

- **£169 +VAT** for quarter page
- **£299 +VAT** for half page
- **£499+ VAT** for full page

Discounts available for consecutive bookings, please enquire upon booking.

We also have advertising opportunities on the LUPC [website](#) as well as competitive [bundles](#).

To find out more get in touch with [Giorgia Varriale](#).





Let's talk....

Ami Nair, Procurement Administrator (Apprentice) at LUPC, reflects on two years of growth, hands-on experience and gaining expertise across the procurement landscape.

You've just completed your apprenticeship with a distinction, how does it feel, and what does this achievement mean to you personally?

Completing my apprenticeship with a distinction feels both rewarding and relieving. I put an extensive amount of effort into both studying for the exams, as well as completing my apprenticeship training scheme. This achievement supports a goal I have set for myself, to be able to reach and complete CIPS Level 6 within the next few years, which is my focus and what has driven me thus far.

Looking back to when you first joined LUPC, what were your expectations of procurement, and how have they changed over time? Coming into procurement was a completely new experience for me,

so it was difficult to set expectations. However, through my research when originally applying for the position, I did expect to work across different categories. This expectation has been exceeded, as I have not only worked with each category manager on various tasks but also on placements at multiple member institutions, learning more than I thought possible.

When I started, I learned the systems, minute taking, overviews of each category, information on the partnering consortia, and other beginner tasks. I have been able to elevate my outputs in each of these, as well as broaden my knowledge. As I grew into my role, I have been involved in supplier relationship management, the LUPC annual conference, evaluated SQ

documents, assisted within a tender working party, analysed spend and management information, and completed thorough research.

What aspects of procurement have you found yourself most drawn to, now that you've experienced the variety of activities it involves?

Although I enjoy a broad range of procurements, I find myself drawn to categories such as legal services, estates management, promotional merchandise as well as responsible procurement. I have appreciated working on SQ documents, clarification questions, supplier evaluation, and consultancy projects.

Can you describe a project, task, or moment during your apprenticeship that you feel most proud of?

Besides the work I completed to achieve my distinction and the work I carried out with our members, I am proud of the extensive research I undertook. Throughout my apprenticeship, I committed to multiple research tasks, most notably in the areas of responsible procurement, consultancy, estates, legal services, labs, artistic design, and the Procurement Act (PA23).

All of these were rewarding, as each piece of research I conducted contributed to a project, deepened my understanding, or helped determine the best approach going forward.

One specific research project that felt particularly rewarding was assessing construction suppliers for one of our higher-education members. I compiled detailed information and compared the top suppliers, focusing on a range of significant factors. I used Creditsafe to check credit scores and highlighted potential risks.

Using Microsoft Excel to present my findings, I reviewed certifications, sustainability efforts, previous work with similar credentials, and any specialisms each supplier offered, and I created an overall ranking system. This work informed which supplier received the direct award for an upcoming minor works project. I was able to demonstrate strong data-collation skills and received positive, insightful feedback about the impact of my work.

What skills, technical or personal, do you feel you've developed the most throughout your time at LUPC?

I have gained an abundance of confidence during my time at LUPC. With the support of my line manager, Justin, and the wider LUPC team, I have been able to overcome challenges with presenting, phone conversations, and expressing my opinions in meetings or at events. Tackling anxiety was difficult at first, but overcoming it has been a significant personal achievement and has enhanced my performance at work.

On the technical side, I have learned to use Microsoft Excel efficiently, including formulas; respond to clarification questions across various e-tendering systems; master administration systems; take effective meeting notes; manage stakeholder engagement; and provide support to the category managers wherever needed. Each of these skills has been valuable for my career development and will continue to benefit me going forward.

What has surprised you the most about working in procurement and the wider HE/public sector environment? I have been most surprised by how deeply procurement relies on networking. I have understood that being able to converse, maintaining relationships with both members and suppliers, as well as other procurement professionals, are all major aspects of procurement.

I was also surprised by the depth of the procurement regulations and how versatile it can be for an institution that falls outside of these regulations. It has been fascinating to see both sides and to learn how to approach each award process.

What kind of role are you hoping to move into next, and what excites you most about taking the next step in your procurement career? I am most excited by the variety that procurement offers, as

it is essential across so many fields. I am keen to explore the options ahead, particularly the opportunity to work within different sectors. Higher education has resonated with me, but I would also like to broaden my experience by exploring more categories and wider opportunities. I am especially interested in contributing to sustainability initiatives wherever possible.

Overall, I hope my next role will be both challenging and inspiring, enabling me to continue growing my career and developing my knowledge while supporting my progression toward the next CIPS level.

What advice would you give to someone considering an apprenticeship, especially in procurement?

Overall, choosing an apprenticeship relies heavily on the career you would like to pursue. As someone who has attended both a year at university and completed a two-year apprenticeship, I found the apprenticeship route far more suited to me. This is due to gaining real world working experience, networking with others in your sector of interest, finding more opportunities to progress your career, and being able to study and work simultaneously.

For anybody that enjoys networking, a fast-paced environment, in-depth research, and a future in

an interestingly broad subject, I would strongly advise looking into a procurement apprenticeship. I would also advise to learn as much as you can from those teaching you, find a support network of others in early careers, and provide innovative ideas wherever you can; don't be afraid to think outside the box!

What's something you're passionate about outside of work that people might not expect from you?

Something I'm passionate about, that very few people know, is volunteering and helping those in need wherever I can. I frequently visit a care home to interact with the elderly; witnessing how happy they are to have conversation is completely heartwarming. I additionally commit to donating gifts around Christmas, through the angel tree scheme, where those in less favourable positions can ask for what they need or want. I would love to help with food banks where possible in the future and volunteer to help with mental illnesses also.

Besides volunteering, I adore travelling to explore new places, cultures and foods. I think it is

important to see the world and understand each part of it as much as possible. Another hidden passion of mine is writing. This ranges from poetry to lyricism and allows for something fun but productive in my free time.

Are there any final comments you would like to make about your time at LUPC and working with our members?

I would like to thank the wonderful LUPC team for such an amazing opportunity, depth of knowledge, and exciting experience. I could not be more grateful to have started my career in procurement here and I will take all the skills and advice with me wherever I work. I would also like to thank the member institutions that allowed for my placements; it was a privilege to work within both universities. I learned a new perspective of procurement and adapted to different working environments, which has assisted my development. I am also thankful for all the members I connected with at previous conferences and events; I will not forget any feedback I have been given. Thank you to everyone who has supported my journey through my apprenticeship!

The main ambition behind LUPC developing an apprenticeship programme is to provide individuals with a strong procurement foundation for the sector.

Our hope is that Ami will go on to be an excellent recruit for one of our members – if any of you are looking for an excellent junior procurement professional we encourage you to snap her up!

