

YOUNG ACHIEVER



Laura Langstaff speaks to *Government Opportunities* about how it felt to win the GO 2006 Young Procurement Professional Award.



AWARDS



I have always worked in procurement, with almost nine years' experience in various roles. In 2003 I actively sought a move to the public sector, as I wanted to utilise my procurement skills to help deliver the public services efficiency agenda. I also felt that the public sector was a place where I could really see the value-add of good procurement practices. Obviously, it has not been without its challenges – but I have found that Ealing Council is full of people who are dedicated to their roles and to meeting the needs of the Council's customers.

Winning the GO Young Procurement Professional of the Year Award last year

in an eight-week period. The project also included mapping all existing non-standard procure-to-pay processes across the Council, and I directly represented procurement as a member of the project board at director level.

I have also been a very strong advocate of sharing knowledge, promoting this both internally and externally, and collaborative working. Representing Ealing Council on the London Contracts and Supplies Group Executive Board allows me to fully engage with other local authorities through existing procurement networks. This has led me to champion the benefits of sharing information and collaborative working within the Council.

(a cross-Council senior officer review panel), was a new concept for the Council. This has not only significantly improved the visibility of the procurement team, as well as good procurement practices, but also helped the understanding of key issues and enhanced our ability to make savings. Departmental Contracts Boards now meet monthly in each of the main service areas of the Council: Environment & Customer Services (reviewing contracts that include those for streets, parks, envirocrime and leisure); Children's & Adult Services (reviewing contracts for social services and education); and Regeneration & Housing (responsible for a wide variety of contracts, including property services and housing management as well as some of the Council's large development schemes). The final Departmental Contracts Board is soon to be established for Finance & Business Support, which will look at everything from legal services and insurance to fleet services and temporary agency staff. In total, the procurement team now has visibility of more than £180 million spend through these major contracts.

I hope that by winning the 2006 GO Young Procurement Professional Award I may have encouraged other young people to consider procurement as a profession and a very rewarding career.



Pictured are *Grahame Steed*, Managing Editor of *GO* magazine, and *Vivien Creegor*, Anchor Newsreader of *Sky World News*, with *Laura Langstaff* (centre) receiving her Award last year

was a testament to the efforts that both the procurement team and I had invested in improving procurement across the Council. The day itself was fantastic, and I was lucky enough to be joined by some of my team.

One of the main activities I led during 2006 that contributed towards the GO Award was the replacement of the Council's legacy system with a new, modern procurement and finance system. Although not without the teething problems that can be expected from any major implementation and change project, the system went live in April 2006 on time and to budget. I was responsible for leading and coordinating the only major procurement communication exercise for the entire implementation, with more than 70 workshops directly facilitated or planned

I also aim to lead by example by always ensuring that the team is open to learning from other boroughs' experiences, and willing to pass on what has worked well for us.

A further activity I was responsible for leading, and which contributed towards successfully winning the CIPS Award for Young Professional of the Year, was establishing structures and senior-level support for procurement. Specifically, I was responsible for launching and leading Departmental Contracts Boards across Ealing Council. This represents procurement's opportunity to meet with executive directors and service directors of each of the major areas of the Council in order to fully review all major contracts. Establishing Departmental Contracts Boards, as well as the Contracts Review Board

Laura Langstaff won the GO 2006 Young Procurement Professional Award.

FURTHER INFORMATION...

For further information on the GO Awards, please visit: www.n3pd.com

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