

Preventing accidental breaches of financial regulations

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Following BCP Council's financial regulations helps protect our services, colleagues and the communities we support. Our colleagues in Procurement and Audit have reviewed the most common causes of accidental breaches and have put together some key reminders to help everyone stay compliant.

Buying personnel services

If you're buying personnel services from an agency **outside the council's corporate framework (Comensura)** and the estimated spend will be **more than £5,000**, you must complete a **procurement decision record (PDR)**.

Please describe what you're buying as **services**, not **staff**, to ensure the process remains compliant.

What a PDR does

A PDR is a straightforward way to record what we're planning to buy and why, at the right stage of the procurement journey.

There are five types, each covering a specific point in the process:

- **Define** – before shaping detailed requirements
- **Procure** – before advertising an opportunity
- **Award** – before awarding a contract
- **Contract change** – before making a significant change (introduced via PA23)
- **Terminate contract** – before ending a contract (introduced via PA23)

When a PDR is essential

Sometimes a PDR is required even when you're not running a full competition. This includes situations where:

- There's a **risk of harm** to people or property
- You can't follow competition requirements for **technical reasons**, such as compatibility or operational issues
- You need approval for **advance payments**
- A **spot purchase** is made despite an existing compliant contract

Recording these decisions helps demonstrate clear and responsible management.

How PDRs differ from other reports

If you're completing an **officer decision record (ODR)** or a **cabinet report**, please note that these do **not** replace the need for a PDR. If both apply, both must be completed.

Planning ahead

A growing risk is Procurement not being made aware early enough of planned procurements. This can affect the council's legal requirement to publish information in the **UK1 pipeline notice**.

To help avoid this, please meet regularly with your **procurement category manager** to discuss any upcoming procurement activity.

Heads of service can also contact the team via:

- procurement.resources@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
- procurement.place@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
- procurement.wellbeing@bcpcouncil.gov.uk