

Aberdeen & Warrington Roundtable Summary

Price vs. Quality: Key Findings & Themes

The following findings emerge from the Aberdeen & Warrington Roundtable discussions on the disconnect between procurement behaviour and quality outcomes in the lifting equipment sector. A defining tension ran through all conversations: procurement professionals buy on price, while specifiers and end users prioritise quality and safety - and the person buying is rarely the person using. The gap between compliance and genuine quality emerged as the central challenge for LEEA to address.

Core Theme: Price vs. Quality

Core theme Price vs. quality	Procurement professionals buy on price; specifiers and users prioritise quality and safety. The person buying is rarely the person using — creating a fundamental disconnect at the heart of the issue.
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Key Findings

Area	Summary
Brand & quality signals Brand & quality signals	Without a clear quality framework, buyers default to brand recognition (e.g. Green Pin, Crosby) as their only proxy for quality. Lesser-known but cheaper products can meet the same standards on paper, making objective differentiation very difficult.
Standards & compliance gaps Standards & compliance gaps	Current harmonised standards cover design and testing but not manufacturing quality control material traceability, weld quality and NDT. A product can be fully compliant yet still be of inferior quality. Sellafield’s supplementary specifications were cited as a practical example of filling that gap. Declarations of conformity were flagged as potentially self-certified and worthless in practice.
Cost of poor quality Cost of poor quality	Multiple participants shared experiences where choosing the cheapest supplier led to higher costs downstream, poor documentation, rework, failed inspections and having to buy twice. The “cheap now, expensive later” problem was a recurring theme.
Education & engagement Education & engagement	Larger organisations like Sellafield face a particular challenge. Procurement is so far removed from engineering that buyers may have no understanding of what they’re purchasing or why quality matters. Education resources defining what good quality looks like across specific product types (shackles, slings, beams, etc.) were proposed.
Verification & approved lists Verification & approved lists	A LEEA-verified equipment mark distinct from general membership was proposed, alongside an approved vendor list. Though, concerns were raised about the risk of inadvertently excluding members. Both were seen as ways to give buyers a clearer, more trustworthy signal of quality.
Procurement tools Procurement tools	An AI-powered procurement tool or chatbot was proposed to guide buyers through the correct considerations and direct them toward quality-compliant LEEA members. Echoing ideas raised independently at other roundtables, suggesting strong cross-group appetite for this concept.
Bottom line More visibility & teeth	The gap between compliance and genuine quality is the defining challenge. LEEA has a real opportunity to define, communicate, and verify what “good” actually looks like — going beyond minimum standards to give buyers meaningful signals they can act on.

The findings from Aberdeen and Warrington reinforce a cross-group pattern: compliance alone is not enough, and buyers cannot currently distinguish between genuinely high-quality suppliers and those who merely meet minimum standards. The tools and frameworks discussed verified marks, approved lists, education resources, and AI-guided procurement, which represents a coherent response to that challenge, and the appetite to act on them is clear.