

Public sector paper procurement

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Introduction

After several years of spending restraint, all quarters of the public sector are lobbying the chancellor for more money often claiming that there are no more savings to be made.

But as this note shows, many public sector bodies are not getting value for money from suppliers when purchasing simple, everyday items such as paper.

The amount of paper being used by public sector bodies, after adjusting for their size varies greatly.

There also appears to be little correlation between the amount of paper purchased and the prices being paid suggesting many organisations are not exploiting potential purchasing economies of scale.

Key findings

In 2016, for a ream of 80 GSM paper:

Local authorities

- The highest price paid was: £4.39 by Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- The lowest price paid was: 75p by Runnymede Borough Council.

NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups

- The highest price paid was: £5.00 by Wokingham CCG.
- The lowest price paid was: £1.62 by Haringey CCG

NHS Trusts

- The highest price paid was: £4.65 by Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust.
- The lowest price paid was: £1.40 by Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust

Fire services

- The highest price paid was: £3.30 by Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service
- The lowest price paid was: £1.59 by Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service

Police Forces

- The highest price paid was: £2.51 by the British Transport Police
- The lowest price paid was: £1.41 by Police Scotland

Police and Crime Commissioners

- The highest price paid was: £2.51 by the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner
- The lowest price paid was: £1.45 by the Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Commissioner

Quangos

- The highest price paid was: £4.72 by the Boundary Commission for Wales
- The lowest price paid was: £1.41 by the Scottish Boundary Commissions Secretariat

Universities

- The highest price paid was: £4.40 by the University of Manchester
- The lowest price paid was: £1.57 by Oxford Brookes University

Average, highest and lowest prices paid by organisation type

Organisation type	Average price (£)	Average number of reams purchased	Highest price paid (£)	Lowest price paid (£)
Local Authority	2.02	13,580	4.39	0.75
CCG	2.35	1,686	5.00	1.62
NHS Trust	1.95	26,555	4.65	1.40
Fire Service	2.06	2,104	3.20	1.59
Police	1.87	19,996	2.51	1.41
PCC	2.08	2,599	2.83	1.45
Quangos	2.41	4,810	4.72	1.41
University	2.12	20,689	4.40	1.57
Public Corporation	2.94	18,454	4.69	1.89

Highest and lowest prices paid by local authorities – page 3

Highest and lowest prices paid by NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups – page 3

Highest and lowest prices paid by NHS Trusts – page 4

Highest and lowest prices paid by fire and rescue services – page 5

Highest and lowest prices paid by police forces – page 6

Highest and lowest prices paid by universities – page 6

Local Authorities

Highest price paid:

Local Authority	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Stratford-on-Avon	4.39	5,190
Fife	4.18*	5,400
Ipswich	3.88	8,000
Canterbury	3.82	6,462
Gedling	3.04	2,800
Wandsworth	3.03	26,413
West Sussex	2.99	10,500
Stevenage	2.85	6,071
St Albans	2.76	5,500
Purbeck	2.66	1,420

*two prices provided. Weighted average used

Lowest price paid

Local Authority	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Runnymede	0.75	3,120
Maldon	1	2,450
Merton	1.15	15,000
Wolverhampton	1.27	19,400
East Ayrshire	1.41	Not provided
Scottish Borders	1.41	7,050
Aberdeenshire	1.41	65,240
Perth and Kinross	1.41	55,168
East Dunbartonshire	1.41	19,780
East Renfrewshire	1.41	9,101

NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups

Highest price paid:

CCG	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
NHS Wokingham CCG	5.00	20
NHS North & West Reading CCG	4.00	18
West Cheshire CCG	3.99	410
Aylesbury Vale CCG	3.53	64
NHS Chiltern CCG	3.00	411
NHS Sunderland CCG	2.94	1,010
NHS Luton CCG	2.85	845
NHS Bristol CCG	2.80	3,132
NHS Brighton & Hove CCG	2.73	895
NHS Barking & Dagenham CCG	2.49	300

Lowest price paid:

CCG	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
NHS Haringey CCG	1.62	86
NHS Barnet CCG	1.63	1,175
NHS Camden CCG	1.63	925
NHS Havering CCG	1.63	180
NHS Newham CCG	1.63	1,850
NHS Redbridge CCG	1.63	1,200
NHS Waltham Forest CCG	1.63	1,425
NHS Hull CCG	1.69	565
NHS Dorset CCG	1.70	3,185
NHS Somerset CCG	1.77	2875

NHS Trusts

Highest price paid:

Trust	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust	4.65	6,774
Leeds & York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	2.84	14,866
Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust	2.59	2,500
South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust	2.58	33,620
Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust	2.33	15,507
Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust	2.33	29,066
Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust	2.33	11,895
West London Mental Health NHS Trust	2.33	10,000
Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust	2.28	18,479
Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust	2.23	9,750

Lowest price paid:

Trust	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust	1.40	30,000
Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust	1.41	18,000
Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust	1.44	30,880
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS	1.47	26,200

Trust	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Foundation Trust		
Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1.5	21,520
The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn. NHS Foundation Trust	1.5	15,600
South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1.51	19,156
Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1.55	37,361
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust (now : Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust)	1.56	89,480
Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board	1.57	224,490

Fire services

Highest price paid

Service	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service	3.20	100
Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service	2.60	1,655
West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service	2.48	2,981
London Fire Brigade	2.38	5,500
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service	2.31	2,296

Lowest price paid

Service	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service	1.59	1,200
South Wales Fire & Rescue Service	1.59	3,545
South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service	1.66	2,400
Humberside Fire & Rescue Service	1.75	2,550
Cleveland Fire & Rescue Service	1.78	1,085

Police

Highest price paid

Force	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
British Transport Police	2.51	22,600
Lancashire Constabulary	2.51	31,047
Metropolitan Police Service	2.10	Not provided
Cleveland Police	2.03	Not provided

Force	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Durham Constabulary	2.03	Not provided
Essex Police	2.03	10,310
Humberside Police	2.03	245
North Yorkshire Police	2.03	Not provided
South Yorkshire Police	2.03	Not provided
West Yorkshire Police	2.03	Not provided

Lowest price paid

Force	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Police Scotland	1.41	56,300
Dyfed-Powys Police	1.45	Not provided
North Wales Police	1.87	10,020
Leicestershire Constabulary	1.57	26,042
Gwent Police	1.58	7,960
South Wales Police	1.58	30,000
Norfolk Constabulary	1.62	9,538
Suffolk Constabulary	1.62	8,460
Greater Manchester Police	1.63	57,605

Universities

Highest price paid

University	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
University of Manchester	4.40	Not provided
Royal Central School of Speech and Drama	3.27	2,030
Falmouth University	2.84	4,000
University of St Andrews	2.73	5,805
Queen Margaret University	2.62	4,200
University of Sunderland	2.62	1,639
Cardiff University	2.57	78,500
Bath Spa University	2.53	6,920
University of Bristol	2.40	167,540
Leeds Beckett University	2.36	33,645

Lowest price paid

University	Latest price paid (£)	Number of reams purchased
Oxford Brookes University	1.57	28,461
University of Cumbria	1.60	4,600
University of Edinburgh	1.60	69,935
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	1.62	2,000
University of Worcester	1.69	13,400
University of Birmingham	1.72	27,615
University of East Anglia	1.75	36,772
Imperial College London	1.76	56,911
Kingston University	1.76	16,345

Sources

The below freedom of information request was sent to all government departments, local authorities, CCGs, NHS trusts, fire and rescue services, police forces, police and crime commissioners, non-departmental public bodies, universities and public corporations

1. What was the latest price paid per ream (500 sheets) of standard white copier paper (80 gsm or equivalent)?
2. If the answer to question 1 is not representative of a usual price paid, what is the average price paid per ream of copier paper during financial year 2015/16?
3. How many reams of copy paper were purchased during the 2015/16 financial year?

No government department was able to provide a full response so they have been excluded.