

## Shopping hub aims to save forces cash

THE UK's National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) has formed a partnership with ProcServe, a company that provides electronic procurement products, to set up a procurement process that enables police forces in England and Wales to buy specified goods and services online. The NPIA is rolling out the new National Police Procurement Hub (NPPH) across all 43 forces in England and Wales. Lincolnshire Police went live with the system in August and the agency expects all forces to be using the hub by June 2012.

The hub gives the police service the ability to select, purchase and pay for a range of approved goods and services online from 500 suppliers, and is set to save the police service £30 million over six years, according to the NPIA. It will enable Lincolnshire Police to buy approved items such as IT, body armour, vehicles and a range of other goods and services, at the touch of a button. ProcServe has developed a cloud-based system, one in which applications and digital content is stored online rather than on a customer's hard drive, for businesses that wish to buy goods and services from their suppliers electronically.

A potential barrier to electronic procurement for public sector organisations has been that buyers and suppliers use a range of backoffice systems that receive and process data in different formats. By connecting to the hub, buyers and suppliers automatically belong to the ProcServe trading network, which allows them to join and share procurement information with similar organisations.

ProcServe also provides some key marketplaces across the UK public sector including OPEN, xchangewales eTrading, xchangewales eTrading for Schools, Procurement for Housing eMarketplace and the NPPH.

The initiative is supported by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). David Horne, the project's senior responsible officer and a former chair of ACPO's procurement portfolio, says it will help forces reduce costs by buying together, provide them with easy access to best-value contracts and allow small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and other suppliers to work more efficiently with the service.

For more information, please visit [www.policereview.com/](http://www.policereview.com/).