Commissioning toolkit
Guidance booklet
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Introduction

The Children, Schools and Families Directorate and Adult Social Care and Health Directorate have, with the Voluntary and Community Sector and Health colleagues, agreed to co-produce a suite of tools to enable us to deliver the best outcomes for children, young people, parents, carers and adults through excellence in commissioning.

Cornwall is facing significant challenge, we are the second most deprived area in Northern Europe, the demand on children’s and adult’s social care services has been increasing significantly, yet we have reducing resources. We are working in a changing environment both at local, regional, national and European level. Shaping Our Future www.shapingourfuture.info/ is developing more integrated services and creating a sustainable and joined up health and care system; and, One Vision www.cornwall.gov.uk/onevision sets the foundation for which we will shape the future integration of education, health and social care services for children, young people and their families in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Commissioning is part of the Council’s cyclical activity to assess the needs of our local population by designing, delivering and reviewing these services to ensure good outcomes. The Council’s processes vary within and across Directorates, with limited standardisation and alignment with partners. This toolkit has been developed to address this.
Our systems and process and the way we work has to change to meet these challenges. We have to ensure our commissioning is the best it can be to support the challenges we face going forward. The Commissioning Toolkit is designed to support:

- Away from silos and towards whole system thinking
- Moving away from competition and towards collaboration
- Place based approaches
- Co-design and co-production
- Including service users and lived experience in design and delivery
- Including small and local organisations
- Appropriate use of grants or contracts
- Moving away from measurement and toward reflection and learning
- Away from medicalisation and towards socialisation

The commissioning Toolkit is based on the following principles:

- Putting children and people at the heart of commissioning
- Co-producing our approach with children, adults, providers and partners
- Creating ambitious and transformation solutions
- Providing choice and opportunities for local children and adults in every aspect of their lives
- Making sure any changes are evidence-based
- Making the best use of our collective resources
- Being open and transparent
- Being flexible and responsive
The Commissioning Toolkit has been developed in partnership with Commercial Services to align and integrate the contract management toolkit. We also worked with the Institute of Public Care (IPC), Oxford Brookes University in developing the Commissioning Toolkit:

“IPC has provided support to Cornwall Council as it developed its commissioning toolkit, building on its investment in training and development of its commissioning staff through our postgraduate commissioning and purchasing certificate programme.

We have extensive experience of working with local authorities and NHS organisations on commissioning, across the UK and Ireland, and have been impressed by the genuine commitment, and the thoughtful, painstaking approach that Cornwall Council has taken to building commissioning knowledge and skills across the authority, encapsulated in this toolkit, which addresses all areas of the commissioning cycle.”

We are committed to maintain and further develop the Commissioning Toolkit and we will know we have been successful when we all:

- know the toolkit is here
- use the toolkit on a regular basis
- maintain and continue to develop the toolkit
- it is implicit in everything we do.

**Trevor Doughty**  
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Children, Schools and Families

**Helen Charlesworth-May**  
Strategic Director  
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About the toolkit

The Commissioning Cycle
It is commonly accepted that good practice commissioning should follow a consistent cycle of activity. We have agreed to work to the model of commissioning developed by the Institute of Public Care (IPC).

According to IPC
Commissioning is the process of identifying needs within the population and developing policy directions, service models and the market, to meet those needs in the most appropriate and cost effective way.

Procurement is the process of acquiring goods, works or services from (usually) external providers or suppliers and managing these through to the end of the contract.

Contracting is the process of negotiating and agreeing the terms of a contract e.g. for services, and on-going management of the contract including payment and monitoring.

Within Cornwall Council, these functions may at times be performed by different staff, most typically either commissioning staff, commercial services staff, or both working together.
Commissioning Toolkit guide
How to use the toolkit

The Commissioning Toolkit is an online resource, it is split into 6 sections that are easy to navigate:

**Introduction to the toolkit**
Its aims and objectives and how you can be involved.

**The Commissioning Cycle**
The commissioning process we aim to follow, based on the model developed by the Institute of Public Care (IPC).

**Analyse**
Before services can be commissioned, we need to form a view about needs, current services and resources.

**Plan**
We secure a mandate for commissioning, conduct service co-design, and determine our route to market.

**Review**
We gather information to review and assess performance of contracts and how well needs have been met.

**Do (secure services)**
We engage with the market, secure services and manage contracts.
These 6 sections contain clear and simple **process maps** for all stages of commissioning, setting out standards and expectations, including:

- Guidance around the creation of a comprehensive **evidence base**.
- Guidance and templates for **co-designing and co-producing services** with our stakeholders.
- Guidance around a **common set of outcomes** and measures of success that we can use to ensure the difference that services are making.
- Guidance around **working with groups of suppliers**, addressing gaps in local markets, helping suppliers develop their workforce etc.
- Guidance around involving **frontline staff** in commissioning so that they are more aware of what services are available to help the people they work with.
- Links to the existing **contract management toolkit** that contains our standards and guidance for working with and managing individual suppliers.
- Reviewing the current **end of contract report** for individual suppliers to ensure it is well-used and fit for purpose.
- Developing a **sector review** template to look at how groups of services are working including non-Council funded services that address the same group of users.

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**The Commissioning Cycle**

The commissioning cycle is split into 4 quadrants:

- Analyse
- Plan
- Do
- Review

These quadrants are described in more detail on the following pages.
Before services for people can be commissioned, commissioners and staff need to form a view about the needs of the relevant population, current services and resources.

This involves activities such as:

- clarifying the commissioning ‘territory’. This is through reviewing:
  - legislation guidance
  - local/national priorities
  - relevant local strategies and policy statements.
- undertaking demand forecasting activities. This is to identify the current and likely future needs of the population for the relevant services.
- mapping and reviewing service provision. This is to understand provider strengths and weaknesses. It also identifies opportunities for improvement or change in providers.
- developing a best practice model from research and other published material.
- identifying the resources currently available and the cost benefits of adopting certain approaches to future provision.

In Cornwall, we refer to these tasks collectively as evidence gathering. Within that process, you should include information from the sector review. This captures the current state of local provision. There are draft templates which include guidance for both of these activities.
Plan

Once needs, resources and provision have been reviewed, commissioners need to “plan” to secure services. There is a lot of focus on this part of the cycle in terms of securing a mandate for any procurement, conducting service co-design with users and providers and determining route to market.

This involves activities such as:

- starting with a review of the key findings from the supply and demand analysis.
- co-design with users, carers and providers.
- identifying gaps in current information and how these may be filled. More detailed review of the gap between what provision is needed and what is available, and planning how these gaps may be addressed based upon the understanding of supply.
- identifying what is not known about current supply and demand, how this may be met in the future and the use and value of the information once acquired. Agreeing appropriate service provision and its configuration to meet future demand.
- analysing the risks involved in implementing change and/or continuing with the status quo.
- writing a commissioning strategy which identifies clear service development priorities and specific targets for their achievement.

In Cornwall, the following processes enable us to carry out these tasks:

- Developing the Market Position Statement (MPS).
- Developing the Commissioning Strategy / Service Plan or Team Plan.
- Service co-design and co-production.
- Specification development.
- Business Case.
- Outcomes framework.
- Quality framework.
Do

The Do quadrant is about ensuring that the services needed and identified are delivered as planned, in ways which efficiently and effectively deliver the priorities and targets set out in the commissioning strategy.

This involves activities such as:

- supply management and capacity building to ensure a good mix of service providers, offering consumers an element of choice in how their needs are met.
- developing good communications and effective relationships with existing and potential providers.
- purchasing and contracting of services and decommissioning services that do not meet the needs of the population group.
- the Care Act 2014 sets out the law around market development in adult social care.

In Cornwall the following activities should be undertaken at this stage of the commissioning cycle:

- Implement Market Development Strategy.
- Procurement of Services.
- Contract award and implementation.
- Contract Management.

Ensuring that contracts are contract managed and that markets are engaged with, will be crucial to ensure that services are delivered as planned in line with Value for Money principles and that Social Value benefits are realised.

Issuing Market Position Statements and building capacity in the market will ensure that future tender submissions are of high quality and meet the requirements needed.
Review

For services to be reviewed, commissioners and staff need to understand how the current contracts have performed and what has been going on in the market place.

The key aim of this quadrant of the commissioning cycle is to monitor the impact of services and analyse the extent to which they have achieved the purpose intended.

This involves activities such as:

- assessment against outcomes – having an understanding of the current market and whether the desired outcomes from the commissioning strategy are being met.
- review of market performance – is the market supporting people to achieve their desired outcomes and providing good quality, value for money solutions.
- review of plans – to ensure commissioning intentions are reviewed, evaluated and updated.
- evaluation of services – clear view of the outcomes services are achieving, the impact they have, what is working and not working and what needs to change.
- review individual outcomes: ensuring that services and support make a difference to an individual’s wellbeing and that the agreed outcomes are being achieved.
- contract monitoring: clear set of agreed measures for monitoring whether outcomes are achieved and the service is delivered in the way the contract specified.

In Cornwall Council, these tasks fall under two headings: end of contract review and the sector review. Within this process, you should also consider what will be needed at the evidence gathering stage within the Analyse section of the toolkit. This will help capture the current state of local provision.
Support for commissioners

We are intending to further develop support for commissioners by building on the Commissioning Toolkit and developing training and development opportunities, commissioning induction, mentoring and developing communities of practice.

The Commissioning Toolkit contains some key documents and we will develop further documents to build this resource library. Documents available to date include:

- A beginner’s guide to commissioning
- Key commissioning templates and tools
- How commissioning relates to Cornwall’s key strategies and vision
- The importance of co-production and co-design to effective service delivery
- A list of key stakeholders
- Commissioning Across Partner Organisations: Engagement, Co-production and Communications Strategy for Commissioning 2017-20
- Planning tool for an Engagement or Co-Production session including communication
- Engagement, Co-Production and Communication Tools Guidance
We value your feedback

There is a feedback form on the home page of the Commissioning Toolkit website which we would encourage you to complete and return. This will enable us to review, amend and add to the tools and guidance available.

Thank you

Many colleagues in the Council, Health and the Voluntary Sector have committed time and resource to support and develop the Commissioning Toolkit. Without their commitment and support we would not have been able to have our Commissioning Toolkit and we would like to say a huge thank you to all of those involved.

We continue to need all stakeholders’ input to keep the Commissioning Toolkit live, relevant, user friendly with good content. If you would like to be involved please let us know.

You can also email us:

For children’s:
csfcommissioning@cornwall.gov.uk

For adults:
contractsadults@cornwall.gov.uk

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Contact us

For advice and guidance please email us at:

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