

# Putting **People First**

## Transforming Adult Social Care

# Commissioning toolkit

## Efficiency delivery - supporting sustainable transformation

The commissioning toolkit is being designed to bridge the gap between the vast amount of literature on commissioning and the practitioner. It links together our earlier Better Buying diagnostic with an increasing number of specific concise tools.

### The gap we are trying to fill

There are vast amounts of literature on commissioning. In 2007 there were at least 50 central government initiatives covering the topic within social care alone. This year we have seen the emergence of World Class Commissioning which will cover both health and social care.

Unfortunately, despite the wealth of knowledge and expertise contributing to the topic, many practitioners find the topic fragmented and confusing. It is difficult to find the nuggets which are useful on a day to day basis.

The commissioning toolkit collates these nuggets and summarises them in the form of concise guides, checklists and pick-up-and-go tools.

### The components of the toolkit

There are four pillars to the toolkit:

- **the diagnostic:** providing an index and self-diagnostic checklist on the spectrum of commissioning activity;
- **a topic sheet:** expanding on specific topics, providing additional explanation and links to relevant resources and tools;

- **a tool information sheet :** giving an overview of a specific tool, where it has been used and links to further information about it; and
- **the tool itself :** a ready to use checklist, methodology, template or concise set of guidance for use by commissioning practitioners.

### Our progress to date

An expanded 'Better Buying' diagnostic to cover the full spectrum of commissioning activities. Councils who have used it tell us that it provides a useful, structured methodology to help focus activity.

Topic sheets for each of the diagnostic points and with work in progress to link to useful resources.

An expanded catalogue of tools which include the following new additions, available now:

- The use of Frameworks and Preferred Supplier lists within social services;
- A decommissioning checklist (with guidance and associated resources).



## The new tools

### Use of Frameworks & Preferred Supplier Lists

A number of councils have told us that they are under increasing pressure from their corporate colleagues to move away from traditional Preferred Supplier Lists to formal Frameworks as defined under EU legislation.

This concise two page guide is designed to clarify that Preferred Supplier Lists are perfectly legitimate and that councils do not have to apply the full EU defined Framework process.

In addition, it provides useful guidance on how to structure a Preferred Supplier List to meet the general requirements of procurement law and maintain contestability.

### Decommissioning checklist and guidance

The transformation agenda is increasingly requiring councils to move from their traditional forms of contract to new, more flexible, arrangements.

This simple tool provides six pages of checklist questions and useful advice for those considering decommissioning of specific services with links to a range of supplementary resources.

## Existing tools

The toolkit does not try to reinvent the wheel. Where there are existing tools, it simply references them, thus making them more accessible.

So, for example, the toolkit provides links to CSED's other offerings such as POPPI, PANSI, FLoSC and TRACS.

### Procurement obligations and Type B Services

The success of our concise guide on procurement related obligations and Type B Services inspired our approach to the toolkit.

The guide summarises key social care related procurement legislation on two sides of A4. Seen stuck up on office walls, it has met its objectives of both informing social care staff of their obligations and preventing inappropriate application of full EU Directive requirements.

## Our forward looking plans

Over the coming months (by the end of financial year 2008) we are planning to:

- Link together the various elements of the toolkit (initially via a hyperlinked pdf, but subsequently on the web);
- Add new tools, focussing on those requested by councils; and
- Merge the work with that being undertaken under the banner of World Class Commissioning.

### Case Studies

- The diagnostic helped Warrington Borough Council to focus on revisiting their supplier performance regime
- London Borough of Lambeth identified the need to strengthen their strategic commissioning function as a result of using the diagnostic
- Thurrock Borough Council have used the diagnostic to identify improvements in the way they commission complex services
- The Obligations two-sider has been used by West Sussex County Council to help make their social care staff more aware of their procurement related obligations
- A number of councils routinely use the Obligations two-sider to counter corporate requests to go through a full EU tendering process for social services

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