

What is Commissioning?

- **Definition:** Commissioning is the **strategic process** of planning, designing, buying, and monitoring services to meet the needs of a population.
- **Purpose:** Ensures people have access to the **right services, in the right place, at the right time**.
- **Cycle:** Often described as a “**plan, do, review**” cycle – assessing needs, securing services, and evaluating outcomes.
 - **Focus:** On **improving outcomes, quality of care, and value for money**.
 - **Collaboration:** Works across health, social care, housing, and community partners.



Courtesy of The NHS Information Centre for health and social care. Full diagram available at: www.ic.nhs.uk/commissioning

Contract Types

- Framework Contracts**

- A list of pre-approved providers.
- Services can be purchased as needed.
- Offers flexibility while ensuring quality standards.

- Spot Contracts**

- One-off or short-term agreements for an individual service user.
- Useful for urgent, specialist, or less common needs.
- Can be higher cost due to lack of economies of scale.

- Block Contracts**

- Provider is paid for a set number of placements/units of service, regardless of usage.
- Guarantees provider income and service availability.
- Risk of under/over-utilisation.

Procurement and tendering

- **Transparency:** Ensures fairness, equal opportunity, and trust between commissioners and providers.
- **Specification:** Sets out exactly what the service should deliver, including outcomes and standards.
- **Tendering Process:** The method of inviting bids, evaluating submissions, and awarding contracts in line with regulations.
- **KPI's (Key Performance Indicators):** Measures used to track whether the service is delivering value, quality, and outcomes for people.
- **Checks:** Safeguards like financial checks, safeguarding standards, CQC ratings, and policies to ensure providers are suitable.
- **Criteria:** The scoring framework used to evaluate tenders, e.g., cost, quality, innovation, social value.

Market engagement and management

- **What is Market Engagement?**
- The process of interacting with providers, stakeholders, and the wider care market to understand supply, demand, and service needs.
- Helps commissioners shape services that meet the needs of local adults requiring social care support.
- **Why We Do It:**
- Identify gaps and opportunities in care provision.
- Understand providers' capacity, capabilities, and innovation.
- Build relationships with local and regional care providers.
- Inform commissioning strategies and service design decisions.
- **What It Achieves:**
- Ensures a responsive, high-quality, and sustainable care market.
- Supports better outcomes for service users.
- Encourages competition, innovation, and improved service delivery.
- Helps plan for future demand and evolving care needs.

Co-production and Co-design

- **Definition:**
 - Collaborative approach where service users, carers, and professionals **work as equals** to design, deliver, and evaluate services.
- **Why It Matters:**
 - Services aligned with **real needs**
 - **Higher satisfaction** and trust
 - **Sustainable, resilient care**
 - Promotes **community engagement and social value**
- **How It Works:**
 - **Engagement:** Workshops, focus groups, surveys, advisory panels
 - **Mechanisms:** Shared decision-making, asset-based approach, clear communication, feedback loops
- **What Residents & Stakeholders Want:**
 - Active involvement from the start
 - Recognition of lived experience
- Clear, accessible information
- Tangible improvements in services
- **Commissioners & Providers Should Aim For:**
 - Inclusive practices, especially for seldom-heard voices
 - Training and support for meaningful participation
 - Long-term partnerships with communities
 - Continuous improvement through feedback

What do Commissioners want to see

- **1. Quality and Reliability**

- High-quality, person-centred care that meets regulatory standards.
- Consistent performance and positive outcomes for service users.

- **2. Engagement and Collaboration**

- Active participation in consultations, forums, and partnerships.
- Open communication with commissioners and other stakeholders.

- **3. Social Value**

- Contribution to the local community (e.g., local employment, training, volunteering).
- Promoting inclusion and wellbeing beyond core care delivery.

- **4. Innovative Approaches & Flexibility**

- Creative solutions to meet evolving care needs.

- Adoption of technology or alternative care models for efficiency and better outcomes.

- Flexibility in service delivery to respond to changing demand.

- **5. Alignment with Strategic Direction**

- Commitment to long-term service sustainability.
- Supporting commissioners' goals for an integrated, forward-looking care market.

The future

- **1. Collaborative Partnerships with Providers**
 - Stronger engagement with home care and care providers to co-design services.
 - Building long-term relationships to understand challenges, capacity, and opportunities.
 - Joint problem-solving to improve service delivery and outcomes.
- **2. Creating a Sustainable Market**
 - Ensuring sufficient supply of high-quality providers to meet demand.
 - Supporting smaller and local providers to thrive and remain viable.
 - Encouraging diverse delivery models, including co-operative and third sector organisations.
- **3. Shaping the Market Effectively**
 - Using data and intelligence to identify gaps and predict future needs.
 - Commissioning strategically to influence provider behaviour and service development.
 - Promoting social value, inclusion, and community impact through commissioning decisions.
- **4. Promoting Innovation & Alternative Models of Care**
 - Encouraging new approaches to home care, technology-enabled care, and flexible services.
 - Supporting co-operative care models, micro-providers, and community-based initiatives.
 - Piloting alternative delivery methods to improve efficiency and service user outcomes.

- **5. Financial Sustainability & Efficiency**

- Balancing quality with cost-effectiveness in commissioning decisions.
- Considering the impact of inflation, workforce pressures, and funding constraints.
- Using tools like Individual Service Funds (ISF) and Direct Payments (DP) to empower users.

- **6. Third Sector & Community Involvement**

- Partnering with voluntary, community, and faith-based organisations.
- Leveraging local knowledge and resources to complement formal care provision.
- Strengthening community resilience and integration with statutory services.

- **7. Strategic Outcomes**

- A responsive, adaptable, and sustainable adult social care market.
- Services that are person-centred, innovative, and financially resilient.
- Stronger collaboration across commissioners, providers, and communities to meet evolving care needs.