

# procurement matters

## Housing infocus

### What's inside:

#### Social Value

Our recent contributions to support local communities 7

#### Government funding boost for zero emission technology

Funding to help the NHS decarbonise their fleets by 2035 10

#### Housing 'In Focus'

Addressing the Financial Strain of Temporary Accommodation in Social Housing 16

# In this month's edition of Procurement matters

A PROUD PART OF



Welcome to the latest edition of Procurement Matters. This issue has an 'in focus' on the **housing sector**, exploring public safety and response efficiency. From technological advancements to policy updates, our articles offer comprehensive insights into the world of public sector.

## Social Value

Our recent contributions to support local communities

Page

7

## Government funding boost for zero emission technology

Funding to help the NHS decarbonise their fleets by 2035

Page

10

## Housing 'In Focus'

Social housing providers are facing increasing financial pressure, particularly in managing temporary accommodation for vulnerable tenants.

Page

16

## New measures to support local housing

The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government is overhauling the planning system to strengthen foundations and boost the UK economy.

Page

21





# Dates for your diary:

## June



### The Blue Light Show

Olympia London  
18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> June

Uniting the emergency services community for the future. The Blue Light Show is the only cross-collaborative event that's focused on bringing together the emergency services community.

[Sign up](#)



### The EBME Expo

Building Society Arena  
Coventry  
25<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> June

The EBME Expo has been operating for 16 years and has established itself as the UK's largest gathering of clinical engineers, EBME managers, and support staff.

[Sign up](#)



### The Eastern Education Show

Newmarket Racecourse  
19<sup>th</sup> June

The EE / NE Show is a part of the country's leading series of events for the promotion and development of effective school leadership, management, learning and teaching

[Sign up](#)



### The Northern Education Show

Bolton Stadium Hotel  
26<sup>th</sup> June

[Sign up](#)

# Social Value



## Making a difference together.

### Supporting Gillingham Street Angels

Our team joined forces with the inspirational Gillingham Street Angels, a Medway-based charity dedicated to fighting homelessness, financial hardship, and food poverty in their local community.

Our team from across Procurement Services had the privilege of helping this remarkable organisation by packing and pricing hundreds of generous donations. The Street Angels' mission is driven by compassion, resilience, and a determination to make life better for anyone in need—no matter their circumstances.

#### The Story of the Gillingham Street Angels

The charity began in 2018 when founders Neil and Tracey saw the increasing number of people struggling in Medway. They knew they couldn't solve the root causes of homelessness overnight but believed they could bring real change by supporting the most vulnerable.

What started with organising street-level volunteer efforts soon evolved into providing vital food, hygiene, and support services. Over time, the Angels expanded their efforts to include food parcels, meal services, and creating safe spaces for those in need. Their journey proves the power of trust, community, and compassion in changing lives.

#### A rewarding experience

Volunteering with the Street Angels gave us a firsthand look at their incredible impact. We supported their Gillingham charity shop by pricing and packaging hundreds of donations, which helped them increase efficiency, save on staffing costs, and improve the

organisation of the store, helping them to achieve more sales and maintain an effective operation. This also allows the charity to focus on their core mission and fosters community engagement.

They have multiple locations across Medway, including Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, and Rainham. In addition to their charity shops, they offer services such as distributing meals, providing essentials, and simply offering a friendly face to someone in need. The charity's dedication goes above and beyond.

Their Welfare Van, a mobile hygiene support service for the homeless, is another example of their innovation in meeting essential needs. Every contribution—whether through donations, volunteering, or simply spreading the word—helps sustain this critical work.

#### How you can help

If you're inspired by the Gillingham Street Angels and want to contribute to their mission, visit their website to learn more about their work and how you can get involved: [thestreet-angels.org](http://thestreet-angels.org).

**Together, we can ensure that more people live with hope and dignity. Let's celebrate the spirit of volunteering every day!**



Sorting charity donations



Gillingham Street Angels

# Supporting the Maidstone Donation Hub

At Procurement Services, we believe in the power of community and the spirit of giving. We were proud to support Maidstone Borough Council's Christmas charity donations through the Maidstone Christmas Donation Hub. This initiative aimed to support our local community and bring a little extra magic to those in need during the festive season.

## The team with our donations, delivering them to the hub



## A successful initiative

Last year, the Maidstone Christmas Donation Hub saw incredible generosity from various contributors, with over £18,000 worth of donations from various contributors charitable organisations. These donations were distributed to people in the community who needed them the most, making a significant

impact on their lives.

With the rising cost of living, many individuals and families are struggling to cover basic expenses such as utility bills and food shopping, leaving little room for festive extras. Recognising this need, Maidstone Borough Council is once again opening the Donation Hub to help ease the burden for those facing financial difficulties.

The Maidstone Christmas Donation Hub divide their donations between these local charities:

- Age UK Maidstone
- Blackthorn Trust
- Family Food Banks/Community Larders
- Fusion Healthy Living Centre
- MADM
- Maidstone Community Support Centre
- Mid-Kent Mind
- St Faiths Centre
- The Princess Project
- Wishing Hearts



## Donating to Medway Foodbank

The Procurement Services Vehicles team arranged a food drive for Medway Foodbank, inviting brands within Commercial Services Group to contribute donations.

Medway Foodbank is an incredible project founded by local churches and community groups, working to combat poverty and hunger across the UK.

It is part of a nationwide network of foodbanks, supported by the Trussell Trust. They help to provide the spaces available for foodbanks, emergency food availability and other support.

We were truly honoured to lend a hand to this wonderful cause, supporting individuals and families across Medway during the chilly winter months.

## How you can help

If you are local to the Medway area, we invite you to join us in supporting this wonderful cause. By contributing to foodbanks, you can help to reduce the impact of hunger and poverty in the community.

For more information on Medway Foodbank, please visit their website: <https://medway.foodbank.org.uk/>  
To learn more about the Trussell trust: <https://www.trussell.org.uk/>

## Cyber Security in Schools: A Growing Necessity in the Digital Age



As technology continues to evolve, schools across the UK face an increasing pressure to prioritise cyber security. Recent reports highlight a worrying rise in cyber-attacks on educational institutions. In fact, according to GOV.UK, a third of the schools in England have experienced a cyber incident, ranging from data breaches to ransomware attacks, leaving them vulnerable to significant disruptions and financial losses. With sensitive student data at risk, schools can no longer afford to overlook the importance of robust cyber security measures.

A recent Ofqual poll highlights this growing concern, with over 90% of respondents recognising the value of cyber security training in schools. However, the survey also revealed that many institutions still lack the comprehensive digital infrastructure required to effectively mitigate

cyber risks. This gap poses a serious challenge, as schools increasingly rely on digital tools for both teaching and administrative purposes. The digital transformation of schools is not just a matter of convenience, but an essential step towards safeguarding students, staff, and data.

We understand the vital role that digital transformation plays in ensuring cyber security across educational institutions. Through **LOT 2: Digital Transformation and Associated Services of our Multi-functional Devices & Digital Solutions framework**, we offer schools access to secure, scalable, and compliant digital solutions. This framework is specifically designed, including **LOT 1: Leased and Purchased Multi-Functional Devices and Digital Solutions**, to support schools in upgrading their digital infrastructure, making it easier to integrate cutting-

edge cyber security technologies.

**LOT 2** includes a range of digital solutions such as secure cloud services, data encryption, secure printing and scanning, and network monitoring tools—all crucial for protecting against cyber threats. Our awarded suppliers also offer managed services that provide ongoing support, including software updates, vulnerability assessments, and cyber security training for staff. By using our DfE approved framework, schools can not only modernise their operations, but also ensure that they are taking the necessary steps to protect their systems and data from cyber-attacks.

Protect your school today by contacting one of our expert account specialists:

Call 0808 2819439 or email [procurementservices@csltd.org.uk](mailto:procurementservices@csltd.org.uk)

[Find out more](#)

## Firefighters Demonstrate Emergency Preparedness at Historic RAF Museum

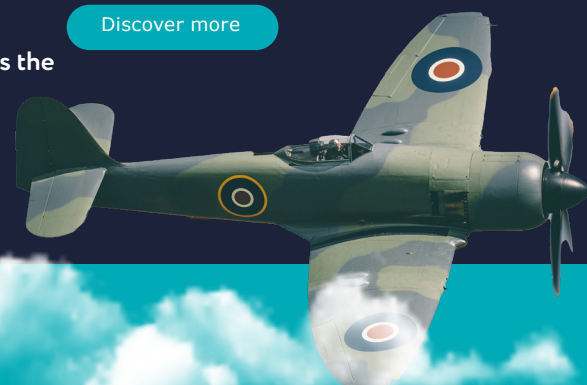
In a recent training exercise, London Fire Brigade put their emergency response skills to the test at the historic RAF Museum in London. The drill, which took place in September, simulated a fire incident at the museum 2024, in order to evaluate the speed and efficiency of firefighter teams when managing emergencies at large public venues. The exercise involved various firefighting tactics, including the use of high-tech equipment and strategic teamwork, to ensure a swift and coordinated response.

The purpose of the drill was to sharpen the skills of the fire crews and identify any areas for improvement in emergency protocols. Public spaces like museums are often filled with valuable artefacts and large numbers of visitors, making fire safety and rapid response critical for minimising damage and ensuring public safety.

This event underscores the importance of maintaining up-to-date fire safety equipment and procedures, as well as the need for reliable partnerships with fire safety product suppliers.

**Our Fire Safety Products and Associated Services framework** has been designed to support your fire safety needs. Whether it's fire detection, alarm systems, or emergency response tools, our framework provides trusted solutions from our awarded suppliers to help protect your staff, pupils, visitors, and assets.

[Discover more](#)



## Record Number of Flood Alerts Issued Amid Extreme UK Weather

According to the Guardian, the UK faced an unprecedented wave of flood warnings and alerts from October 2024, due to extreme weather conditions. With heavy rainfall hitting large parts of the country, emergency services were placed on high alert, working tirelessly to respond to incidents of flooding in urban and rural areas. This surge in extreme weather has raised concerns about the increasing frequency of such events and the urgent need for public sector bodies to be prepared with the right tools and equipment to handle emergencies.

In response to the ongoing risks, a recent government press release has urged the public to remain vigilant and take proactive steps to prepare for potential flooding. The past 18 months have been recorded as the wettest period on record; experts predict that these conditions may persist. With flood-prone areas especially vulnerable, the call for emergency readiness is more pressing than ever.

Flooding can cause widespread disruption, from damaging homes and infrastructure to posing serious risks to life. Effective response requires specialised rescue equipment and trained personnel, to manage situations safely and efficiently.

The best way to protect yourself from flooding is early preparation and knowing what to do in advance. To reduce potential dangers, the public can take actions such as:

- Check your long-term flood risk. You can use this **free government service** to find out the long-term flood risk for an area in England, the possible causes of flooding, and how to manage flood risk.
- Sign up for flood warnings by phone, text, or email
- Take steps to protect yourself from future flooding – including storing important documents in a secure, waterproof location, taking rugs and small furniture upstairs, checking how to turn off your electricity and water and preparing a flood kit.

Did you know that **LOT 3 of our Emergency Response, Rescue Equipment and Associated Services framework** includes comprehensive water rescue equipment? This includes drysuits, life jackets, torches, small rescue tools knives, inflatable walkways.

[Find out more](#)



# Unlocking AI's Potential in the UK Government

Recent research, conducted by the Global Government Forum, highlights significant opportunities for the UK government to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) in transforming policymaking, enhancing national security, and improving public service delivery.

However, the report reveals that the UK is currently behind in fully capitalising on AI adoption and therefore failing to take advantage of the countless benefits that it can provide.

The UK is taking steps to overcome a number of challenges that they face regarding AI, such as safety and security. This is being done with events, two examples being the AI Safety Summit and the establishment of the AI Safety

Institute. This will help to ensure that AI is used responsibly, but only through practical application and testing will the UK Government ever be able to completely trust and incorporate AI.

The next steps for AI adoption is the creation and maintenance of AI roadmaps and strategic vision for the UK Government. This strategy needs to incorporate a variety of factors, from AI training for staff, to systems implementation, and much more.

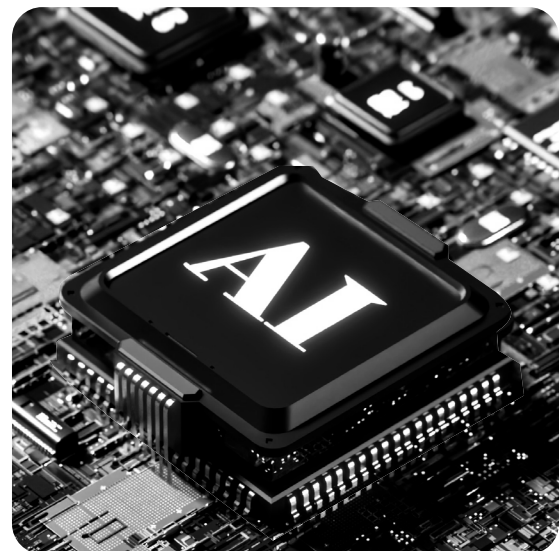
Kevin Cunnington, the former Director General of the Government Digital Service, emphasises the potential for rapid improvement in AI adoption, if the government commits boldly to using these technologies.

For the UK Government to take these bold steps, they will need the support of compliant suppliers who are experts in artificial intelligence. Our **Software Products and Associated Services framework** provides compliant access for all public sector organisations to procure

AI systems.

Discover how our frameworks can assist your organisation in taking advantage of the multitude of benefits that AI can provide.

[Find out more](#)



# Embracing AI in Modern Education

The UK education sector is beginning to take steps towards AI implementation, to ensuring that the numerous benefits are taken advantage of and students can receive the highest quality of education in the new age of AI.

## The benefits of AI in education:

- **Detecting plagiarism and academic dishonesty:** One misconception with AI in education is that it will facilitate academic dishonesty. AI can also be accustomed to detecting cheating and plagiarism, making it the solution to its own problem.

- **AI-powered classrooms:** There are a variety of educational tools that are powered by AI that offer teachers support and the ability to personalise teaching techniques for individual students. By using student data, AI can analyse and dictate the best learning pace and materials for each student, allowing them to learn with more efficiency.

- **Translation and interpretation:** Many students who are studying in foreign languages are disadvantaged when compared to their fellow classmates. But with AI, quick accurate translation can make learning and communicating with these students flawless, destroying any language barriers that stand in the way of their learning and development.

- **AI beyond the classroom:** By utilising AI, school staff can reduce the time spent on administrative tasks. For example, identifying IT errors and problem-solving which will allow teachers more time to focus on teaching and supporting their students.

These benefits could positively impact both students and teachers if implemented. However, all safety precautions must be taken before integrating this advanced technology into schools. Providing clear information about sensitive and personal data, ensuring that its sources and how it will be used are

assessed and safe. Correct IT and AI training should be given to all teachers and students that plan to apply the software within learning.

If your school wants to start leveraging the numerous benefits of AI while ensuring the safety and protection of your students, then our **Software Products and Associated Services framework** can help. By providing access to a variety of awarded suppliers who are AI experts, you can be sure that your students are getting the most from their education whilst staying protected.

[Find out more](#)



## Celebrating Success: East Devon District Council's Mental Health Support Programme for School Children

East Devon District Council has announced the success of its year-long mental health support programme for school children, parents, and teachers. The programme offered a variety of support services to pupils, including:

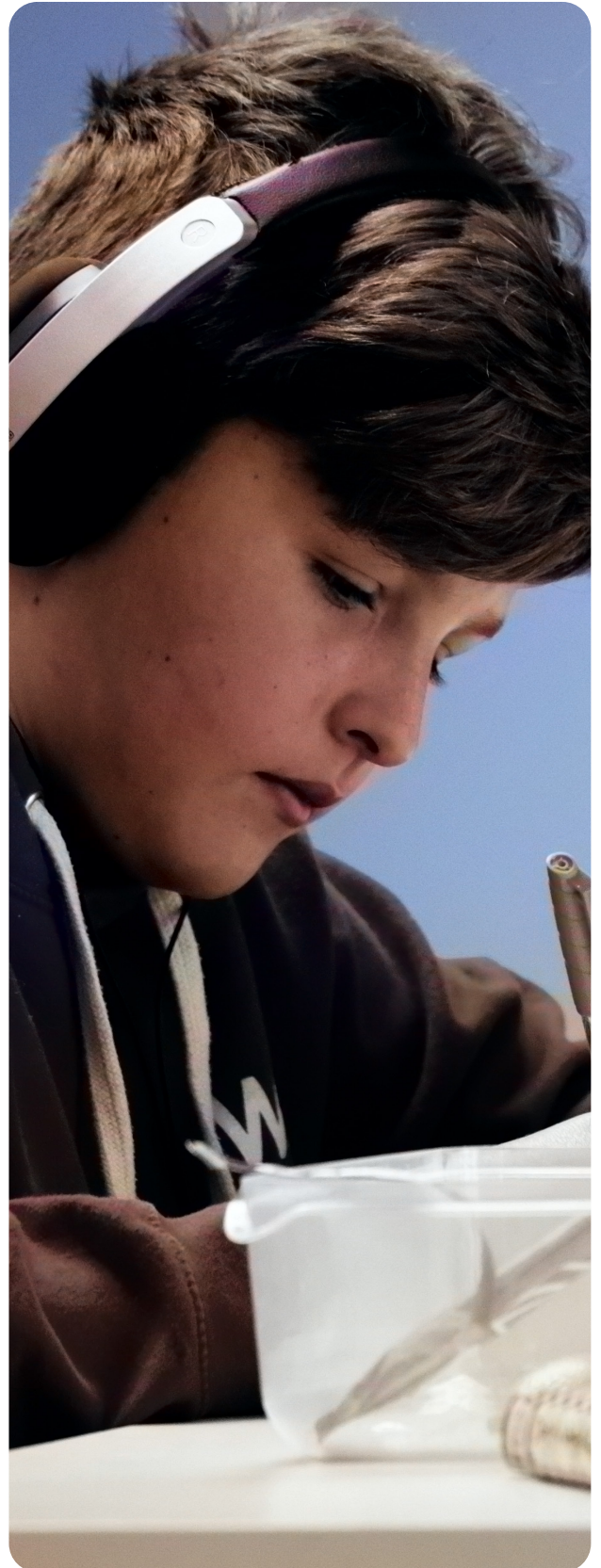
- One-to-one counselling
- Training to become mental health ambassadors
- Workshops for parents
- Face-to-face and virtual support hubs
- Teaching assistant training

There have been a variety of positive impacts that have followed this programme, including better understanding of mental health among children, improved sleep patterns, increased confidence and enhanced physical health. Additionally, parents have reported feeling more confident in raising their children, thanks to the support provided between the council and various third-sector groups.

**Although this initiative wasn't through our framework, we can support your organisation with a similar solution.**

Our **Employee Support Services and Benefits framework** provides compliant access for any school or local government to access cost-effective solutions.

Discover more



Positive results of council-funded mental health support for Axminster school communities

[eastdevon.gov.uk/news/2024/09/positive-results-of-council-funded-mental-health-support-for-axminster-school-communities/](https://eastdevon.gov.uk/news/2024/09/positive-results-of-council-funded-mental-health-support-for-axminster-school-communities/)

# Government funding boost for zero emission technology



**In September 2024, the Department for Business and Trade announced that £88 million of funding was awarded to 46 projects that will help boost zero-emission vehicle technology, including developing e-motorcycles, wireless charging solutions and electric trucks for the NHS.**

This funding will help the NHS to decarbonise their fleet by 2035 (apart from ambulances) and then include ambulances by 2040. Meeting these goals is vital for collectively reaching net zero emissions in the UK by 2045.

Net zero is the plan in which we will no longer be adding towards the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, by increasing the usage of clean and renewable energy and reducing the usage of fossil fuels. Reaching net zero targets is imperative for combating the negative effects of climate change.

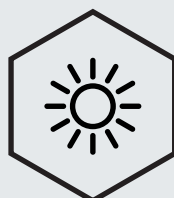
Sarah Jones, the Minister for Industry and Decarbonisation, said “Labour is committed to boosting the jewel in the crown of our manufacturing base – the automotive industry. Working in partnership with industry, this funding

will drive innovation and propel the development of next-generation zero-emission vehicle technologies”.

“From Royal Mail trucks delivering our post, to cleaner, greener bus journeys, this funding will back projects that will lower emissions across the country, while also supporting skilled jobs.”

We can help your public sector organisation meet net zero goals and decarbonise your fleet through our vehicle solutions and frameworks. Visit our **Electric Vehicle Charging Points and Associated Services framework**, to see how we can support you with zero-emission technology.

[Find out more](#)



# Education: New report urges more support for schools to boost children's health and wellbeing

**Northumbria University academics have contributed to a new report, published by the Centre for Young Lives, advocating for more support for schools to enhance school's food systems, and boost children's physical activity to tackle ongoing issues such as childhood obesity and food insecurity.**

Today in the UK, nearly a third of children aged 2 to 15 are overweight or obese. Obesity is a complex problem with many drivers, including our behaviour, environment, genetics and culture. However, obesity is caused by an energy imbalance, taking in more energy through food than we use through activity. Physical activity is associated with numerous health benefits for children, such as muscle and bone strength, improved quality of sleep and maintenance of a healthy weight.

To achieve long-term, sustainable change for children, it is essential to actively engage schools, communities, families, and individuals. It is important for schools and educational organisations to ensure they have the available equipment to help drive physical activity in children. This includes outside playing areas on school grounds.

**Our Y23064 Playground, Fitness, Sports Equipment and Leisure Facilities framework** can support your education organisation with keeping young people active..

Also, our **Y23009 Catering, Vending Machines & Water cooler solutions framework** can assist your organisation in providing a balanced dietary lifestyle.

[Find out more](#)





# Why choose us for your leasing needs?

## Lease vs purchase analysis:



We provide detailed lease vs purchase analysis, ensuring you make informed decisions that offer the best value for your organisation.

## New lease procurement:



We make the process easy for you: we will review all of the funding option, the initial term and over the life of the contract/review types of leases, which will be suitable for departments and run a fully compliant mini-competition. A fast turnaround can be fulfilled.

## Accountancy changes:



Due to the adoption of IFRS16, there are new available options to select from. We can offer advice and support around these changes, and support business cases to allow capital and revenue to be used effectively.

## Portfolio review:



Our expert team conducts comprehensive portfolio reviews, to identify leases that can be reorganised for better terms and cost savings.

## Negotiation expertise:



With our deep industry knowledge and strong relationships with lessors, we negotiate favourable terms on your behalf, helping you save time and money.

By partnering with us, you can expect to enhance your leasing strategy, reduce expenses, and achieve greater financial flexibility.

Contact us

# Delivering value, control and supplier performance



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**At Procurement Services Lifecycle, we specialise in transforming contract management into a proactive tool for achieving savings and operational excellence.**

Our team can help streamline your processes and implement the right contract management solutions tailored, to your organisation's needs.

Do you have full visibility of all your contracts? If not, we can help.

Our expertise lies in providing end-to-end contract management services that ensure you have complete control over your contracts.

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## **The benefits of seamless contract management:**

- ⊗ Lower costs
- ⊗ Enable improved supplier performance
- ⊗ Reduce operational risk
- ⊗ Enhance the ability to adapt and change
- ⊗ Facilitate best operational outcomes



[Find out more](#)

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# Drive up savings with an electric fleet

Results from a research publication, developed by the REA (the Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology) and EST (Energy Saving Trust), show that operators can save around £1,500 annually for each light commercial vehicle that switched to electric.

According to the report, an LCV (light commercial vehicle – including vans and trucks), driving 15,000 miles a year (60 miles a day, 250 days a year), could save around £1,500 in annual fuel/energy costs, if charged at the

depot/home (or more if using an EV tariff). A rigid HGV (heavy goods vehicle – includes large trucks), driving 15,000 miles a year, could save around £3,500 in annual fuel/energy costs, if charged at the depot. In all cases, savings will vary depending on the vehicle efficiency (mpg), the electricity tariff at the depot, fuel price fluctuations, and use of public charging.

These savings are due to electric vehicles using roughly 25-30% of the energy that a diesel equivalent would need to drive the same journey.

The published report also emphasises the benefits of smart charging, which refers to a type of electric vehicle (EV) charging. This allows for real-time adjustments to charging patterns, based on site electrical capacity, renewable energy availability, and electricity prices.



[Find out more](#)

## Benefits of smart charging:

Improved efficiency

Greater control

Cost savings

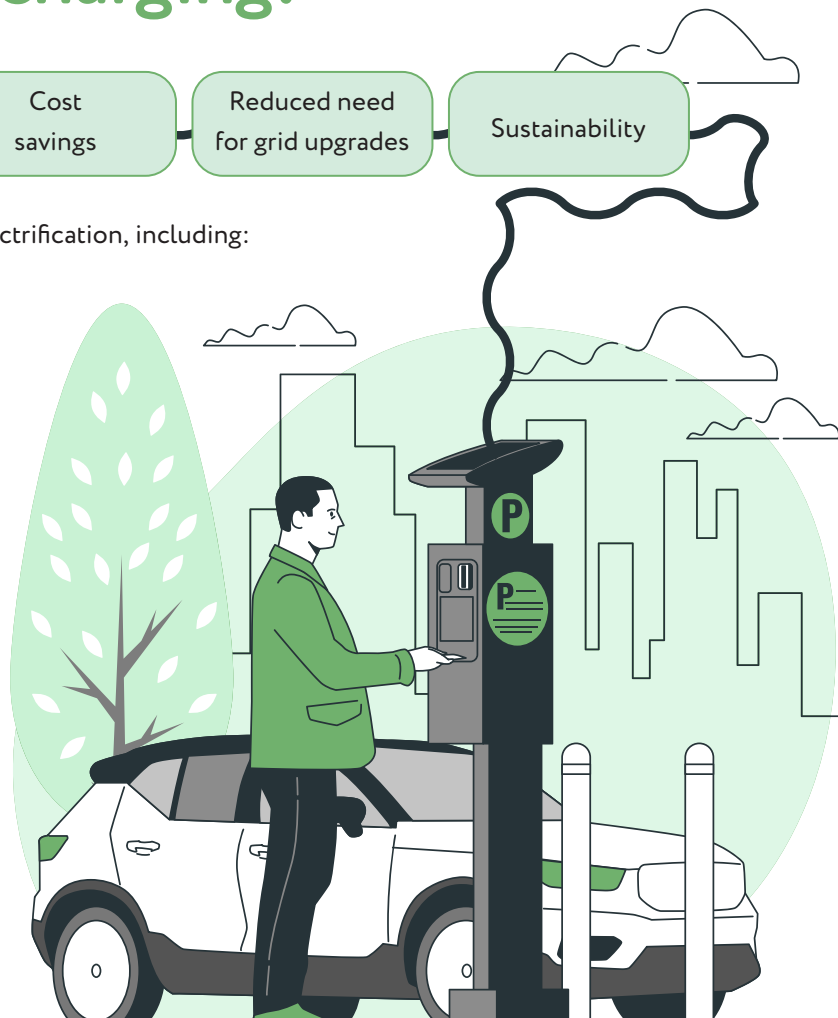
Reduced need for grid upgrades

Sustainability

It also provides key aspects for successful fleet electrification, including:

- Fleet analysis a phased transition, understanding impact on current fleet operations, e.g. which vehicles/routes are best suited for EV transition.
- Site design and pre-meter power enablement – Understanding what electric charging infrastructure is needed, defining charging requirements at a site, impact on local energy infrastructure, and implementing strategies.
- Operational integration – Integrating charging solutions into your existing fleet management systems for a smoother transition.

[Find out more](#)





# Is your organisation looking to hire or purchase a fleet of vehicles?

Procurement Services is a national leader in fleet operations and can assist with any of your fleet and transport needs. We have experience in supplying to the public sector and pride ourselves on providing compliant, tailored solutions to fulfil every customer's requirements.

## Why use our vehicle services?

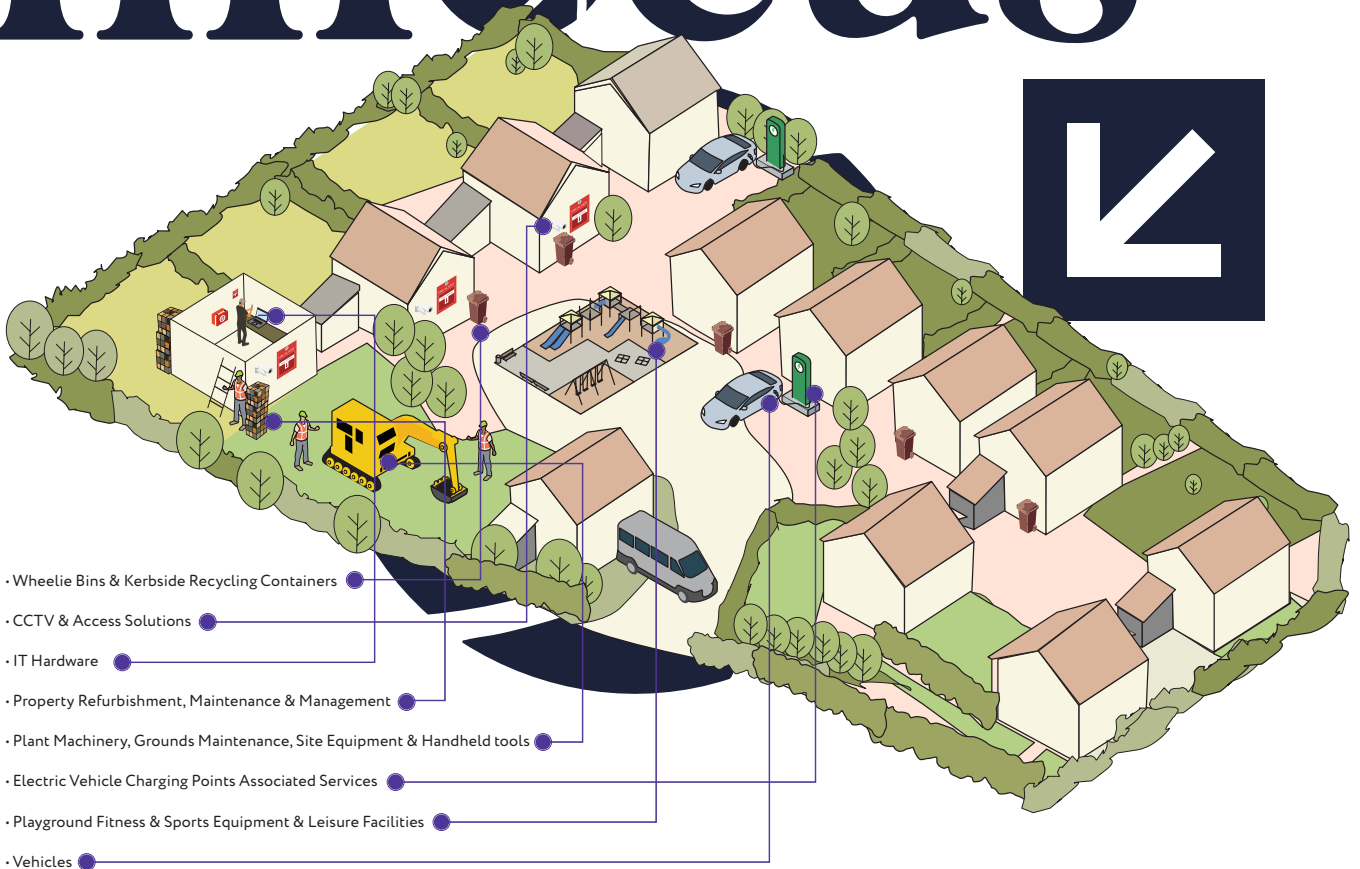
- Access to a comprehensive range of vehicles
- Electric/diesel/petrol/hybrid vehicle options available
- Access to a wide range of competitive vehicle hire suppliers
- Better value pricing
- Fully PCR-2015 compliant buying in line with UK and EU purchasing regulations
- Dedicated central point of contact
- Fully approved supplier network
- Full, free support throughout the lifetime of your contract

For more information about our vehicle services:  
Contact us on [procurementservices@csltd.org.uk](mailto:procurementservices@csltd.org.uk) or call 0808 2819439

[Find out more](#)



# Housing infocus



## Addressing the Financial Strain of Temporary Accommodation in Social Housing

Social housing providers are facing increasing financial pressure, particularly in managing temporary accommodation for vulnerable tenants. Recent reports, by the Local Government Association (LGA), highlight the growing strain that local authorities experience in balancing rising housing costs with limited budgets. The surge in demand for temporary housing, driven by factors like homelessness and housing shortages, has led to an unsustainable financial burden for countless councils. These challenges are worsened by the additional costs of maintaining quality standards in temporary accommodation and providing essential services to tenants.

According to a recent analysis commissioned by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, local authorities across the UK are grappling with how to provide safe and secure housing while managing tight budgets. The rising costs of temporary accommodation have forced many to explore innovative solutions, in order to stretch their resources and meet demand. Collaboration with private landlords, renegotiating contracts, and streamlining services have become key strategies, but these efforts still may not be enough to bridge the gap between the growing need and financial limitations.

As the social housing sector continues to navigate these financial strains, ongoing innovation and collaboration will be crucial in ensuring that vulnerable individuals have access to safe and secure housing. Addressing these issues requires not only short-term solutions, but also long-term strategies that can help mitigate the financial burden on local authorities and ensure that social housing provision remains sustainable.

We understand the complexities faced by social housing providers and local authorities. Our diverse range of frameworks provide access to essential goods & services, from building materials & maintenance & plant machinery & equipment, to IT infrastructure, fire safety products and much more. This can allow housing associations to maximise value and operate compliantly and efficiently.

[Visit our frameworks](#)

## Navigating New Challenges in Social Housing

Being a provider of social housing in the UK has become increasingly more challenging.

These challenges include:

**Funding and Financial Pressures:**

Securing sufficient funding amidst economic uncertainties.

**Regulatory Compliance:** Adapting to new legislation and safety standards. **Affordable Housing**

**Targets:** Meeting ambitious government targets for new affordable homes.

**Building Safety:** Addressing issues like unsafe cladding and ensuring compliance with safety regulations.

### So, what is the solution?

Centralised project management software can be the key to overcoming these new challenges. This is due to the variety of benefits that are provided:

#### **Clear project goals:**

This can help align with an organisation's strategy; both staff

and tenants can have clearly outlined central dashboards for all key information.

#### **Feedback:**

Teams can provide clear feedback via the software, ensuring that all parties can accommodate specific needs and requests.

#### **Automatic updates:**

These updates can show staff how their work has benefited tenants or achieved milestones. This could include scores for tenant satisfaction or the exact number of tenants that have moved into their first houses of a construction project.

#### **Real-time data:**

Large building projects require a significant amount of administration a well-designed software solution allows everyone involved to update the latest data, budget updates and any other key information.

#### **Data reporting:**

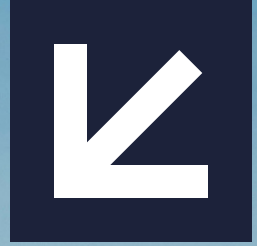
Software systems can automate certain aspects of data reporting, analysing data and reporting into templates without manual inputs, saving an abundance of time for staff throughout a whole construction project.

A centralised software system can streamline workload and ensure that everyone involved in a project is kept updated. This saves time and prevents confusion, allowing for workloads to be completed more effectively, which leads to happier tenants who can move into their homes quicker and with less stress.

With our **Software Products and Associated Services** framework, you can be assured that you will partner with a trusted software supplier that perfectly fits the needs of your organisation.

[Find out more](#)

# Supported Housing Investment Could Unlock Vital Savings



The Public Sector Executive has written an insightful piece, highlighting how supported housing investments lead to impactful financial savings.

The Local Government Association recently shared findings from councils, showing that supported accommodation not only prevents hospital visits and stays in care homes, but also reduces hospital readmissions.

For example, supported housing saved the NHS up to £47,000 per person in Bradford. In contrast, 151 people with complex needs were supported in finding work or training opportunities over a 9-month period in Medway.

The LGA has been pro-active in their analysis for the months ahead, calling for the government to review

how they fund supported housing, and take into consideration how they may navigate a specific housing support fund, to enable long-term investment.

This begins with the government kickstarting investment in the preventative services that allow people to live their lives with more independence. Statistics shown suggests that investing £1.6bn into supported housing could unlock savings of more than £3.4bn

[Find out more](#)





## How Housing Reforms Could Put More Pressure on Vital Services

With the government planning to introduce new mandatory housing targets as part of an updated National Planning Policy Framework, a recent survey from local authorities found that 90% of local councils feel these targets are too high for their areas. A research piece, from County Councils Network, has discovered that rural and county areas will see a 56% increase in the number of new homes required each year – around 64,000 homes annually.

This is significantly higher than other regions and three times more than the targets for other major cities.

Several of the findings involved in the National Planning Policy include:

- Councils in rural and county areas will need to build an extra 1,245 homes each week
- These areas will experience a much bigger increase in housing, compared to large cities and towns
- 70% of rural and county councils support the idea of national housing targets
- 85% of councils say their local infrastructure, including roads, services and amenities, is already under too much pressure
- 90% of county and unitary councils are concerned that their areas will be at an increased risk of speculative development

[Read more](#)

## Safeguarding health: tackling black mould and asbestos in social housing

Recent incidents in social housing have brought to light concerning issues surrounding black mould and asbestos, posing significant health risks to residents. Neglecting these hazards can lead to serious consequences, including respiratory problems and allergic reactions.

To help reduce the risks when exposed to mould and/or asbestos you can follow these steps:

- Using engineering controls including isolating the exposure source
- Wearing the correct PPE like respirators with a HEPA rated filter
- Wearing the correct clothing like disposable overalls when around asbestos
- Disposing of asbestos exposed clothing correctly ensuring it is double wrapped in heavy duty plastic bags with secured tape and kept damp
- Using only accepted asbestos waste centres/ disposal sites to dispose of clothing
- Limiting exposure to both

### Our framework can help.

#### LOT 1 of our Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Associated Services framework.

This framework includes suppliers who can provide respirators and protective clothing, ensuring safety during inspections and remediation efforts.

To find out more about how this framework can benefit your organisation:

[Read more](#)



# Are your social housing energy efficiency ratings up to standard?

The Energy Secretary has recently announced plans to raise energy efficiency rules for social housing, in a bid to cut down fuel expenses for tenants and meet climate goals. These plans include all social homes in England achieving an energy performance certificate

(EPC) rating of at least C by 2030. An Energy Performance Certificate states how energy efficient a property is. These certificates are required to be ordered before selling, renting out or building a new property.

This new energy efficiency rule has been put into place because, as of September 2024, a third of social homes (around 1.2 million) are currently rated D or below on the EPC. This shows that they are far below the ideal standard, and will likely need new insulation, windows and heating systems to meet this "C" rating.

[Gov UK EPC Guide](#)

This new strategy will be included within the previous funding provided by the UK Government, which aims to improve the energy efficiency of households from April 2023 to 2025. £1.8 billion has

been awarded through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Home Upgrade Grant and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, to upgrade social homes and public buildings.

Overall, these new energy rules will mean that over a million social properties will require improvements, including retrofitting and insulation funding. Retrofitting describes the process of modifying a building to improve its energy performance, including a wide range of upgrades. This comprises of solar panels, insulation, upgrading window glazing, doors and much more. Our compliant frameworks and solutions can help support local authorities and housing associations, to ensure they all are up to the new standard.

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# New measures to support local housing and community needs

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has announced a complete overhaul of the planning system, to help fix the foundations and grow the UK economy.

This new system will include mandatory targets for local councils, a review of the greenbelt to identify 'grey belt' land and meet local housing needs, and ensure every area has local housing plans.

The 'grey belt' is described as the poor-quality areas on protected land (the green belt) that have been designated to allow for construction. The new rules announced will require half of the homes built in the grey belt to be affordable housing.

These new mandatory targets will mean councils must boost housebuilding in areas most in need and help to remove the largest barriers to economic growth, helping more people buy their own homes.

This new approach reflects the level of ambition

necessary to tackle the housing crisis and meet the government's commitment to 1.5 million homes over the next 5 years. The Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, has written to every council Leader and Chief Executive in England to make clear that there is "not just a professional responsibility but a moral obligation to see more homes built.

Alongside building the housing that the public needs, the government is committed to making it easier to build key infrastructure such as laboratories, gigafactories and data centers, as well as making changes to deliver more large onshore wind projects and solar development across the country.

These new housing plans aim to help support the increase of sustainable energy production in the UK and will help protect the green spaces, whilst meeting housing targets.

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