



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

Part 1: Guidance



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit:

www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities. We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Foreword

As the pressures of the recession really impact on young people it has never been more important that local authorities secure as good a local youth offer as they can in the current financial climate. There is a growing body of evidence that shows that youth services, providing a range of open access and targeted provision, can not only be a critical part of any early intervention strategy, but can also prevent young people from needing any intervention at all. Great youth provision raises aspirations, improves well being and supports educational attainment and employability. Youth work approaches are central to raising self esteem and enabling young people to become active citizens with a real voice in their local communities.

With real pressures on local budgets it is critical that councils use their resources wisely and really consider the options available to them. If savings must be made then surely it is better that these savings are made with a full understanding of local needs and the options available. Officers and members need to be able to understand the business case and have considered the full range of options available. Developing the local market in partnership with local voluntary and community sector providers, securing a high quality workforce and ensuring young people themselves are involved in the process are really important.

NYA is very pleased to be publishing this guidance developed with the support of our partner the LGA and in collaboration with councils themselves as part of the broader programme "Routes to Success". For over a year councils have told us that they want to be better at commissioning youth services and we really hope this guidance, coupled with our broader programme of tailored support, will satisfy that need. We are delighted that the Children's Improvement Board has placed building on this guidance at the heart of its commissioning support programme.

Finally we believe that, as the sector uses this guidance, our collective understanding of what we need to do will grow and so we hope the guidance published today will grow and develop and change. NYA is committed to working with councils and their statutory, voluntary and community sector, and private sector partners to ensure young people have access to the youth workers and youth provision they need.



Fiona Blacke
Chief Executive
National Youth Agency

Contents

1. Introduction	5
What do we mean by services for young people?	5
What do we mean by commissioning?	6
Using the toolkit and obtaining further support	7
2. Getting started	8
Governance	8
Service users	9
3. The Commissioning Process	10
3.1 Understand	11
What does this stage involve?	11
Needs analysis	11
3.2 Plan	12
What does this stage involve?	12
Business case and options appraisal	12
3.3. Do	13
What does this stage involve?	13
Workforce development	13
Guidance on developing a local market	14
Creating an outcomes specification	14
Decommissioning	14
3.4. Review	15
What does this stage involve?	15
Managing organisational performance	15
Performance measurement	15
Performance monitoring	16
Practical tips for the "Review" stage	17
4. Further Help and Support	18
5. Glossary	19

1. Introduction

Services for young people are facing unprecedented changes. In their strategic leadership role local authorities are considering the needs of young people and their communities and trying to shape the best offer they can to meet those needs at a time of significant financial constraint.

At the National Youth Agency (NYA) we are passionate about young people and believe they are entitled to a wide range of high quality services that support them in a successful transition through adolescence to adulthood. Our focus is firmly on improving outcomes. In partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA) we are working closely with local authorities and central government to support the development of policy and innovative practice that promotes improved outcomes for young people.

We know that local authorities have commissioning teams with a high level of knowledge and skills in commissioning processes, but we also know some of them are commissioning young people's services, such as youth work and targeted youth support, for the first time. The aim of this guide is to support local authority commissioners and organisations that deliver young people's services in commissioning and providing high quality services for young people. The guide is aimed at a range of people involved in the commissioning process, including providers.

The NYA believes that young people should have a voice in everything that affects them and that the performance of services will be improved by taking proper account of that voice. This includes involving young people in commissioning services. By involving young people in commissioning, local authorities can ensure that the services they commission are relevant, accessible and appropriate to the needs and aspirations of the young people they target. This guide provides practical

information on how to involve young people in commissioning and has useful links to Hear by Right – the NYA and LGA's framework for developing and embedding young people's participation in decision making.

We also know that young people need the support of appropriately trained and qualified professional staff. The guide provides links to our Workforce Development Self Assessment Framework for Integrated Youth Support Services so that commissioners and providers can ensure that their plans take account of the need to train and develop staff and ensure a confident and competent professional workforce.

The NYA is well known for its role as an advocate for youth work as a methodology for promoting young people's personal and social development and social inclusion. We believe that youth work methods can be applied in a wide range of settings and results in improved outcomes for young people. However, this guide is not limited to commissioning youth work. It aims to support good practice in commissioning any service that is targeted at young people and will assist commissioners to commission provision and programmes such as targeted youth support, positive activities, youth engagement and other forms of support aimed at specific groups of young people.

What do we mean by services for young people?

The term 'services for young people' applies to any service or provision aimed at young people, that a local authority might wish to commission. Local authorities are responsible for a wide range of services that are specifically aimed at supporting young people including youth work, positive activities, information and advice, alternative education provision and support services for

young people that are parents, young carers, young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those that are vulnerable or at risk. As many local authorities move away from providing these services and move toward commissioning them, it is vital that they have access to resources and expertise that supports them to commission effectively.

What do we mean by commissioning?

It is important that there is a shared vision of commissioning: what it means; what processes are included; who it involves; and what constitutes success.

***"Commissioning is the process for deciding how to use the resources available in order to improve young people's outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way."**¹*

Commissioning is not the same as procurement although both are very closely aligned. Procurement is the process of acquiring goods and services and managing these through to the end of a contract. Procurement, especially the contracting of services, is one of the tools that commissioners might use but it is generally accepted that the commissioning function is a broader one².

The commissioning task involves not only those with commissioning in their job title but also many of those who work with and within young people's services. The skills required for commissioners of young people's services include:

- an understanding of the local authority's vision and priorities for children and young people;
- the ability to analyse and assess young people's needs and identify and agree priorities for action;
- a commitment to young people's participation;
- effective leadership and management skills;
- the ability to influence policy and decision making;
- a clear knowledge and understanding of young people's services, relevant legislation and good practice;
- mapping resources;
- promoting collaboration and a commitment to partnership working;
- specifying and measuring outcomes;
- prioritising investment;
- shaping and managing the markets;
- promoting improvement and innovation;
- the ability to secure procurement, financial and legal expertise when required; and
- implementing project and change management³.

Notes:

1. Adapted from "Good commissioning principles and practice", The Commissioning Support Programme, 2011.
2. DfE Commercial Guidance for Commissioners, 2009.
3. CWDC National Occupational Standards for commissioning, procurement and contracting, 2007.

Using the toolkit and obtaining further support

The following sections provide an overview of each of the stages of the commissioning process, with links to tools providing more in depth guidance and templates. These have been developed and piloted, in partnership with sector leaders, to be applied and adopted by those involved in commissioning services for young people. It is recognised that commissioners and providers may be at different stages of the process and so each section has been designed so that it can be used as a distinct document in its own right, enabling the reader to dip in and out of the guide as required.

Besides the tools and examples provided, NYA has a number of other tools, services, and operational and commissioning experts who can provide bespoke support packages to local authorities and providers.

The National Youth Agency website also contains a range of support materials and is a repository for case studies of good practice.

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk

The Children's Improvement Board has been consulting with local authorities and key partners on their support needs for commissioning. In December 2011 it confirmed they have taken on a consortium to develop a range of responses likely to include setting up or assisting regional or sub-regional networks of commissioning champions, establishing a commissioning and productivity hub which would house key resources, developing a cohort commissioning specialists within the sector and providing a national pool of experts which local authorities can access through the CIB. More details will follow later in 2012.

Further support on commissioning processes is available from the Commissioning Support Programme website. Established in 2008 the programme produced a range of support and training materials, including *The Commissioner's Kitbag*. Much of this material is directly applicable to commissioning young people's services. For further information visit: www.commissioningsupport.org.uk

2. Getting Started

Before embarking on the commissioning process the engagement and support of relevant elected members, particularly the lead member for young people's services, must be secured. Without this, efforts to commission or decommission services will not succeed.

Good commissioning of young people's services is underpinned by a set of shared core values and principles. Key to this are:

- actively involving young people, their families and communities at all stages of commissioning;
- promoting equality of access and taking positive action to ensure the most vulnerable of young people are not disadvantaged in any way;
- commitment to drawing on the knowledge of local voluntary and community groups in understanding local needs and priorities;
- ensuring that there are strong governance structures which provide clear direction, decision making, resources, accountability and delegation to support the commissioning process;
- ensuring that safeguarding young people is at the heart of all commissioned services;
- providing intervention and support at the earliest possible time for those young people that require it;
- adherence to local authority policies and government guidance;
- ensuring that all decisions are informed by evidence based practice;
- ensuring that the commissioning process is transparent and promotes contestability;
- taking account of value for money; and
- working in partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people.

The starting points for commissioning young people's services are to ensure:

- strong governance arrangements are in place;
- there is a commitment to a shared vision, values and principles at all levels;
- a clear remit for the work has been developed and agreed; and
- key partners and stakeholders have been identified and engaged.

Next steps

In order to assess the organisation's capacity and capability to commission, the NYA has developed a "Commissioning Readiness Tool" as part of this guide. It can be found at: www.nya.org.uk/commissioning-toolkits-for-local-authorities

A note on governance

It will be important when establishing a governance structure for the process to consider the relationship with existing structures and whether any of these are well placed to fulfil this function or whether a new structure needs to be established.

The Audit Commission defines governance as: *"The framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives."* It is about ensuring:

- shared vision;
- clear direction;
- resources;
- accountability; and
- delegation.

Typically, strong governance for the commissioning of young people's services might include:

- a clear mandate for planning to meet the local area's priorities for young people;
- the work being overseen by a senior level joint commissioning board/group;
- a joint commissioning framework, agreed between key partners and stakeholders;
- senior managers having a clear understanding of the role of commissioning and providing support for the commissioning of young people's services;
- clear line management arrangements for the work;
- identified resources available to support the work;
- a task and finish steering group to drive the work;
- clear lines of delegation and accountability for commissioners;
- a defined reporting process with timescales; and
- clear links with other related commissioning activities.

A note on engagement of service users

Commissioners should actively seek to involve service users, their families and communities at all stages of the commissioning cycle. Through this they become co-producers of services to meet their needs and achieve better outcomes for young people.

Fundamental to this is the involvement of young people. NYA and the LGA, in conjunction with local authorities and partner organisations, have developed "Hear by Right" to help guide those working in services for young people.

"Hear by Right" offers a tried and tested standards framework for organisations to assess and improve policy and practice on the participation of children and young people and includes an award scheme.

Next steps

For further information on "Hear by Right" visit: www.nya.org.uk.

As part of this guide, the NYA has produced guidance on involving young people in commissioning. This can be found at: www.nya.org.uk/commissioning-toolkits-for-local-authorities

3. The Commissioning Process

There are a number of different descriptions for the commissioning process. However, essentially all follow a process of **Understand**, **Plan**, **Do** and **Review**. The diagram below summarises the approach used in this guide:

The commissioning cycle



3.1 Understand

Contained in this section:

- What does this stage involve?
- Needs analysis

What does this stage involve?

The understand stage is about assessing young people's needs and identifying and agreeing priorities for action that will result in improved outcomes and identifying resources and how they are currently deployed.

This can involve the gathering of data and information to analyse the needs of young people in the local area, service user and staff feedback, mapping services, benchmarking and detailed analysis of finances and human resources. Providers are a key source of information, and working in partnership at this stage is essential in order to obtain as complete a picture as possible.

The "Commissioning Readiness Tool" has been developed to support you in assessing strengths and weaknesses. This simple tool will have enabled you to get a sense of your organisation's readiness for commissioning in each of the eight domains:

- governance;
- commissioning expertise;
- user participation;
- needs analysis and market intelligence;
- policies, strategies and plans;
- market management;
- procurement and contracting; and
- performance management.

We suggest you use the "Commissioning Readiness Tool" before you embark on the commissioning process.

Needs analysis

Once you have identified whether you are "commissioning ready" the next step is to

expand upon needs analysis (sometimes referred to as "needs assessment") that you did earlier. This is the starting point for most commissioning. It is important that commissioners have as much information, as possible, qualitative as well as quantitative about current and future needs in order to inform their planning and make the best use of the resources available. In many places youth services have not been developed in relation to a rigorous needs assessment.

Needs analysis is the process for identifying and addressing needs, or "gaps" between current outcomes and services and desired ones. Good needs analysis involves using data and other information to develop a clear picture of young people's needs. It enables local authorities and their partners to identify priorities for action that will result in improved outcomes for the youth population in general or for specific groups of young people. Needs analysis is not just about collecting data and information; it is also about how that information is analysed in order to provide a clear picture of the issues that affect young people in the local area.

Next steps

Good needs analysis requires dedicated time and expertise to coordinate the information available. In order to help commissioners with this task, the NYA has developed a needs analysis planning model, that includes a needs analysis template, as part of this guide. It can be found at: www.nya.org.uk/commissioning-toolkits-for-local-authorities

3.2 Plan

Contained in this section:

- What does this stage involve?
- Developing a business case

What does this stage involve?

This stage involves considering different ways to address needs and formulating an agreed action plan. Again, key stakeholders and particularly young people and providers should be involved to add their knowledge of what is needed and what works. Most local authorities have a number of strategies and plans, at a variety of levels, which will relate to young people. Consideration of young people and the issues that affect them and priorities are often included in local areas' Community Plans, a Children and Young People's Plan (where one exists) and the 14 to 19 Strategy. It is important to draw from these plans and strategies to ensure that commissioning activity is consistent. The work in the planning stage should culminate in a clear strategy and plan for commissioning services for young people.

Developing a business case

Most local authorities considering commissioning services that they currently provide themselves will have to develop a business case that demonstrates the benefits of moving to a new model for service delivery. The purpose of the business case is to set out a formal proposal for change, identify benefits and drawbacks of implementing the change and demonstrate that alternative options delivering the change have been thoroughly reviewed. The business case is an essential document for securing the commitment and approval of key stakeholders such as elected members, senior officers and staff. A well constructed business case for commissioning services should provide information about:

- the background and rationale for commissioning;

- the benefits of commissioning rather than directly delivering services;
- the drawbacks commissioning services;
- the current arrangements for delivering the service;
- the key stakeholders and groups the proposal will affect;
- financial implications and potential savings;
- how the proposal will improve services;
- an appraisal of alternative options for service delivery; and
- an action plan and timescale for implementing the proposed change.

Generally, a business case is written for strategic officers and decision makers. However, proposals for commissioning youth services are likely to affect staff, young people and communities, and be used for consultation. It is therefore very important that the business case is presented in plain English.

Next steps

As part of this guide, the NYA has developed guidance on writing a business case to assist in preparing a compelling document that includes the information decision makers need when considering a proposal for commissioning services for young people. It has also reviewed a variety of service delivery models identifying potential benefits and drawbacks to assist local authorities to appraise different options for delivering young people's services.

"Business Case and Options Appraisal" can be found at: www.nya.org.uk/commissioning-toolkits-for-local-authorities

3.3 Do

Contained in this section:

- **What does this stage involve?**
- **Workforce development**
- **Guidance on developing a local market**
- **Creating an outcomes based specification**
- **Decommissioning**

What does this stage involve?

This stage is about implementing the results of the options appraisal and may involve: securing investment decisions for revised services; managing the performance of an existing provider in order to achieve improved outcomes; decommissioning services and tendering for new or adapted service provision.

Workforce development

Workforce development is a critical element of commissioning, because skilled and effective staff are key to securing the desired outcomes for young people. Whether a service is commissioned internally or externally, the commissioner needs to understand and secure the appropriate level of staff and know mechanisms are in place for their development be they full-time professional, part-time or volunteer. Commissioners should consider the following:

- **workforce profile** – current number and type of staff and requirements for the future; impact of workforce cycles (e.g; retirement); comparison with population diversity profile;
- **deployment** – how existing staff are deployed and their capacity to use and develop their skills;
- **skill shortages** – within the existing workforce, as well as those emerging from job applicants;
- **changing demands** – impact of organisational priorities and political environment on services and provision

now and in the future

- **modernisation** – utilising new and emerging approaches (in technology, skills and ideas); and
- **efficiency and excellence** – being clear what this means to the organisation and what it needs to do to achieve success.

Next steps

As part of this guide, the NYA has also produced guidance on the importance of workforce development within commissioning. It includes checklists for use in analysing skills and reflections on continuing professional development. It can be found at: www.nya.org.uk/commissioning-toolkits-for-local-authorities

The NYA has also produced two self assessment frameworks – one for single organisations, one for integrated services – which both be found in the Workforce section at: www.nya.org.uk

Commissioners concerned with ensuring a suitably skilled and qualified workforce will also find two further NYA documents useful. These are an Indicative Qualifications Map showing what kind of qualifications are appropriate for delivery jobs at five separate levels, and a Competence Framework extensively detailing what skills and competences are needed for staff at strategic, operational, support and assistance levels. Both these documents are also available in the Workforce section at: www.nya.org.uk

Guidance on developing a local market

A market is made up of all the providers and consumers of goods and young people's services. The term "providers" covers the public, private (for profit businesses), and voluntary and community sectors, including not-for-profit businesses and social enterprises. The term "consumers" includes purchasers and users of the services, including commissioners, children, young people and their families.

Experience shows that developing a robust market requires considerable time and effort. It will involve being creative about getting to know the market and the players within it, working out how to build the capacity of high quality, smaller providers, reviewing barriers to entry and taking action to remove, or at least lower them.

Next steps

As part of this guide the NYA has produced guidance on developing a local market that expands upon these points. It can be found at: www.nya.org.uk/commissioning-toolkits-for-local-authorities

Creating an outcomes based specification

A specification is the document which describes the commissioner's needs. It enables providers to propose an appropriately costed solution to meet those needs. Specifications should:

- provide background and context;
- set out the requirements;
- provide information on each party's responsibilities;
- reflect users' and other stakeholders' views;
- be clear, concise and consistent; and
- provide details of how quality and performance is to be evaluated, measured and assessed.

Specifications are not standalone documents. When they are sent to prospective providers they should be accompanied by documents

containing information about the legal aspects of the requirements, such as the organisation's general terms and conditions of contract.

Next steps

The NYA has developed a template and guidance for creating an outcomes based specification. It can be found at: www.nya.org.uk/commissioning-toolkits-for-local-authorities

Decommissioning

For the purposes of this guidance, decommissioning is: *"The process of discontinuing a service procured from an internal or external provider."*

A key difficulty, many commissioners will face, occurs when the commissioning process identifies a public (could be in-house), private or third sector provider who is not delivering value-for-money outcomes and which could be decommissioned and replaced by an alternative provider. If resources are to be continually redirected towards changing needs and priorities, decommissioning is an essential part of the commissioning process. Commissioners must reserve the right, and not shirk from using that right, to withdraw resources from a provider when the review process shows the provider is failing to deliver better outcomes, and is unlikely to improve in a reasonable timeframe, irrespective of who is delivering that service.

Decommissioning is also necessary when a thorough needs assessment shows that a particular service is no longer needed. Commissioners should decommission such services in order to reinvest resources where needs are greater.

Next steps

The NYA has developed guidance and a decommissioning checklist which is intended to help in reducing the risks. It can be found at: www.nya.org.uk/commissioning-toolkits-for-local-authorities

3.4 Review

Contained in this section:

- What does this stage involve?
- Managing performance
- Failing organisational performance
- Practical tips for the "Review" stage

What does this stage involve?

The review stage enables commissioners to:

- review whether or not the "do" stage of the commissioning cycle is delivered to the desired "plan"; and
- assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided or commissioned.

The review stage does not only focus on performance and results of commissioned services but also enables commissioners to consider their own actions – considering whether the strategic plans are addressing identified needs and monitoring whether all partners are acting in accordance with the commitments they made.

Good quality performance management information enables commissioners to ensure that outcomes are being met and to review and revise priorities, where needed. It enhances early identification of problems and provides evidence for changes required.

It is, therefore, essential to review the performance and quality of commissioned services to ensure they are meeting the needs of young people and achieving the outcomes set out in the specification. The review stage is critical in providing information to commission improved outcomes and feeds into the next phase of commissioning,

providing a key source of information for the "understand" stage and future planning.

Managing organisational performance

Managing the performance of an organisation is about ensuring that goals and outcomes are being met in an effective and efficient manner, providing evidence of what works and identifying where improvements are needed.

This should be done in partnership with providers and service users. It requires a two stage approach:

1. Performance measurement; and
2. Performance monitoring.

Performance measurement

Performance measurement is about defining objectives and measures (or indicators). These should be specified in a contract or service specification and include quality assurance arrangement, outlining methods for assessing the quality of services and who is responsible.

Good performance measurement should address the following:

- How much was done?
- How well was it done?
- Is anyone better off as a result?⁴

Note:

4. "Trying hard is not good enough: how to produce measurable improvements for customers and communities", Mark Friedman, 2005.

Performance monitoring

Performance monitoring is concerned with what happens after the objectives and indicators have been set to ensure delivery is on track to meet the requirements of the contract or service specification.

Commissioners should develop systems that monitor outputs, finances and crucially quality and service user experiences, in order to reach a view about whether outcomes are improving. This may involve data, user satisfaction surveys, contract monitoring, audit, inspections, annual reviews and reports.

Reviewing the impact of services on outcomes for young people involves using management information systems and data to assess how well the service is achieving its aims. For example, changes in the numbers of young people that are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) can be used to assess the impact of a service that aims to support young people into employment, education and training. It is important that the commissioning process identifies what data and management information is needed to identify impact, who is responsible for compiling and maintaining it and the frequency required.

Besides using data, there is a range of performance and quality assurance techniques and tools used by local authorities, commissioners and providers to ensure that services provided meet agreed standards for quality. These can vary from inexpensive in-house developed systems to more formal whole system approaches and include:

- audit and review systems;
- user feedback and exit questionnaires;
- mystery shopping;
- the use of balanced scorecards;
- Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA);
- Six Sigma; and
- European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model.

Additionally there are a number of existing and emerging quality standards and accreditation schemes relating to young people's services. These include:

- sector specific awards such as Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO), the NAVCA Quality Award for voluntary and community sector (VCS);
- standards/quality criteria for work with young people that do not lead to an award – for example: Quality Standards for Positive Activities; From Here to Entitlement: A self-assessment toolkit for 14-19 Partnerships; You're Welcome; Quality Standards for Youth Information, Advice, Counselling and Support Services; and Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance;
- standards/quality criteria for work with young people that do lead to an award – for example: Hear by Right Award (developed by the NYA); Clubmark (Sports England); Quality Mark (Clubs for Young People); Safe Systems and Sound Systems (NCVYS);
- the NYA Quality Mark for Young People's Services; and
- the NYA Quality Mark for Integrated Services for Young People Award.

For more information about the NYA Quality Marks visit the Quality section at:

www.nya.org.uk

Failing organisational performance

Performance information indicating that services are inefficient, ineffective or unsustainable will help inform commissioners' decisions to either support and challenge that service to improve, or decommission it and seek alternative provision to meet need.

The first stage in addressing failing performance

would usually be to work with providers to agree what action they will take to improve their performance. Commissioners should support providers to improve their performance through, for example, workforce development and training, providing expert advice and examples of good practice. It is important to agree timescales for improvement and be clear about the consequences of failing to make the agreed improvements.

Practical tips for the “Review” stage

- Ensure that standards and methods for assessing performance and quality are

detailed in the service specification/ contract.

- Monitoring can be resource intensive and so investment in monitoring should be proportional to what you hope to achieve and be based on risk.
- Collate information from all existing sources.
- Make use of providers’ quality assurance systems.
- Agree protocols for intervention with under performing providers.
- Set up systems to ensure that remedial action is taken when needed.
- Publicise performance against standards.

4. Further Help and Support

The remodelled NYA has built up an Associate Network of expert frontline practitioners, service managers and leaders to ensure the skills, knowledge and expertise to support practitioners and policy makers across the youth sector. The Associate Network provides access to a pool of staff, meaning that experienced teams in a range of delivery areas can be put together at short notice, delivering a uniquely tailored level of support and improvement and supplementing in-house expertise.

The National Youth Agency website contains a range of support materials and is a repository for case studies of good practice. It includes

helpful guides, provides information about forthcoming events and includes a community of practice to share ideas.

Other sources of help and support are available. As mentioned earlier in the document, the Commissioning Support Programme remains a source of online resources on commissioning (visit www.commissioningsupport.org.uk), and the Children's Improvement Board will in 2012 be implementing a range of support services such as fostering networks of commissioning champions and experts and creating a hub for key resources. See www.lga.gov.uk for updates on this work.

5. Glossary

Audit	An evaluation of an organisation, system, process, project or product.
Balanced Scorecard	A strategic planning and management system used to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organisation and monitor organisational performance against strategic goals.
Benchmarking	The process of comparing one's own business processes and performance to another (usually a best practice site).
Commissioning	The process for deciding how to use the resources available in order to improve young people's outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way.
Consumers	Purchasers and users of services.
Contestability	This is a situation where a provider faces a credible threat of competition.
CWDC	Children's Workforce Development Council.
Decommissioning	The process of discontinuing a service procured from an internal or external provider with no intention of re-commissioning that service.
DfE	Department for Education.
EFQM Excellence Model	A management framework to help organisations assess their strengths and gaps.
Governance	From the Latin 'to steer'. The framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives.
HR	Human resource.
Inputs	Things that are converted by a process into an output. These would probably include staffing, equipment, premises etc.

Market	The market is made up of all the providers and consumers of goods or and young people's services. The term 'providers' covers the public, private (for-profit businesses), and third (voluntary and community groups, not-for profit businesses and social enterprises) sectors. The term 'consumers' includes purchasers and users of the services, including commissioners, children, young people and their families.
Market analysis	This is the study of the attractiveness and the dynamics of a specific market within a special industry (eg. young people's services).
Mystery shopping	Using people to act as users of the service to assess the quality of the service they receive.
Needs analysis	The process for identifying and addressing needs, or 'gaps', between current outcomes and services and desired ones.
NYA	National Youth Agency.
OBA	Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) is a conceptual approach to planning services and assessing their performance that focuses attention on the results – or outcomes – that the services are intended to achieve.
Options appraisal	Reviewing options for delivering a service, identifying the strengths, weaknesses and risks associated with each option.
Outcomes	The desired end result, the effect that an organisation's activities has on a community or other target group. Examples of outcomes include young people being satisfied, feeling safer, being healthier, getting jobs etc.
Outputs	The amount of goods and services produced.
Performance indicators	Clearly defined measures demonstrating achievements. Usually numbers and percentages.
Performance management	Putting systems in place to ensure that goals and outcomes are being met in an effective and efficient manner.
PESTLE	A tool to analyse the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legislative and Environmental factors.

Procurement	The process of acquiring goods and services and managing these through to the end of a contract.
Risk analysis	A technique to identify and assess factors that may jeopardise the success of a project or achieving a goal.
Six Sigma	A business performance methodology that uses data and statistical analysis to improve performance.
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely.
SWOT	A tool to assess Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
Target	A commitment to achieve a specific and (usually) better quality or level of service over a specified time frame, or complete a one-off objective (such as have a new centre opened by a specific date).
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) law protects the employment Rights of employees when a business changes ownership.
Workforce development	An approach to enhancing business outcomes by focusing on the workforce (essentially a human resource strategy). It is the mechanism to equip staff with skills and knowledge so that they can effectively deliver and improve services to young people. Workforce development can include: training; qualifications; induction; work shadowing; supervision; appraisals; reading; and mentoring.

Notes

Notes



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk





A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People



Part 2: Commissioning Readiness Tool



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit: www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities.

We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Commissioning Readiness Tool

Introduction

Before embarking on any commissioning it is important to ensure that:

- there is a commitment to shared vision, values and principles;
- there are strong governance arrangements in place;
- there is a clear remit for the work; and
- key partners and stakeholders have been identified.

Governance

The Audit Commission defines governance as:

“The framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives.”

It is about ensuring:

- a shared vision;
- clear direction;
- resources;
- accountability; and
- delegation.

Typically strong governance for the commissioning of young people’s services might include:

- a clear mandate for planning to meet the local area’s priorities for young people;
- the agreement of relevant elected members, particularly the lead member for young people’s services. Without which efforts to commission or decommission services will not succeed;
- the work being overseen by a senior level joint commissioning board/group;

- a joint commissioning framework, agreed between key partners and stakeholders;
- senior managers having a clear understanding of the role of commissioning and providing support for the commissioning of young people’s services;
- clear line management arrangements for the work;
- identified resources that are available to support the work;
- a task and finish steering group to drive the work;
- clear lines of delegation and accountability for commissioners;
- a defined reporting process with timescales; and
- clear links with other related commissioning activities.

Service users

Commissioners should actively seek to involve service users, their families and communities at all stages of the commissioning cycle so that they become co-designers of services to meet their needs and co-producers of services designed to achieve better outcomes for young people.

Fundamental to this is the involvement of young people. NYA and the Local Government Association (in conjunction with local authorities and partner organisations) have developed “Hear by Right” to help guide those working in services for young people. “Hear by Right” is based on the established seven **S** model of organisational change:

Shared values
Strategies
Structures
Systems

Staff
Skills and knowledge
Style of leadership.

“Hear by Right” offers a tried and tested standards framework for organisations to assess and improve policy and practice on the participation of children and young people and includes an award scheme. For further details visit the Quality section of the NYA website: www.nya.org.uk

Commissioning principles

Good commissioning requires all those involved in commissioning young people’s services to share core values and principles. Key to this are:

- actively involving young people, their families and communities at all stages of commissioning;
- promoting equality of access and taking positive action to ensure the most vulnerable of young people are not disadvantaged in any way;
- ensuring that there are strong governance structures which provide clear direction, decision making, resources, accountability and delegation to support the commissioning process;
- ensuring that safeguarding young people is at the heart of all commissioned services;
- providing intervention and support at the earliest possible time for those young people that require it;
- adherence to local authority policies and government guidance;
- ensuring that all decisions are informed by evidence based practice;
- ensuring that the commissioning process is transparent and promotes contestability;
- taking account of value for money; and
- working in partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people.

Commissioning readiness

In order to begin the commissioning process, it is helpful to first assess your commissioning strengths and weaknesses in order to determine your organisation’s readiness for commissioning. In order to help you with this, the self-assessment tool on the following pages has been created.

How to use

This is a simple tool that can be completed with a group of managers and key stakeholders or by a single manager or commissioner.

It comprises 15 standards across eight domains:

- Governance
- Commissioning expertise
- User participation
- Needs analysis and market intelligence
- Policies, strategies and plans
- Market management
- Procurement and contracting
- Performance management.

The tool then gives a range of indicators that show progress on these standards, and allows you to rate your own progress as being in place, in development or not in place. The final columns allow you to record evidence for your judgments and further action that may be needed.

Commissioning Readiness Tool

Governance						
Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
There are clear governance arrangements and accountability for commissioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic managers, elected members and other strategic stakeholders understand and support the commissioning of services for young people. A joint commissioning framework is in place and agreed with key partners. There is a senior level joint commissioning board/group. Commissioning services for young people is part of an overall commissioning approach and links to other related commissioning areas. There is clear delegation and accountability for commissioners. Resources are available to support commissioning. Commissioning issues requiring decisions are regularly reported and resolved. 					

Commissioning Expertise						
Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
The local authority has the skills and capacity to effectively develop, implement and monitor commissioning strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a workforce development plan identifying commissioning skills and competencies. • Staff and managers are involved in commissioning young people's services. • Young people develop the skills to be meaningfully involved in the commissioning process. • There is a clear professional development path for commissioners. 					

User Participation						
Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
Young people, their families and local communities are actively involved in commissioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people, families and communities are regularly consulted and asked about their needs and how best to address them. User feedback is used to assess quality and inform service development. Young people, families and communities are involved in planning. Young people are involved in procuring services. User groups are clearly identified and consulted. Young people and families work in partnership with the organisation and take on delegated responsibilities. 					

Needs Analysis and Market Intelligence

Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
There are identified desired outcomes and agreed priorities for young people which are widely disseminated and understood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Children and Young People's Plan, or similar document, identifies the needs and priorities for young people. • There is a Youth Strategy which clearly identifies desired outcomes and priorities. • Staff, partners and other stakeholders understand the desired outcomes and priorities. 					
Information systems provide good data about outcomes and trends amongst current service users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is clarity about what data and management information is needed. • There are systems to collect and disseminate data and management information. • Commissioners and stakeholders use data and management information to identify future population trends and needs, and the implications of these for service provision. • Key performance indicators inform needs analysis. 					

Needs Analysis and Market Intelligence (continued)

Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User and staff feedback (soft data) informs analysis of need. Current services have been mapped and gaps identified. All data and information is used to inform service development. 					
There are clear resource allocations and forecasts that enable accurate and sustainable future financial planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of resources available for specific services is clearly defined and communicated. Relevant data on performance, quality, finance and outcomes for services, can be brought together in order to assess value for money. There is a clear budget allocation for the service. Future financial commitments and resources are clear. 					

Policies, Strategies and Plans						
Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
There is a clearly stated vision and strategy for commissioning and delivering young people's services with links to other local plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a Children and Young People's Plan, which identifies priorities for young people. • There is a Youth Strategy. • There is a plan for delivering young people's services with clear arrangements for measuring impact, quality and value for money. • There is a strategy for commissioning young people's services developed and agreed with partners and stakeholders. 					

Market Management						
Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
There is an up to date knowledge of all youth service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is regular monitoring of market changes e.g. new entrants, contract awards by other local authorities etc. 					
The organisation treats all providers equally (internal and external) and has established a reputation as an open and fair commissioner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common processes and procedures are used to assess in house and external providers delivering services for young people. Processes used to assess tenders are transparent and communicated to all stakeholders. 					
The organisation is able to influence the market to develop services in line with population needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are regular events for information sharing with providers. There is capacity building to develop the local market. There are good relationships between commissioners and providers (relationship management). 					

Market Management (continued)						
Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
There is clarity and a shared understanding of the type of market mix (public, voluntary and private providers) that would be most appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers and commissioners are clear about what is required. Options are appraised and recommendations are approved by elected members. The outcome of options appraisal is communicated to stakeholders. There is a plan in place to achieve the market balance required. 					

Procurement and Contracting						
Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
Contract management arrangements are clear and robust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clear procedures for managing contracts. • Specifications identify the responsibilities of commissioners and providers. • Contracting activities are informed by young people. • Contracting activities are informed by needs analysis. 					
Future procurement requirements for young people's services are known and understood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a procurement plan which is specific about the services to be purchased, which is driven by the commissioning strategy. • Contracts are increasingly focused on outcomes rather than on outputs. • Information from contract reviews or service evaluations inform the ongoing development of the commissioning strategy. 					

Performance Management						
Standard	Indicators	In place	In development	Not in place	Examples of evidence	Action required
There is regular monitoring and review of population needs and market activity and commissioning strategies are adjusted accordingly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract monitoring occurs at least quarterly. Commissioners, strategic managers and young people are jointly involved in contract management reviews. In-house and commissioned services are required to undertake regular audits. 					
Performance management information is regularly reviewed and analysed to inform needs analysis and continuous improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are systems for regular monitoring and analysis of key data and information is used to inform planning, continuous improvement and to assess impact and value for money. Performance management information is reviewed in management and team meetings. All managers, staff and partners understand the value of providing accurate management information and know how to use it to inform their work with young people. 					

Notes



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People



Part 3: Developing a Needs Analysis



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit: www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities.

We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Developing a Needs Analysis

Introduction

Needs analysis, (sometimes referred to as “needs assessment”) is the starting point for most commissioning. It is important that commissioners have as much information as possible about current and future needs, in order to inform their planning and make the best use of the resources available.

Needs analysis is the process for identifying and addressing needs, or “gaps”, between current outcomes and services and desired ones. Good needs analysis involves using data and other information to develop a clear picture of young people’s needs. It enables local authorities and their partners to identify priorities for action that will result in improved outcomes for the youth population in general or for specific groups of young people that experience poor outcomes, for example young people in local authority care and care leavers, young parents, those involved in the youth justice system and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Needs analysis is not just about collecting data and information – it is also about how that information is analysed in order to provide a clear picture of the issues that affect young people in the local area. Needs analysis can be undertaken on a small or large scale.

It is important to start with information that is readily available and to ensure that the needs analysis does not become an end in itself. It is very easy to continue obtaining more and more information, and so recognising when you have enough information to provide an accurate picture of needs in your area is key to the process. Questions that commissioners should constantly ask themselves are:

- Why are we collecting this information?
- Is the information relevant? If it is not then it should not be used.
- What is the information telling me?

Good needs analysis requires dedicated time and expertise to coordinate the information available. In order to help commissioners with this task, the NYA proposes the following advice:

- ensure that there is clear accountability and reporting for the work;
- communicate the aims of the needs assessment to service providers;
- identify key individuals to be involved in a steering group for the needs assessment project;
- decide who will carry out the needs assessment (e.g. officers, partner agencies or an external contractor). Consider whether additional assistance may be needed;
- define the target group as specifically as possible;
- make sure the needs of the target population are the focus of the needs assessment;
- gather existing sources of information about the needs of your young people. Consider what this information tells you;
- ensure that information is analysed and interpreted, and that conclusions are drawn;
- identify the outcomes required for the target group;
- identify areas where priority groups – such as young people in local authority care, care leavers, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, BME young people and young parents – experience poorer outcomes. Identify the services in your area that are already available

to meet the needs of your young people. Consider the range of needs currently being met by them. What is the capacity of those services? Are they accessible?;

- consider the ways in which you will obtain the views of young people, families and communities about needs;
- consider the ways in which you will obtain the views of service providers about the needs of the target population;
- think of ways to engage busy staff in your needs assessment and how to allay people's fears (e.g. of closure) or concerns (e.g. that no action will be taken as a result of the needs analysis);
- consider how those who gathered the information can be involved in the analysis, and how the results can be relayed back to all those who contributed to the process;
- once you have identified the needs of your target population, prioritise them;
- consider how the views of service users could be taken into account in the prioritisation;
- report findings through the commissioning governance structure; and
- consider how future monitoring and evaluation information will inform future needs analysis.

Case Study

The following case study illustrates how one county authority planned and carried out a needs assessment.

One in Ten: A needs assessment of young people aged thirteen to nineteen in Surrey, Surrey County Council Services for Young People, November 2010

Purpose

The purpose of the needs assessment is to identify the key issues for young people in Surrey, and to give an indication of which outcomes the authority need to assign resources to (commission) in order to make the biggest impact to support young people in making a successful transition to adulthood.

Methodology

In order to undertake a thorough and accurate needs assessment for young people in Surrey a project team and plan were established. A significant amount of the most up to date qualitative and quantitative secondary data was collated and analysed from Surrey County Council, the eleven Borough and District Councils, Surrey NHS, Surrey Police and the voluntary, faith and community sector to give a full picture of the needs of young people. A summary of results of consultation with young people was included along with elected member feedback and inspection results.

After identifying the vulnerable groups in Surrey, further research was undertaken to show population figures for these groups, inter-dependencies

between groups and the internal and external policies, legislation and guidance relating to them. A comprehensive search of all available information on the universal offer in Surrey was carried out and mapped using Geographical Information Service (GIS).

The data was analysed to recognise the key issues both in Surrey and for each of the eleven boroughs and districts.

Scope

The needs assessment focuses on young people aged 13-19 years old although the ends of this range are somewhat blurred to cover young people in the criminal justice system from 10 to 17 years and also includes services for young people with special educational needs up to 25 years.

The scope of the assessment and future commissioning is young people and the youth agenda. The youth agenda focuses on issues such as young people's personal development, rights empowerment, leisure and recreation, homelessness, offending behaviour and educational status (e.g. excluded or NEET). Teenage health (e.g. drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, emotional well being and mental health, teenage conception and teenage parents) is also in the scope of the assessment as are the needs of teenagers in care and teenagers with disabilities.

In summary the scope of the assessment is young people in Surrey aged 13 to 19-years-old and their needs as they relate to local and national youth policy objectives and statutory duties that aim to improve outcomes for young people.

For more information: www.surreyi.gov.uk



Needs Analysis Model

The NYA has developed a model to help authorities to plan and execute a needs analysis.

How to use

The model laid out over the following pages includes a table of key areas for which data will need to be collected, along with suggestions of tools and data sources that might be helpful and some questions that commissioners may need to reflect upon.

It also then includes a template which can be used for collating the work into a report.

The Needs Analysis Model

Area	What to include	Useful information/Tools	Questions for commissioners to ask themselves
Getting started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The desired outcomes for this group of young people. A clear remit for the work and how it will inform future planning. Governance arrangements with clear accountability, decision making and reporting. Check any existing needs analysis / assessment that might be relevant. Agree relevant legislation, guidance or research to be included in the needs analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Children and Young People's Plan (where applicable). Existing JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) – www.dh.gov.uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What mandate does the needs analysis have? Who has asked for this information? How will it be used? What are the remit, timescale and reporting arrangements? Is it to cover a specific target group or the youth population in general? What are the outcomes that we want for young people? Who are the key people with knowledge in this area? Is a steering group needed to oversee the work?
Population Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic data covering areas such as gender, age, ethnicity, location, deprivation etc. Levels of deprivation affecting children (IDACI scores) for specific geographical locations Specific data about young people e.g. numbers by school year group; educational attainment; level of exclusions; numbers with special educational needs; numbers who are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Census. ONS data. C4EO Interactive data (data views and area profiles) – www.c4eo.org.uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the data meaningful i.e. is it relevant and helpful? What does the data tell you about your target group of young people? Is there any additional data that can be sought in the timescale for completion of the needs analysis?

Area	What to include	Useful information/Tools	Questions for commissioners to ask themselves
Population data (continued)	<p>disabled or have learning difficulties; numbers with Child Protection plans; number of looked after children; numbers in the youth justice system; and NEET young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The disparity in outcomes for hard to reach young people, priority groups and those that are vulnerable or at risk of becoming vulnerable Benchmarking with similar local authorities. 		
Outcome data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected by the area or service in relation to young people's outcomes e.g. young people's sense of worth and wellbeing, numbers of young people in EET, educational attainment, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DfE Publications. e.g.: "Effective early interventions for youth at risk of future poor outcomes" – www.education.gov.uk Young Foundation outcomes based framework – www.youngfoundation.org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the outcomes the desired ones? Is further data or consultation required to get a more complete picture?
Service data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand data e.g. numbers accessing the service, waiting lists, numbers withdrawing from the service. User satisfaction surveys e.g. feedback forums, exit questionnaires etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C4EO cost and outcomes web-based template and guidance – www.c4eo.org.uk The Young Foundation DfE S52 return – www.education.gov.uk "Services for Young People: Value for Money Self Assessment Pack" – www.audit-commission.gov.uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is this data telling you about the current service? Is the activity in line with the contract specification? How does the activity data compare to the needs of young people? What additional data is needed?

Area	What to include	Useful information/Tools	Questions for commissioners to ask themselves
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing information provided through regular monitoring and evaluation systems such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular contract/service monitoring meetings/information. quality assurance systems. findings from audits service reviews. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there immediate concerns? What are the areas of strength? What are the areas of weakness? How might these be addressed?
User information and views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people, families and community views about the needs of young people and services required obtained through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultation events; user surveys; feedback/exit forms; user forums; mystery shopping; and young people's inspection and assessment of youth provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYA Hear by Right NYA Quality Mark – www.nya.org.uk Other useful information will be available from sources such as local youth councils and the UK Youth Parliament – www.ukyp.org.uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has there been comprehensive consultation? What do young people think are their needs? What do service users think works? What do they think doesn't work? How do service users rank the priorities?

Area	What to include	Useful information/Tools	Questions for commissioners to ask themselves
Other stakeholder information and views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key stakeholder views (including current provider and staff, other service commissioners, providers from relevant agencies, and others in the community including employers). Information can be obtained through mechanisms such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reports; evaluations; consultation events; questionnaires; and focus groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation Works – www.participationworks.org.uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do they think are young people's needs? What do service providers think works? What do they think doesn't work? What do they think should be the priorities?
Service mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping of service locations against the need in local areas. This enables a gap analysis to be undertaken. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there provision to effectively meet needs in different geographical locations? Could services be combined or share buildings/services?
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) PESTLE (a tool to provide greater understanding of the situation, looking at Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legislative and Environmental factors). Market analysis. Benchmarking the local authority's performance against other similar areas. Risk analysis. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does all of the information obtained give a clear picture or are there conflicting views, data etc – if so why? What is all of the information actually telling me? Are there clear priorities emerging?

Needs Analysis Report Template

Introduction

For example:

- a brief description of the local authority area:
 - background to the needs analysis – why it was undertaken and the approach taken; and
 - a statement of desired outcomes and current priorities (taken from the Children and Young People's Plan if applicable).

What do the statistics tell us about the needs of young people?

For example:

- demographic data;
- current outcomes and trend data;
- geographic data across the local authority area (e.g. deprivation, economic conditions, educational achievement – comparisons and differences in needs etc);
- educational attainment;
- experience of specific target groups of young people (e.g. looked-after children or young people with special educational needs or disabilities); and
- benchmarking data with other comparable local authorities.

Services for young people

For example:

- a map of current services;
- demand/activity data;
- what's working and what isn't – outcomes, quality, availability, accessibility; and
- gaps to be addressed.

Stakeholder views

For example:

- young people;
- parents and carers;
- communities;
- current providers; and
- other partners and stakeholders.

Implications/priorities

- priorities in the Community Plan and Children and Young People's Plan; and
- other priorities resulting from detailed needs assessment.

Future action or next steps

- action to address the needs.



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People



Part 4: Business Case and Options Appraisal



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit: www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities.

We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Business Case and Options Appraisal

Introduction

This document is designed to help local authorities examine the options they have when considering how their services for young people should be delivered.

It is in two parts. The first is a Business Case Template which offers a format for setting out proposals for the chosen way forward. It provides a structure for communicating information that will enable elected members and senior officers to make informed decisions about the best and most cost effective way of securing high quality services for young people.

The second part, starting on page 7, offers guidance on how to appraise a range of options from continuing with in house delivery to a variety of different commissioning arrangements.

Business Case Template

1. Introduction

This section should include a brief introduction to the business case. It should explain what it sets out to achieve and how it has been developed.

2. Executive summary

This section should be designed for those who may not have time to read the full document. It should therefore summarise all the vital information and key messages. It should also contain an overview of the business case and identify the recommended option for delivering services. It should highlight key points such as:

- the need for change that the business case addresses – for example, delivering high quality services for young people within reduced resources;
- the local context and the need to review;
- the scope of the proposal – the services that are included and those that are not;
- the recommended option for delivering the service;
- how the recommended option will contribute to the local authority's strategic objectives;
- how the recommended option impacts on young people as service users;
- the overall cost of implementing the proposals and potential savings for the local authority;
- non financial benefits – for example, securing more flexible and responsive services;
- key stakeholders/clients that will be affected; and

- key recommendations and a timescale for action.

Although the Executive Summary appears at the beginning of the document it is best to write it last in order to ensure that it highlights key points and is consistent with the rest of the document.

3. Background

This section should include information about the background and context in which the proposal has been developed. It should highlight key points such as:

- the rationale for the proposal – why the change may be needed and what problems the proposal will solve;
- information on internal factors (such as the need to cut costs) and external factors (such as the central government focus on increasing the use of commissioning for the delivery of public services);
- an outline of the recommended option;
- the benefits of the recommended option, how it will impact on young people as service users and how it will contribute to key strategic objectives and complement other areas of work – for example, its impact on the prevention agenda, improving access to education, employment and training, and delivering the youth offer;
- an outline of the current arrangements for delivering the service including factors such as cost, numbers of staff involved, premises, performance and work with partners and local communities;
- the key stakeholders and groups of young people likely to be affected if the proposal is accepted; and
- the amount of any potential savings and how the proposal will improve services or ensure that they are maintained at current levels.

4. Options Appraisal

This section should give an overview of the options that have been appraised. This should include, as a minimum, high level cost/benefit analysis of at least three options, addressing the need for any change and an identification of the preferred option. The second part of this document provides guidance on how to appraise a range of options (see page 7). One of the three options should be a 'do nothing' option which provides a point of reference against which the other two options can be compared. Once the appraisal process has been completed, findings can be put into the report structured along the lines of the following example:

Option 1

Do nothing – maintain the current arrangements for in-house service delivery, but implement cuts as necessary.

Benefits – no major change or upheaval to delivery arrangements.

Risks – cuts in funding mean losing staff and closing provision; the service will not be able to maintain current levels of performance; young people will lose out; there will be reduced levels of professional support for vulnerable young people.

Finance implications – the cost of implementing this option – for example, the costs of redundancies, voluntary severance and early retirement incurred as a result of the need to make savings.

Financial benefits and/or drawbacks – this option may deliver savings but is likely to result in reductions in the level of service.

Provide a budget overview for the option

Option 2

Commission the service from an external provider

Benefits – the local authority can develop a service specification and negotiate a contract for delivering services cost-effectively; expectations for quality and performance are clearly set out in the contract and the current level of service for young people can be maintained or increased.

Risks – commissioning services from external organisations could cause upheaval and disrupt services; staff will have to be transferred using TUPE arrangements; smaller local providers might not have the capacity to tender for large contracts; long standing partnership work might be jeopardised.

Finance implications – for example, the cost of developing a comprehensive service specification; on-going costs of contract management, including performance monitoring the tendering and the procurement processes and the costs of any capital transfers.

Financial benefits and/or drawbacks – this option will deliver savings and maintain levels of service; secure improved outcomes for young people within a reduced budget; a transfer of premises will result in savings on maintaining buildings and transferring staff may reduce pension liabilities.

Provide a budget overview for the option

Option 3

Phased outsourcing – moving services gradually from in-house delivery to delivery by an external provider

Benefits – the local authority can develop service specifications and negotiate small contracts that maintain or improve current levels of service delivery; more attractive and accessible to smaller local providers; allows time to develop a contestable market of local providers; providers might be able to access funding that the local authority cannot; has the potential to reduce staff and premises costs.

Risks – a phased approach to outsourcing may not generate the necessary savings within the required timescales; smaller providers might not be able to provide adequate supervision; could lead to complex arrangements for performance management and quality assurance; might not achieve the economies of scale of a single provider; staff will have to be transferred using TUPE arrangements and this could cause an extended period of upheaval and uncertainty.

Finance implications – the cost of implementing this option – for example, the cost of developing a number of small individual service specifications; the tendering and the procurement processes and the costs of any capital transfers.

Financial benefits and/or drawbacks – this option may deliver savings and maintain current or increase levels of service; improved outcomes for young people could be secured within a reduced budget; a transfer of premises will result in savings on maintaining buildings; and transferring staff will release the local authority from its pension liabilities.

Provide a budget overview for the option

5. Identify the recommended option

This section should identify the best option and describe why it has been chosen, describing the benefits of the option and how potential risks are to be minimised.

6. Project Plan

This section should outline how the recommended option is to be implemented. It should include:

- an action plan with associated timescales and deadlines;
- a summary of financial details to demonstrate the feasibility of the proposal (fuller financial details that deal with staffing costs, premises costs, operating costs and transferring assets should be provided as appendices);
- arrangements for consultation – including how young people will be consulted; and
- recommendations for the next steps needed to implement the proposal.

Business Case Checklist

This checklist provides questions that help to ensure the business case is clearly communicated:

- Is any need for the change clearly identified and communicated?
- Is the contribution to corporate priorities clearly identified?
- Is it clear what the preferred option is?
- Is it clear why this is the preferred option?
- Are the benefits clearly identified? Particularly those for young people?
- Are the risks explicitly stated and addressed? Particularly those for young people?
- Is there sufficient financial information to support the proposal?
- Is there sufficient information to enable key stakeholders to make a fully informed decision?
- Is the project plan SMART?

Options Appraisal


Completing a thorough appraisal of the different options facing a local authority is obviously a key part of preparing a business case. Over the following pages you will find guidance that takes you through the process of appraising the following options:

- in house;
- phased outsourcing;
- big bang outsourcing;
- mixed delivery;
- multi-authority shared services;
- youth trust; and
- employee spin-out.

For each option you are offered:

- a brief description;
- how the basic model can be varied;
- a list of the potential benefits;
- a list of the potential drawbacks;
- analysis of who each option is suitable for;
- an indication of the timescale; and
- an indication of the cost implications.

Youth Services Delivery Model:	POTENTIAL BENEFITS	POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS	Suitable for you if ...
IN HOUSE			
Description			
<p>Provision of all youth services through staff directly employed by the local authority.</p> <p>Most in-house services outsource small elements of the service either through a grant programme or through a service level agreement/contract.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Control of delivery and reputation● Close relationship with users● Delivery remains consistent● No disruption to users● No tendering costs/resources● Local authority better able to deliver integrated services through strategic links with youth partners e.g. health● No VAT or TUPE costs● Ability to make links to other council provided services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● No incentive to change, diversify or innovate● May not be aware of latest developments in outcome delivery● There may be someone better suited and able to provide the best service● May not know if they are offering best value for money i.e. the best balance of costs and outcomes● Pension liabilities● More liable to salami slicing of budgets● Limits market development and competition● Unable to use other income streams● No economies of scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You have tested the market thoroughly and found that external providers cannot offer better value for money. This requires full understanding of all in-house costs and outcomes achieved✓ You have undertaken a detailed needs analysis
Variations on basic model			
N/A			
Comments			
<p>Most local authority youth services are delivered through this model.</p>			




Time from cabinet signoff to operational

N/A

6–12 months

3–6 months

18 months+



Set Up Costs


N/A

MED

LOW

HIGH


Youth Services Delivery Model:	POTENTIAL BENEFITS	POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS	Suitable for you if ...
PHASED OUTSOURCING			
Description			
Moving all, or the majority of, services gradually from in-house delivery to delivery by an external provider which may be not-for-profit or private sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved outcomes on a reduced budgetAble to learn lessons to apply to each phaseMore attractive to smaller providersSeparates management from deliveryManageable approach to outsourcingAllows time to capacity build a provider marketCan lead to a contestable marketReleases local authority resources for more strategic roleCan test projected benefitsProviders may mobilise businesses and communityReduced pension liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Takes time to capacity build suppliersToo slow for those local authorities needing saving quicklyLoss of momentumDisruption to service users during transition to new providerMay miss economies of scaleLess control over delivery and reputation than purely in-houseLoss of key champions and staffVAT, TUPE, profits/surplus paymentsNeed for quality procurement/commissioning staffReduced links with strategic partners e.g. health and effect on integrated youth services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You do not need to make major changes quickly✓ You want to build a local market✓ You want to test the market✓ You want a controlled approach to outsourcing✓ You want to move from direct delivery to a service enabler✓ You have undertaken a detailed needs analysis✓ You have high quality procurement/commissioning staff
Variations on basic model			
Outsourcing may be by individual services, by service package, or by geographical package, e.g. by ward or district.			
Can support a mixed delivery model where the local authority is part enabler, part service delivery agent.			
Comments			
A number of local authorities are currently considering this model.			



Time from cabinet signoff to operational

N/A

6–18 months



Set Up Costs

N/A

MED


3–6 months

18 months+

LOW

HIGH


Youth Services Delivery Model:	POTENTIAL BENEFITS	POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS	Suitable for you if ...
BIG BANG OUTSOURCING			
Description			
<p>Outsourcing all, or the vast majority of, youth services to one or more external providers in one major exercise. Providers may be not-for-profit or private sector.</p> <p>Involves the decommissioning of in-house services although a core of contract/performance management staff may be retained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved outcomes on a reduced budgetA 'blank sheet of paper' opportunityOpportunity to rethink outcomes and agree with providersHelps develop a contestable market in the med/long termCan empower local providers by involving them in decision makingProvides projected benefits quicklyBudget is likely to be retainedReduced pension liabilityOpportunity to keep services integrated under one provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires market readinessStaff and public resistanceDisruption to young people/ service usersLess control over delivery and reputation than in-house deliveryMay rule out smaller providersNeed for quality procurement/ commissioning staffIntensive level of staff resources requiredVAT, TUPE, profits/surplus paymentsLessons learned 'on the hoof'Difficult to change approach once contract is signedReduced links with strategic partners e.g. health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You want to make major changes relatively quickly✓ You have strong senior officer and elected member support✓ You have a contestable, quality market✓ You want to move from direct delivery to a service enabler✓ You have undertaken a detailed needs analysis✓ You have high quality procurement/commissioning staff
Variations on basic model			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Appoint a provider or providers who deliver services (through sub-contracts if they wish)Appoint a provider or providers who are required to subcontract, and manage, delivery of servicesAppoint a consortium of providers.			
Comments			



Time from cabinet signoff to operational

N/A

6–18 months



Set Up Costs

N/A

MED


3–6 months

18 months+

LOW

HIGH


Youth Services Delivery Model:	POTENTIAL BENEFITS	POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS	Suitable for you if ...
MIXED DELIVERY			
Description			
<p>The local authority retains a significant level of service delivery in-house and outsources the rest to external not-for-profit or private sector organisations. The percentage of services outsourced remains largely static.</p> <p>This could be introduced using a phased or big bang approach.</p> <p>Requires decommissioning of in-house services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved outcomes on a reduced budgetHelps develop a contestable marketCan empower local providers by involving them in decision makingReduced pension liabilityMay encourage smaller providersEducates the local authority on relative benefits/drawbacks of in-house and external provisionAbility to match best provider for each element of service, thus playing to strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires market readinessStaff and public resistanceDisruption to young people/ service usersReduced control over delivery and reputationNeed for quality procurement/ commissioning staffVAT, TUPE, profits/surplus paymentsDifficult to change approach once contract is signedLoss of economies of scaleReduced links with strategic partners eg. health and effect on integrated youth services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You want to make significant changes relatively quickly✓ You have strong senior officer and elected member support✓ You have a mixed economy of providers from which to commission✓ You want to move from direct delivery to a service enabler but retain some core services✓ You have undertaken a detailed needs analysis✓ You have high quality procurement/commissioning staff
Variations on basic model			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The mixed provision could be coordinated by a second tier organisation.Appoint a consortium of providers.			
Comments			



Time from cabinet signoff to operational

N/A

6–18 months



Set Up Costs

N/A

MED


3–6 months

18 months+

LOW

HIGH

Youth Services Delivery Model:	POTENTIAL BENEFITS	POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS	Suitable for you if ...
MULTI-AUTHORITY SHARED SERVICES			
Description			
Two or more local authorities bring their in-house delivery of young people’s services together to deliver their identified needs and/or jointly commission services from external not-for-profit or private sector organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved outcomes on a reduced budgetSavings from back office rationalisationCan take the best of each local authority’s services or jointly commission new servicesEconomies of scaleOpportunity to rethink outcomes and agree with providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Requires cross local authority political supportStaff and public resistanceNeed for quality procurement/ commissioning staffRedundancy costsRisk of cross-boundary arrangements breaking down following change in political control in one or other authorityAgreeing governance arrangements that suit all local authoritiesAgreeing outcomes that suit all local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You have strong senior officer and elected member support✓ You have undertaken a detailed needs analysis✓ You have high quality procurement/commissioning staff✓ You have strong existing links with neighbouring authorities
Variations on basic model			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The local authorities pool budgets.A lead authority is identified to commission each type of service.			
Comments			




Time from cabinet signoff to operational

N/A

6–18 months

3–6 months

18 months+



Set Up Costs


N/A

MED

LOW

HIGH

Youth Services Delivery Model:	POTENTIAL BENEFITS	POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS	Suitable for you if ...
YOUTH TRUST			
Description			
Creation of a charitable trust, limited by guarantee and independent of the local authority for the delivery of services to young people within an agreed geographical remit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved outcomes on a reduced budgetA 'blank sheet of paper' opportunityCould operate as a second tier support organisationHelps develop a contestable market in the medium/long termFunding streams not available to a local authority are opened upYoung people can be directors of the TrustLocal business can be better engaged either through sponsorship or in director or advisory roles.Reduced pension liabilityOpportunity to keep services integrated under one local provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up can be challengingStaff and public resistanceLess control over deliveryDisruption to young people/ service usersAlready established local providers may lose contractsNeed for quality procurement/ commissioning staffGood legal advice requiredVAT, TUPE, profits/surplus paymentsDifficult to change approach once contract is signedThe contract award needs to meet UK and European competition regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ You have strong senior officer and elected member support✓ You have undertaken a detailed needs analysis✓ You want to locate services for young people in an organisation established for that sole purpose✓ You want young people and community leaders to have ownership of organisational direction and outcomes
Variations on basic model			
Comments			
Medway Youth Trust was created in 2008 to take on delivery of the Connexions contract. They have improved outcomes, and reduced costs and have expanded their service delivery remit.			




Time from cabinet signoff to operational

N/A

6-18 months

3-6 months

18 months+



Set Up Costs



N/A

MED

LOW

HIGH

Youth Services Delivery Model:	POTENTIAL BENEFITS	POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS	Suitable for you if ...
EMPLOYEE SPIN-OUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and knowledge of local workforce are retained • Staff empowered to take the initiative and innovate • Improved performance through greater staff attention to outcomes, productivity and cost control • Savings through more commercial arrangement • May attract a range of funding streams not available to the local authority • Could support integration across a number of local authorities • Opportunity to rethink outcomes • Helps develop a contestable market when tendered out • Reduced pension liability • Little or no disruption to users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost and time to set up • Services and costs not tested against the market • Requires 'excellent' in-house team to attract clients • Requires staff buy-in • Need for quality legal/procurement/commissioning staff • Intensive level of staff resources required • VAT, TUPE, profits/surplus payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ You do not need to make the changes urgently ✓ You already have an excellent in-house service ✓ You are willing to invest in the set up process ✓ Your local provider market is weak ✓ Your in-house team wants to adopt the model ✓ You have strong senior officer and elected member support ✓ You have undertaken a detailed needs analysis ✓ You have high quality legal, procurement and commissioning staff
Description			
<p>Staff from the in-house youth services team choose to divest themselves completely of local authority terms and conditions of employment (including pensions) to form a social enterprise. They develop a business case for continuing the delivery of services to the local authority which may appoint them to provide the services (or redefined services) for an agreed period.</p>			
Variations on basic model			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social enterprise can take many legal forms e.g. co-operative, LLP, charity, community interest company. • May be run as a joint venture with a partner organisation. 			
Comments			
<p>This model may take three years or more to implement fully.</p>			

 Time from cabinet signoff to operational		 Set Up Costs	
N/A	3–6 months	N/A	LOW
6–18 months	18 months+	MED	HIGH



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information, visit www.nya.org.uk



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

Part 5: Producing an Outcomes Based Specification



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit:

www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities. We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Producing an Outcomes Based Specification

Introduction

Assessing, recording and measuring the personal and social development of young people is complex. Nevertheless the need to capture and provide evidence of the difference made to young people's lives by service interventions is set to remain a central plank in social policy and funding decisions at local and national levels.

Work is underway on a variety of fronts to consider effective practice in measuring outcomes for young people and the impact of interventions on their longer-term life chances. The Young Foundation as part of its work with Catalyst Consortium¹; the Department for Education's strategic partner for young people is developing an outcomes framework for the youth sector. It is increasingly important for services to seek clarity about the outcomes of funded work and to commission provision on that basis. What follows is a description of key components of an outcome based specification that draws on work from across the country; this is a first stage document and will be revised in coming months/years to reflect developing practice in this field.

What is a specification?

The specification is the document that sets out the needs of the commissioner and invites providers to present costed solutions to these needs.

The specification should:

- provide background and context information – who you are, what has brought you to this point, the current position and any anticipated changes;
- reflect young people's and other stakeholders views;
- detail the requirements – the impact, outcomes and outputs to be achieved;
- identify responsibilities – of commissioner and provider; and
- clarify how measurement of performance and quality will be carried out.

Specifications are not standalone documents. They should be accompanied by documents that contain information about the legal requirements, such as the organisation's general terms and conditions of contract as well as any statutory duties that the council will be seeking to discharge as a result of the specification of the contract.

What should be in it?

In preparing an outcomes based specification it is helpful to consider:

- What is it that you want to change or impact upon for young people?
- What assessment of need has brought you to this point?
- Who are the target groups and what is the geographical area?

Note:

1. <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/Catalyst.html>

- Research evidence – is there any relevant research that impacts on the type of service you want to commission?
- What are the relevant legal requirements that underpin the requirements (e.g. safeguarding, health and safety, IAG Standards, 507B Education & Inspection Act)?

Many traditional contracts have been developed around the outputs (activities and processes) that should be delivered, such as the number of young people taking part or number and types of sessions delivered. While this can provide clarity about the types of activity required it does not encourage sufficient attention to the outcomes of activity. In working with young people, it is important to know “the difference” work has made and how this contributes to the intended improvement of outcomes for young people.

In creating an outcomes based specification it is important to:

- ensure the needs and wants of young people are met;
- detail the outcomes and outputs you want to achieve;
- avoid defining how to achieve these; and
- encourage innovation.

Impact, outcomes and outputs – understanding the language

Terminology around outcomes is used inconsistently and can be confusing; here we refer to outcomes as “the intended impact or consequence of a service on the lives of individuals or communities”². Measuring outcomes is a developing area of work in services for young people. Outcomes may be described in a variety of “sizes” and are often interlinked – some are long-term goals for all young people such as reducing Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or teenage pregnancy rates, some are much more immediate such as improving a C.V. or learning a new skill, while others can be encouraged to grow like self confidence and organisational skills.

The ultimate achievement for a young person may extend beyond the contracting period but services and organisations can make significant contributions to these goals during a commissioning cycle. Therefore an effective specification will encourage the use of shorter term or interim outcome measures, described in more detail below as “capability clusters” and interim outcomes,³ in working towards the achievement of longer term outcomes for young people.

It is important for commissioners to be clear about their use of terms; in this document our definitions are drawn from the work of Hogarth and Comfort⁴:

- **Inputs** are the resources that go in to make the programme work, such as money, time, workers, vehicles or facilities.
- **Activities** are what we do to achieve the changes or results. For example, running open access youth club sessions, offering educational programmes to young offenders, providing summer youth activities, producing health education leaflets etc.
- **Outputs** are the direct products of programme activities and are almost always numerical; for example, the number of leaflets distributed, how many sex education sessions were offered, how many young people attended, how many young people achieved accreditation for their work, etc.
- **Outcomes** are the answer to the “so what?” question: “So what difference does it all make?”⁵ A well-balanced specification will consider outcomes across the range of “sizes” and include those specific to the young person (capabilities), interim outcomes and longer-term outcomes.
- **Impact** is the “effect of a project/programme at a higher or broader level in the longer term, after a range of outcomes has been achieved.” (Cupitt and Ellis, 2007)⁶

Notes:

2. Trying hard is not good enough: how to produce measureable improvements for customers and communities, Mark Friedman, 2005.
3. Adapted from the consultation stage paper by Catalyst ‘A Framework of Outcomes for Young People’.
4. A practical guide to outcomes evaluation, Liz Hogarth and Hilary Comfort, 2010.
4. A practical guide to outcomes evaluation, Liz Hogarth and Hilary Comfort, 2010.
6. Your projects and its Outcomes. London, Cupitt, S. and Ellis, J., 2007.

The terms “outcome” and “impact” are sometimes used interchangeably when talking about the results a programme may have. Our interpretation uses “impact” as something that occurs longer term; what really matters is that all parties are clear about the definitions and how they are used in the specification.

Interim outcomes

For some young people, and particularly for members of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, progress towards outcomes that research has shown to be indicators of positive future life chances may be slower than that of their peer groups. Because of the challenges these young people face, services focus work on areas where progress has been proved to have significant benefit over time. Such work can support these young people into more positive outcomes such as gaining a job, undertaking further training, not being a teenage parent, staying outside of the criminal justice system and many more. These could be described as interim outcomes depending on the context/setting in which the service is working. These are often indicators that can be measured and validated externally. Such interim indicators may include:

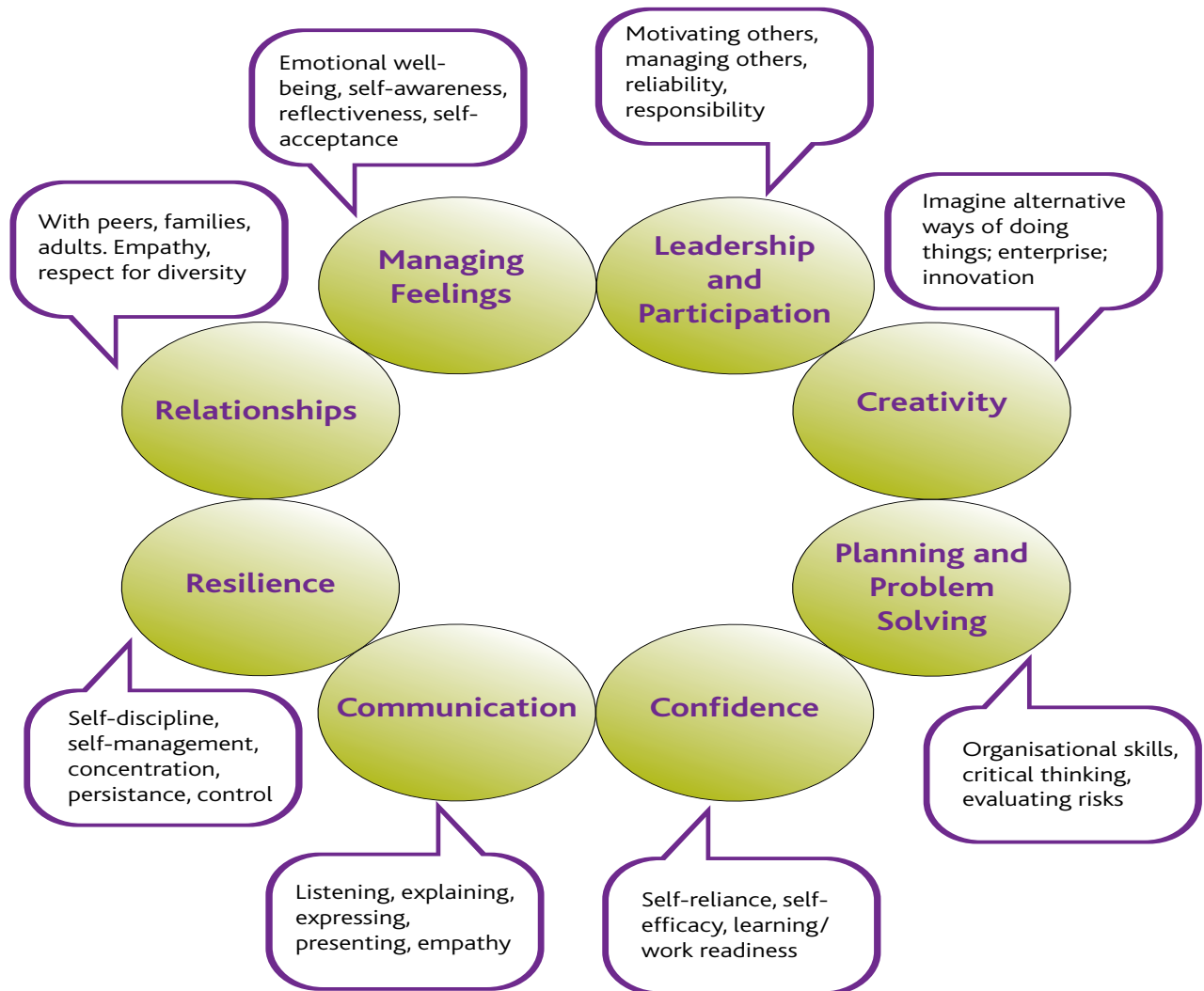
- improvements in literacy and numeracy;
- gaining a level 1 or 2 qualification/attainment; and
- reduction in offending behaviour.

However, this explanation falls short of being able to describe the breadth of work that takes place with young people across services. In fact, it may not adequately reflect the work that for many is central to their provision and the main focus of their work, that is, a concentration on supporting young people to develop personal, social and emotional skills and abilities.

Capability clusters

We have already established that demonstrating the direct impact of the work on longer term outcomes is not straightforward; it can be difficult to evidence the direct link between the activities, process or programme that young people have participated in to the desired outcome for that individual or group. Work is currently under way to identify the immediate outcomes for young people, presented as capability clusters (see below), and demonstrate specific changes in programme participants’ behaviour, knowledge, skills, status and level of functioning which contribute to long term positive outcomes.

The clusters focus on the social and emotional skills and capabilities that evidence has shown are important for young people to make a successful transition to adulthood. It may be useful to consider these specific gains for young people, in the clusters outlined, when considering the development of an outcomes based specification.



Impact – longer term outcomes

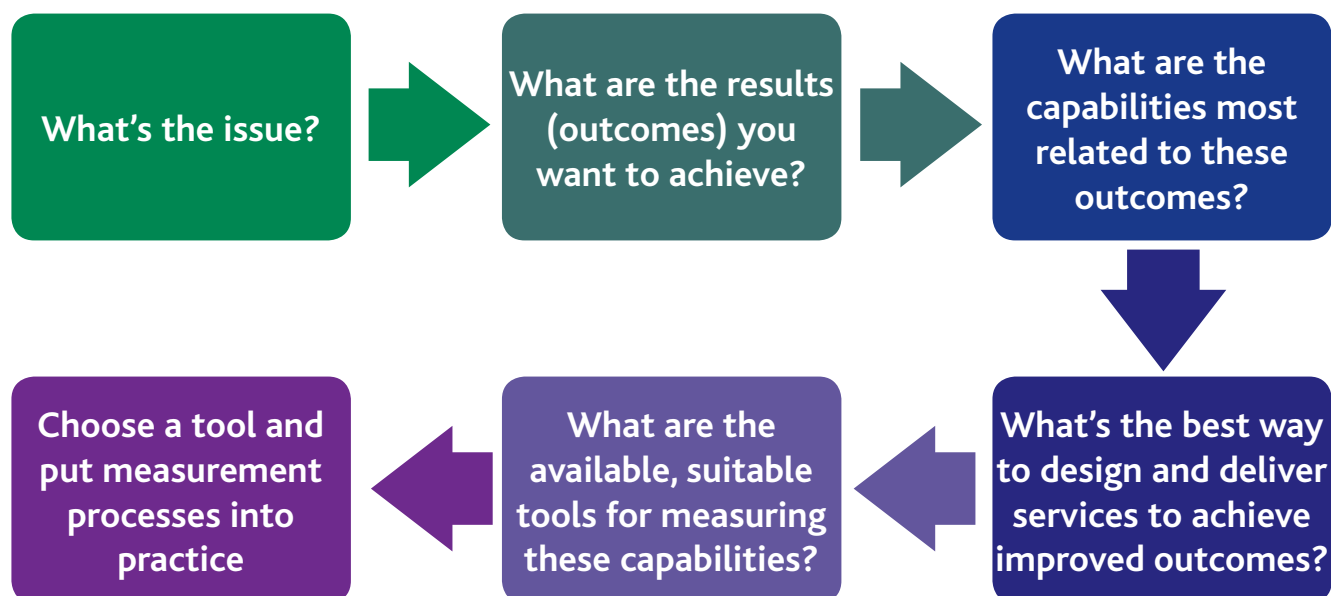
Longer term outcomes for young people can be expressed as the impact that you are trying to achieve, which may be several years beyond the period that you will be working with the young people. These might typically include outcomes such as:

- career success;
- achieving in education;
- being healthy;
- having positive relationships; and
- stable accommodation.

Measurement of outcomes

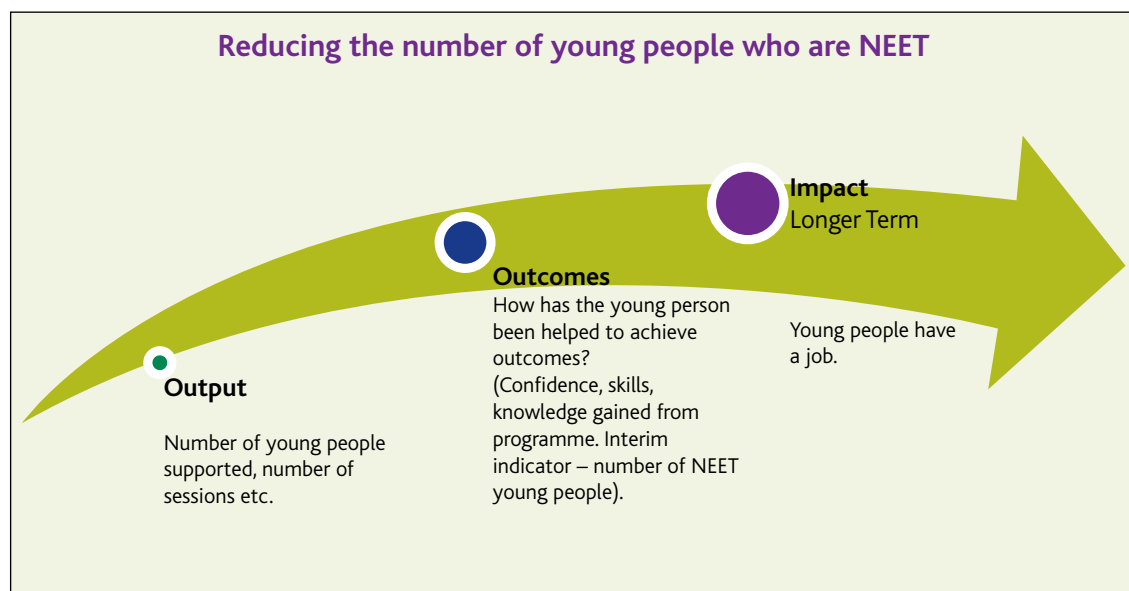
It has always been good youth work practice to focus on the outcomes to be achieved and to select the most appropriate methods and settings to deliver programmes to address that outcome. Effective commissioning will encourage providers to determine their own methods and approaches, encouraging and enabling them to bring creative solutions to sometimes seemingly intractable problems.

Developing effective tools to measure outcomes for young people is an area that the Government has signalled requires greater attention. A 2011 report from the Education Select Committee concluded: "The lack of a common measurement framework across the sector makes it extremely difficult for authorities to decide which services to fund." When considering the measurement and improvement of outcomes, it is unlikely that one system or framework can supply all the information required. The diagram below suggests a process to be followed to ensure that the design of services and programmes maintains a focus on outcomes and includes consideration of how to measure that impact from the outset.



The "capabilities" referred to in the model above, are a way of focusing on the particular skills, knowledge or experience that the young person will gain from any intervention. Within the logic model this will be supplemented by interim outcomes that can be demonstrated to link to the longer-term outcome required.

For example:



The types of tools that can be used to measure these capabilities as part of the young person's outcomes might include:

- questionnaires – strengths and difficulties questionnaires, before and after questionnaires, New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) Well-being Measure;
- established assessment processes – e.g. Common Assessment Framework (CAF), Asset, Connexions Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review (APIR) framework; and
- accredited awards – e.g. Youth Achievement Awards, Duke of Edinburgh's Awards.

In preparing a specification it is important to be clear about how you will expect providers to demonstrate the results of their activity, both in terms of the outputs and the short and longer term outcomes.

- Do you have a database or recording system that you would expect an external provider to access and report outputs?
- Do you have recommended assessment or outcome evaluation tools or do you want them to devise their own?
- What is the period for reporting – weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual? and
- How do you expect the provider to ensure quality?

Commissioners must consider:

- Are we using the right tools to demonstrate short and long term outcomes?
- Are we collecting data at the right time? and
- Is the data accurate, reliable and useful?

Developing an outcomes based specification

You might want to consider using a logic model⁶, a tool widely used in effective commissioning. This approach sets out how an intervention (such as a project, a programme, or a policy) can produce particular outcomes, based on a theory of change, usually incorporating five key elements illustrated in the diagram below:



The table below puts into words what would typically be included under each heading:

Inputs	Activity or process	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
The costs, staff, materials and equipment you will need.	The types and range of activity you will deliver to achieve outcomes.	The amount of activity that will take place. The number of young people participating.	The difference your intervention/ service/project will make to the young person.	The long-term results you want to see for individuals or groups of young people

Note:

6. W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Logic Model Development Guide January 2004.

This model can be then used to create an outcome based specification grid which shows who is responsible for what, and how outcomes will be delivered. It can be used flexibly in negotiation with potential providers.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Indicators or evidence (measure-ment tools)	Targets
Provider completes	Provider completes	Provider completes	Commissioner completes (provider supplements where appropriate)	Evidence that outcomes are being achieved Commissioner completes (provider supplements where appropriate)	To be agreed and inserted after negotiation of contract

Notes



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk





A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

Part 6: Workforce Development Guidance



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit:

www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities. We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Workforce Development Guidance

Introduction

Commissioners should seek to secure providers which have a workforce that demonstrates the skills and competencies to deliver the required outcomes.

Whether a service is to remain in house or be outsourced, the commissioner should seek evidence that the workforce – including the many volunteers that support work with young people – have the right skills and that systems are in place to manage performance and continuously develop staff. A skills analysis, undertaken by a single or multiple providers could be a good tool when developing strategies to strengthen the local market.

On occasions, when the local market is made up of a number of small providers from the voluntary and community sector, or where there is a specific strategy to build local capacity, the authority as the commissioner may wish to assume responsibility for workforce development across the local provider base.

Workforce development is especially important at a time when staff will need to show greater flexibility. This may be an inevitable requirement as resources become increasingly tight, but is also going to be a necessity as a range of services for young people become less subject to top-down performance management.

This guide identifies key elements of workforce development and provides a checklist useful to both providers and commissioners of youth services.

Workforce development

Workforce development is a key element of commissioning which needs to be addressed throughout the commissioning cycle. It is a continuous and dynamic process that influences every aspect of service potential and success. It is, therefore, a key consideration whether: undertaking a needs analysis or an options appraisal; creating clear and specific outcomes based specifications; decommissioning; or reviewing and managing performance.

Effective workforce development ensures that services have the right people in the right place with the right skills to achieve identified objectives and deliver their vision. It is about:



Skills Analysis

Commissioners should encourage potential providers to undertake a robust skills analysis.

A skills analysis process is a series of activities that can help determine the current state of the workforce, identifying strengths, gaps, and training and development needs as they relate both to individual and organisational performance.

When properly done, a skills analysis is a wise investment saving time, money and effort by focusing on addressing the right problems. A well-executed skills analysis provides the information that can lead to solutions that focus on the areas of greatest need. It supports:

- effective recruitment by clearly identifying what specific and combined skills are missing from the existing workforce;
- effective retention by providing recognition for current skill and capability as well as supporting continued professional development; and
- planning ahead to build a workforce equipped to deal with the challenges of tomorrow.

Workforce performance management

Commissioners should expect that providers have in place robust performance management processes.

Management of performance has two elements:

- a) the management of the performance of the organisation toward meeting its required goals and outcomes; and
- b) the management of individuals and their contribution to the performance of the organisation.

Continuous Professional Development

Commissioners should evidence that resources and processes for Continuous Professional Development are robust. This should also be a requirement in any tender specification. Skills development of part-time workers, volunteers and activists should also be given consideration.

An effective organisation assesses and evaluates individual development needs on a regular basis. Development in this context means both increasing the capacity of an individual to perform in their current role as well as up-skilling them toward improving their capacity to meet their own career aspirations and the future needs of the organisation. Continuous Professional Development is best achieved where there are clear learning goals and measurable outcomes.

NYA Workforce Self Assessment Frameworks

The NYA has developed two frameworks as a resource to support workforce development – one specifically for a single organisation and one supporting workforce development across an integrated service. This tool can be used to help potential providers assess and demonstrate their workforce capability.

Both frameworks look at workforce development under three key themes: Strategy, Practice and Results, providing a series of indicators against which an organisation can demonstrate their strengths or define and plan for development. Their main purpose is to provide a structure for organisations and services to:

- Make judgement about current performance in relation to workforce development;
- Set out the main sources of evidence on which judgements are based; and
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement; and formulate action plans the support continuing improvements and raise the quality of their approach to workforce development.

On page 7 there is an example of the key themes and supporting indicators, in the framework supporting single organisations. Commissioners can use the indicators to help develop the local market, set specifications and assess providers bidding to deliver services.

A full copy of both assessment frameworks can be found in the Workforce section at:
www.nya.org.uk

Workforce Self Assessment Grid

1. STRATEGY	2. PRACTICE	3. RESULTS
There is workforce development strategy	There is investment in workforce development and this investment is visible in practice	The workforce is fit for the purpose of working effectively with young people directly or indirectly
1.1 There are recognised methods for workforce analysis and planning across the whole workforce including part-time workers, volunteers and young people.	2.1 There are relevant and clearly defined aims and objectives for learning and development across the whole organisation.	3.1 Quantitative and qualitative analysis of workforce development activity provides evidence of positive impact on practice and delivery of provision and services for young people.
1.2 There is an implementation plan, including lines of accountability and arrangements for quality assurance and evaluation.	2.2 There is a clear and explicit definition of what development activities are available to staff across the whole organisation.	3.2 Records of workforce development activity demonstrate diverse and equitable take up by staff across the whole organisation.
1.3 There are policies for equal opportunities, diversity and inclusiveness in workforce development.	2.3 There are established processes for managing performance.	3.3 Performance management records demonstrate improved performance linked to workforce development across the whole organisation.
1.4 There are clear methodologies for staff recruitment and retention across the whole organisation.	2.4 Regular assessments are made of the impact of workforce development on the practice and delivery of provision and organisations for young people.	3.4 Assessment of workforce development activities demonstrates robust evaluation of the suitability and applicability of policies and practices across the whole of the organisation.
1.5 There are secured and sufficient financial and human resources to implement the workforce development strategy across the whole organisation.	2.5 There is clear accountability for managing the workforce development strategy within the organisation structures.	3.5 Workforce development policies and plans are continually developed in the light of feedback and other contextual, political and environmental influences to best meet the needs of the whole organisation.



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk





A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

Part 7: Developing a Local Market



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit:

www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities. We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Developing a Local Market

Introduction

A market is made up of all the providers and consumers of young people's services. The term "providers" covers the public, private (for-profit businesses), and voluntary and community sectors, including not-for profit businesses and social enterprises. The term "consumers" includes purchasers and users of the services, including commissioners, children, young people and their families.

Local authorities should consider developing the local market as part of their overall approach to commissioning services for young people. Market disciplines and a strategic approach to market development can improve the options, outcomes and value for money of young people's services. Market-based approaches can have some advantages over other models because competition can encourage organisations to:

- better tailor their services to the needs of the consumer of those services;
- provide services which ensure a more efficient use of resources and better value for money;
- deliver a higher quality of service, allow greater flexibility and innovate more than they otherwise would;
- provide a range of tailored services instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, which offers consumers a greater choice; and
- develop opportunities for local collaboration, therefore maximising the potential within a particular locality.

Context

Historically, the majority of local authority youth service provision has been provided in house. However, an increasing number of local authority youth services are establishing service level agreements and commissioning part or all of their service from local providers. In particular, services that target specific groups of young people such as young carers, BME young people and those with learning difficulties or who are disabled, are often commissioned or provided through service level agreements with voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.

Given the current challenging financial situation, many local authorities have been considering a variety of different options for the delivery of their services for young people (for more detail see part 4 of this guide "Business Case and Options Appraisal"). In line with the national policy context for the delivery of public services, many local authorities are starting to extend their commissioning of young people's services. In doing so they are looking to a wide range of local and national providers to take on delivery.

National perspectives

The findings from a review of markets for youth services¹ identified that currently, local provider markets are rarely fully developed and do not have the capacity or capability to scale up their service. If local authorities are to have robust markets to commission services from, then some work in developing a local market is required.

The main lesson from local authorities who have developed markets as part of decommissioning in-house services is that the amount of time and effort required to develop and sustain a robust market should not be underestimated.

The recent Ofsted report “An evaluation of approaches to commissioning young people’s services” (available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/) highlighted that commissioning had developed at a varied pace within the local authority areas visited. Alternative approaches were not always being considered and there were poorly informed views among local authorities and providers about the potential of competitors to provide an improved service. Insufficient consideration had been given to engaging alternative providers from the voluntary and community sector, charities or other arms of the public sector such as social landlords. Overall, the report concluded, local authorities were not generally giving sufficiently impartial consideration to new providers and needed to ensure a proper role for voluntary, community and charitable organisations in the design, decision-making and monitoring of commissioned services.

“Firm Foundations”², the government’s framework for community capacity building published in 2004, included a survey of 158 voluntary, community and faith sector organisations. There was overwhelming support for the definition of community capacity building suggested by the report, and the key themes identified are still relevant for commissioning today. The key themes emerging from the consultation were:

- ◆ the importance of long term resourcing for community organisations: this would show commitment to the civil renewal agenda and lead to sustainability;
- ◆ the need for easier access to funding better and more consistent training of community workers;
- ◆ more recognition of the good work already being undertaken at community level and the will to build on this;
- ◆ more awareness and acceptance that one size does not fit all;
- ◆ the need to encourage a bottom up approach; and
- ◆ the importance of support for citizens and communities at neighbourhood or community level.

Notes:

1. *Review of the Youth Services Market, Department for Education*, Rees, C. and Forde, B. (2011), (unpublished).
2. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/firmfoundations>

Local perspectives

A number of local authorities and local umbrella organisations have given serious consideration to potential difficulties and have been proactive in designing-in factors to ensure providers are well placed and receive the necessary support required to play a full part in commissioning processes.

Some of the good examples currently in operation that may help develop effective markets are:

- A)** The Youth Federation, a VCS umbrella organisation based in Cheshire, offers a range of capacity building initiatives to registered organisations and practical support and training to enable groups to achieve quality standards.
- B)** Surrey County Council produced an interim strategy for improving the relationship between the Council and the VCS. The strategy is for all of the VCS, including those who receive funding from other public sector partners and the many smaller organisations that do not. It is based on the acknowledgment that the sector does vital work for local people, and that it needs the support and understanding of the public sector to help it thrive. The strategy aims to secure a partnership that recognises existing good practice, such as the Surrey Compact, and that involves joint identification of key concerns and solutions. It sets out principles to guide future work and offers a platform for developing a wider shared approach, seeking to:
 - improve dialogue and engagement with excluded and seldom-heard groups;
 - contribute to the rich mix of services and activities that the VCS carries out to help communities to be strong, cohesive and connected; and
 - work in partnership to enable innovative and cost-effective delivery of public services in line with the Surrey Strategic Partnership's Vision for Surrey in 2020.
- C)** The London Borough of Newham has developed a set of "Capacity Building Standards" which were included as part of a study to recognise the value of VCS organisations across the borough.
- D)** A number of local councils for voluntary services offer a range of help and support for smaller organisations to build capacity and strengthen their market position. This might include help with recruiting staff and volunteers, policy development, roles and responsibilities, writing effective funding applications, strategic planning and staff training and development. Some, though not all, will have specific Councils for Voluntary Youth Services.
- E)** Cumbria County Council has devoted effort to developing a more open dialogue with providers that results in positive but critical relationships based on mutual interests. The process of commissioning adopted by the local authority encouraged collaboration and the partners themselves, often through their own subcontracting arrangements, had protected very local and small scale provision by developing the capacity of the smaller providers, thereby maintaining the range and diversity of provision for young people.

Given the relatively small budget dedicated to youth work, collaborative working between providers and the local authority enabled them to attract more and varied sources of external funding. This had helped retain small rural youth projects, introduce cross-county initiatives in youth participation and improve the range of training and support available to youth workers³.

- F)** Tower Hamlets introduced a thorough registration scheme for any organisation wanting to receive funding. The registration process included a self-assessment for potential providers and an assessment visit by a local authority officer. Organisations were required to meet a wide range of criteria including for safeguarding, equalities and involving young people in planning and evaluation of services. Different levels of provider were then established that enabled different levels of funding to be awarded depending on their “readiness” to deliver. This approach helped nurture and build the confidence of smaller organisations⁴.
- G)** Thurrock Council has produced “Towards Developing a Thriving Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Strategy”. A number of key recommendations emerged from the consultation with the sector that informed the production of the strategy, and included:

 - ◆ A dialogue should be started between commissioning agencies and voluntary, community and faith organisations to facilitate better understanding of the context of public service delivery and the capacity of local organisations;
 - ◆ Individual voluntary and community organisations should seek to inform themselves about local priorities and commissioning procedures;
 - ◆ Voluntary sector infrastructure organisations should ensure that they preserve the integrity and independence of their support to voluntary and community organisations. This cannot be achieved if they find themselves competing with their members for contracts; and
 - ◆ Commissioning agencies should apply clear process and procedures which should be consistently applied throughout their organisations.
- H)** Sefton is currently developing a commissioning approach as part of a whole service redesign. While the main driver for the redesign is a budgetary one, it follows a consistent quality improvement approach. This approach seeks to ensure that resource deployment is fully set against young people’s needs and in collaboration with partners across public, voluntary, community and faith sectors (including leisure, community safety, education and Connexions). A series of workshops are taking place to support youth providers to contribute to the developing commissioning specification. The workshops have considered:

Notes:

- 3. An evaluation of approaches to commissioning young people’s services, Ofsted, 2011.
- 4. An evaluation of approaches to commissioning young people’s services, Ofsted, 2011.

- ◆ how do-able the priorities are within the resource available;
- ◆ what works now and what support might be needed;
- ◆ how to involve young people in joint governance arrangements of hubs; and
- ◆ pros and cons of different hub delivery models (radial, linear and thematic).

Additional work has been undertaken to explore these arrangements in one geographical area of the borough to support youth providers where engagement has been low. A provider day has been hosted to explain the process of meeting the contract specification. Through the contract the authority has with the local CVS, it will continue to support individual and groups of providers around capacity building, focussed training and networks.

Case Study

Voluntary and community sector tiered commissioning

Northamptonshire Youth Service

Project outline

Northamptonshire Youth Service commissions out many of its services to voluntary, community and faith groups. Because the sector is so large and varied, it does this through a three-tiered process:

- **Tier one** – providing small grants to grassroots groups who are just setting out, for example local volunteers working with a parish council to set up a village youth club. This covers their first year, and three quarters of new groups go on to find funding to continue from elsewhere.
- **Tier two** – inviting small community enterprises to bid for small pieces of work to fill gaps identified by the youth service. This is not a full tendering process.
- **Tier three** – full procurement process in which a full-scale analysis of the county's needs is carried out and work is put out to tender. Many third sector organisations bid and are successful in taking on this work.

Key ingredients for success

- There needs to be the political will to do it, the cabinet has to be behind it.
- There needs to be a budget in place to support it.
- The marking criteria very much favours local groups, and puts a lot of importance on organisations proving they can deliver locally.

Successes

- Voluntary sector groups get the support and resources they need to fulfil their purpose and the council is able to ensure it gets good quality work that meets local need.
- The cyclical nature of the commissioning process means that the council can regularly

identify the needs of the county and only commission services that are needed. This also reduces the issue of staff who are resistant to changing the way services are delivered.

- The tiered system enables local people to take their own actions to respond to issues in their area
- Two organisations, Service6, and Youth Works, started as small community organisations and now deliver some of the council's major contracts. They set an example of how organisations can progress through the tiers.

Challenges/barriers

There is a danger that large third sector organisations will dominate the commissioning process. The council has to work to ensure that the commissioning process is accessible to small organisations, which includes setting realistic timeframes, and long enough contracts to provide stability and sustainability.

Young people's involvement

There is a children and young people's "charter mark" within the council which grades organisations on their level of youth involvement from bronze to platinum, and the council issues guidance on how to involve young people in commissioning services. There are also Youth Boards who provide 40% of the final score for organisations who bid for tenders.

Things to consider

Additional tips for developing an effective provider base include:

1. get to know the market and the providers within it;
2. consider 'Meet the Commissioner' events;
3. produce a "How to do business with...." guide that sets out processes for commissioning and tendering to deliver services (many local authority commissioning teams have developed these guides);
4. publish a named contact for enquiries from potential providers;
5. ensure a fair and transparent commissioning and procurement process;
6. consider commissioning on full cost recovery;
7. consider offering training and support to potential providers, outside of any particular tender, to enable them to improve tenders;
8. allow sufficient time for the development of a robust, contestable market;
9. consider capacity building for high quality smaller providers to take on more provision;
10. consider offering fixed assets, such as youth centres and additional equipment to providers to reduce the barrier to entry to the market;
11. thoroughly review the barriers to entry into the local market by establishing regular close dialogue between the commissioner and potential or actual providers;
12. encourage collaborative processes through which smaller and less well developed organisations can learn from more established providers;
13. consider the option of developing a second tier organisation, such as a Youth Trust or Council for Voluntary Youth Services (CVYS) to support market development. This organisation could be the main contractor with a range of local sub contracts and could facilitate the development of consortia. It could take responsibility for contract management and back office support for smaller organisations; and
14. consider seconding local authority staff to local voluntary organisations to build their capacity to deliver services and improve practice overall.

Notes

Notes



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk





A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People



Part 8: Decommissioning Checklist



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit: www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities.

We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Decommissioning Checklist

Introduction

For the purposes of this guidance, decommissioning is: *The process of discontinuing a service procured from an internal or external provider.*

A key difficulty many commissioners will face occurs when the commissioning process identifies a public (could be in-house), private or third sector provider who is not delivering value-for-money outcomes and which could be decommissioned and replaced by an alternative provider. If resources are to be continually redirected towards changing needs and priorities, decommissioning is an essential part of the commissioning process. Commissioners must reserve the right, and not shirk from using that right, to withdraw resources from a provider when that provider is failing to deliver better outcomes, and is unlikely to improve in a reasonable timeframe, irrespective of who is delivering that service.

Decommissioning is also necessary when a thorough needs assessment shows a particular service is no longer needed. Commissioners should decommission such services in order to reinvest resources where needs are greater.

Decommissioning can have political consequences and it is always wise to gain senior and political sign-up at an early stage. Major service changes may also require a specific consultation exercise and all decommissioning decisions should be supported by plans for service transition. When decommissioning therefore, the commissioner should take into account the costs of decommissioning, as these can be substantial (e.g. TUPE – Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment).

Decommissioning can raise a number of risks:

- threat to the continuity of provision that affects the wellbeing of users;
- public and local, even national political disquiet over the loss of a service;

- expensive and time consuming contractual wrangling; and
- creating financial instability for a provider following decommissioning and possible loss from the market. Losing a contract may threaten their ability to meet requirements on other contracts with your organisation or with others.

The skills required for successful decommissioning are similar to those for commissioning. Decommissioning often requires a multi-disciplinary team including support on matters such as:

- human resources;
- procurement;
- legal;
- communications;
- project management; and
- senior management/politicians willing and able to make evidence-based decisions and to stand by these.

How to use

This checklist is adapted for use in youth commissioning from the Department of Health document *Putting People First: Transforming Adult Social Care*. It is designed to help commissioners work through the issues they need to consider when decommissioning any service.

It is split into four sections:

- Quality, performance, value for money and future demand
- Preparing a service for decommissioning;
- Informing the market and understanding the response; and
- Financial impact.

For each issue a question is posed, an explanation given of its significance and space left for organisations to write in their own proposed action.

Quality, performance, value for money and future demand

Services may need to be decommissioned when the evidence demonstrates that needs have changed or the current provider is not best placed to meet the outcomes required. When considering decommissioning a service one of the first priorities is to return to information on local needs and how those needs may have changed and does the provider still meet required outcomes?

No.	Question	Why is this important?	Action
1	What is the quality of the service?	Is service quality good or acceptable? Is there a risk that if the contract is changed then it might deteriorate? It is important to pay particular attention to process quality (ie. the service user experience of receiving the service).	
2	How effective is the service, particularly in terms of outcomes? Or has the service got the potential and adaptability to be effective in terms of outcomes?	Although the service may not at this point be delivering the outcomes required, you need to apply your analytical skills to evaluate whether the service, if changed, has the potential to be effective.	
3	Is performance meeting the requirements of, and the standards set out in, the service specification?	If this is the case it will bode well for future delivery and effectiveness of services, taken together with other factors that will be looked at as part of any decommissioning/re-commissioning/re-tendering process.	
4	Is the demand for the service commensurate with the services that the local authority is committed to paying for (particularly if this is locked into a block contract)?	If there is no longer the demand for the service then consider whether there is scope for negotiating with the provider on this point.	

No.	Question	Why is this important?	Action
5	<p>Do you need to terminate the contract?</p> <p>Have you sought advice from legal and contract services?</p>	<p>Has the provider unilaterally changed any elements of the service, withdrawn service or failed to provide services that it is contractually bound to do to any significant or substantial degree?</p> <p>If any of these apply then they can be used as leverage to either ensure compliance or to get the provider to become more flexible and responsive to change contractual requirements.</p>	
6	<p>Where you terminate a contract, are you able to develop decommissioning/transfer/transition plans in conjunction with the provider?</p>	<p>This is vital to effect a smooth transfer and to minimise the impact on service users and staff.</p>	
7	<p>Have you got a communication plan?</p>	<p>It is important to communicate well in advance with service users and the media, as well as other stakeholders such as elected members.</p>	
8	<p>Have you briefed elected members and other key stakeholders?</p> <p>Who else should you inform or consult with?</p>	<p>It is important to brief anybody within the governance structure, other stakeholders who might be affected, or where there might be an impact on other services.</p>	

No.	Question	Why is this important?	Action
9	Have you developed a decommissioning/transition/transfer plan?	This should be managed by a programme/project management approach.	
10	Have you considered future contracts to ensure that they do not constrain you unduly?	Your contracts may need to be revised to be more flexible and include scope for periodically revising the service specification. Legal advice should be sought and examples sought from other local authorities.	

Preparing a service for decommissioning

No.	Question	Why is this important?	Action
1	Have you mapped commissioned services against commissioning plan?	When you are considering decommissioning as part of shaping the local market and creating a change in emphasis such as to an outcomes based approach, it is vital that your plans are developed in a methodical and rational way. A mapping exercise early on, which analyses the nature and scope of supply, together with demographic and demand information, provides the foundation for everything else that follows.	
2	Have you selected the services to be reviewed against the above plans?	The selection of services for review will be the next stage on from the mapping process.	
3	Have you decided in what way services/support needs to change?	The focus is not so much on the service design but on the outcomes that you wish to see resulting from the delivered service and the quality standards that will apply to the process of service delivery.	
4	Have you developed criteria against which to review services?	Public sector services are open to challenge in terms of the processes they engage in and the basis upon which they make decisions. All stages of the processes described in this document should be recorded with care taken to ensure that the basis for any decisions can be clearly justified.	

No.	Question	Why is this important?	Action
5	Have you reviewed services against criteria?		
6	Does the service still fit with the strategic direction of local authority activities?		
7	Is the service fit for purpose?		
8	In what way does the contracted service not fit with what is now required?		

No.	Question	Why is this important?	Action
9	Have you decided which services should cease and documented the reasons for this?	Documentation, including how, who was involved and where decisions are made and the basis for them, is vital as there may be legal challenges by provider organisations at a later stage in the process.	
10	Have you sought advice from the contracts and procurement team regarding the contractual arrangements?	It is important to review the contract and determine whether there are any legal reasons why it cannot be terminated. Is there flexibility within the contract to change services?	
11	If a service is not at or near the end of the contract period, have you entered into discussions with the provider?	The objective of this is to see if the provider is prepared to reshape the service to deliver the required outcomes to the quality standards specified underpinned by a renewed service specification (by mutual agreement).	
12	If a service is at or near the end of the contract period have you prepared a new service specification ready for re-tendering?	The service specification should be outcomes based and should include quality standards for the service delivery process.	
13	Which services could be retained if they changed sufficiently and which will have to definitely close?	Services that are of the right quality may be capable with support of changing to fit new market requirements. However, if persistently poor performance or compliance with contract requirements is an issue then you may not want that service to be a local provider.	

Informing the market and understanding the response

You need to understand how the market will respond to your plans. You should gain this understanding prior to putting plans into action since this will affect how you proceed. The very process of engagement with providers can smooth the way for subsequent implementation.

No.	Question	Why is this important?	Action
1	Have you notified affected providers and offered to meet to explain the rationale and process?	Engaging with affected providers throughout the process is not only good practice but may mitigate a legal challenge to the process and decisions at a later stage.	
2	Have you analysed the outcome of any such meetings?	Following your meeting (or other form of communication) with the provider you should be able to answer and document the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their response? • Do they want to keep strictly to the terms of the contract? • Is there any indication of their willingness to agree to a variation in the contractual terms? 	
3	Have the providers in question attended any workshops that you have run on personalisation/self-directed support/outcomes based services?	If not then they may not be able to understand the change in policy, direction and the context for service delivery. Analyse this and if necessary provide and communicate relevant information.	

No.	Question	Why is this important?	Action
4	Having gone through these stages, what is your assessment of the provider's attitude and the chances of reaching a negotiated solution?	It will be important to take stock at regular intervals through the process and to analyse and adjust plans according to the responses and attitudes of provider(s). The objective should always be to reach a negotiated position.	
5	Is the provider inflexible?	If no negotiated solution can be found and the provider intends to stick strictly to the terms of the contract, and the contract does not provide any of the flexibility required to achieve services of the required nature, then a risk assessment and impact analysis should be undertaken.	
6	Do you need to undertake a risk assessment and impact analysis?	This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a cost/benefit analysis • impact of decommissioning the service – the effect on service users, provider organisation and on your ability to deliver services. 	
7	What is the advice of your legal department?	The local authority's legal department should be involved in the process.	

Financial Impact

No.	Question	Why is this important?	Action
1	What will be the cost of decommissioning a service?	This needs to be considered in terms of the potential cost (e.g. breaching or buying out a contract) if the consequences of continuing with the existing contract is limiting or risky in terms of performance or service quality.	
2	What will the cost be of not decommissioning the service?	Against this needs to be set the adverse effect on performance judgment if the local authority is not making progress with key national policy initiatives, or is not taking incisive action over services that can be considered of an adequate quality but may be of a poor or outdated service model.	
3	If a provider is completely inflexible have you considered working and discussing this with other local authorities who do business with them?	This may help a provider to reconsider their stance and enter into discussion and negotiation to find common ground and agreed solutions.	

Notes

Notes

Notes



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

Part 9: Guidance for Elected Members



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit:

www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities. We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Guidance for Elected Members in the Commissioning of Services for Young People

Introduction

Successful strategic commissioning is the key to improving outcomes for young people, prioritising and planning the best use of resources. It is councillors who will make the crucial decisions about commissioning, so it is vital that they have a clear understanding of the needs of young people, the services currently provided and potential impact of changes. This requires councillors, especially those with specific responsibility for the commissioning of young people's services, to have a regular dialogue with young people and to work closely with the relevant council officers.

The points below summarise some of the key points that elected members may want to reflect on when making their decisions. This list is followed by an additional set of questions councillors can pose for themselves to help assess how well they are fulfilling their role.

What should councillors consider when making decisions about commissioning?

- Lead members are accountable to their communities and should ensure that decisions are transparent to council staff, young people and families, local communities and external providers.
- Understanding commissioning, the timetable within which the commissioning cycle operates and when key decisions need to be made is crucial.
- It is important for members to be clear about the distinction between commissioning and providing a service. The council may do both but it is essential to distinguish the two and to be aware of involvement in any services that might be commissioned or de-commissioned and potential conflicts of interest. Where these do exist, members should declare their interest and where appropriate remove themselves from the process and decision-making.
- Elected members have a key role to play in establishing clear working arrangements with executive officers, agreeing respective roles, expectations and the involvement of members in the commissioning process.
- Working with partner agencies to ensure that there is 'sign up' to a common understanding of commissioning and the approach being taken is an important role for members. This might include working with local communities, schools and youth service providers in the voluntary and private sectors.
- Lead members should ensure that there are up to date arrangements with the voluntary sector, perhaps through a formal agreement or 'compact' in order to manage commissioning and decommissioning processes.

- Lead members should promote the voice of young people, families and communities and ensure their involvement in the commissioning young people's services.
- Lead members are ultimately responsible for making the best use of resources and so knowing service costs and being clear about how to judge whether services are cost effective is essential. This will involve judgments about cost, quality and impact on outcomes.
- Councillors should assure themselves that services will be suitably monitored and reported on against their progress in ensuring positive outcomes for young people.
- Elected members should ensure that commissioning and decommissioning decisions are informed by evidence and clearly reflect the priority needs of the community. Elected members should expect to see a clear rationale to support proposed decisions. This is likely to include needs analysis, cost benefit analysis and an options appraisal or business case.
- Where services are to be decommissioned, elected members should expect to see clear evidence for the proposed decision, which demonstrates poor service quality or that the service is out of date, not cost effective or does not meet priority needs. If it is decided that a service should be decommissioned, elected members have a clear role in ensuring that this process is carried out effectively.
- Where new services are to be procured, elected members should satisfy themselves that all action has been taken to prepare and stimulate the market to respond and that the process proposed is fair and compliant with relevant legislation.



Key questions for elected members to ask themselves

- Do I understand how young people's services are commissioned and my role in that process?
- Do I know who is the officer for commissioning young people's services?
- Do I have a clear understanding of young people's needs and wishes and of the services provided?
- Do I receive information about current activity and the performance of services?
- Do I have an overview of how the budget is spent in young people's services?
- Do I have benchmarking information from other councils about how our young people's services compare to others and to emerging best practice?
- Do I have any involvement with young people's services (outside of the council) which may be impacted by any proposed changes to young people's services and which could lead to a potential conflict of interest?
- Have all key stakeholders been involved in the commissioning process? If not what is my role in promoting this?
- Have I been provided with a clear rationale and supporting evidence for decisions that I am being asked to make?
- Are decisions transparent?



Case Study – Gloucestershire

Hands-on Cabinet leadership to commission change in youth support services

In 2008 Gloucestershire led the way in commissioning youth support and Connexions services through a leadership and management contract with a national provider, Prospects Services Ltd. This began the process of mixing council staff (largely in the fields of youth work, youth offending and care/care leaving) with Information, Advice and Guidance staff and NEET workers from Prospects to offer young people a more integrated service.

There remained the structural problem, though, of how to refocus resources on preventative approaches that would improve vulnerable young people's outcomes and reduce demand for expensive specialist services. And in 2010 came national policy change and the urgent need for long-term savings.

With hands-on Cabinet leadership, we built our change programme on clear, consistent messages about these structural changes, and the strength of our strategic partnership. Using the existing commissioner-provider relationship was key and meant:

- **not** a megaphone relationship, where the commissioner uses the contract to control the provider, and the provider complies but does not innovate or go the extra mile;
- **not** an end-of-a-phone relationship, where the commissioner awards and monitors a contract, but does not engage with the provider over future developments, and the provider works in a vacuum without sight of wider change programmes;
- **but** an active relationship where there is a clear understanding about roles, responsibilities and direction of travel, and the provider, understanding political changes, can take ownership of decisions made.

Using this relationship within our change programme led to: innovation in co-design of services, financial savings made very quickly, and a responsive contract. By mid-2011 Gloucestershire had restructured and integrated youth support services to focus on the most vulnerable, transferred ten youth buildings to communities as the voluntary sector took over universal youth work, and found savings of £3.6m over three years.

Of course there was a cost to this, and the pain of a 50 per cent reduction in staff numbers, but this was mitigated to some degree by having one joint and fair process for all staff in the restructure, completing the programme within six months, and communicating clearly with young people, staff, unions, councillors and communities.

From the point of view of change management, the key success factors were having a Project Board that met with Cabinet Lead Members every week, a well-supported change team managed jointly by the County Council and Prospects, commissioner-provider protocols, and a tight system for risk and performance management.

Francis Gobey
Lead Commissioner, Youth Support

Notes



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk





A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People



Part 10: Involving Young People in Commissioning



A Practical Guide to Commissioning Services for Young People

This guide has been produced by the National Youth Agency as part of the Routes to Success programme of work with the Local Government Association. It consists of a range of documents, frameworks and toolkits to support organisations at the different stages of the commissioning process.

The documents are as follows:

1. **Guidance**
2. **Commissioning Readiness Tool**
3. **Developing a Needs Analysis**
4. **Business Case and Options Appraisal**
5. **Producing an Outcomes Based Specification**
6. **Workforce Development Guidance**
7. **Developing a Local Market**
8. **Decommissioning Checklist**
9. **Elected Member Guidance**
10. **Involving Young People in Commissioning**



© Copyright of these materials rests with the National Youth Agency, which has been funded by the Local Government Association to develop these materials to be used freely by local authorities.

The National Youth Agency, as part of its programme of work funded by the Local Government Association, has developed the Routes to Success programme – a free package of support to help councils improve the local offer of services and support for young people.

For further information on the Routes to Success programme and to access free support visit: www.nya.org.uk/routes-to-success

The Local Government Association (LGA) is here to support, promote and improve local government.

We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

The Local Government Association is an organisation that is run by its members. We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels. However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LGA covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities.

We also work with the individual political parties through the Political Group Offices.

For further information about the Local Government Association visit: <http://www.local.gov.uk/>

Introduction

This document is designed to help local authorities explore how young people can be involved in commissioning young people's services.

The document is in two parts. The first part provides an overview of the policy and legislative context and details some of the benefits of involving young people. There are also case studies that show how a range of authorities have come up with creative ideas to ensure the voice of young people is heard and acted upon in the commissioning of services that affect them. It also gives a list of top tips (see p13) for ensuring effective involvement by young people in commissioning.

The second part, starting on page 14, offers a self assessment tool to identify your organisation's strengths and weaknesses in involving young people in the commissioning process. Councils can use this tool to assess and record their progress at involving young people in key tasks across the commissioning cycle.

Context

There is strong statutory requirement for young people to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. The Children Act 1989 confirmed a duty for local authorities to consider the wishes and feelings of children when adults make decisions about them. This right is also enshrined in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children and young people should be able to express their views freely on matters affecting them and that their views should be given due weight.

In addition Section 507b of the Education Act 1996 (introduced through Section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) created legal requirements on local authorities to provide positive activities and to place young people at the heart of decision making about that provision. .

The current Positive for Youth¹ statement, which sets out Government policy for 13 to 19-year-olds, also backs the involvement young people in local democratic processes.

So, commissioners of young people's services should actively seek to involve service users at all stages of the commissioning cycle so that young people become co-designers of services to meet their needs and co-producers of services designed to achieve better outcomes. Good commissioning of young people's services requires all those involved to share core youth participation values and principles.

Local authority leaders and commissioners have a crucial strategic role to listen to and involve young people in assessing needs and making decisions about local services. Local authorities should ensure the voice of young people reflects the diversity of local young people including those who may not otherwise have their voice heard.

Successful commissioning depends on local partners' commitment to working together to understand local needs, commission and deliver effective provision, and monitor and ensure quality. Legislation and best practice suggest, then, that young people have a vital role to play at every stage of the commissioning process – informing decisions about the local offer of services including health, transport, youth justice and local authority funded services for young people.

Note:

¹ <http://www.education.gov.uk/positiveforyouth>

Benefits of Involving Young People in Commissioning

Positive for Youth identifies many benefits from involving young people in commissioning young people's services including:

- better services developed through feedback from young people that know and use them;
- a greater sense of ownership by young people;
- young people's personal and social development and the development of skills for employment and further education for those directly engaged; and
- it sends a clear message about the valued and positive place of young people in their community.

Evidence from the Education Select Committee² suggests young people's involvement not only empowers young people, but also enhances the effectiveness of spending decisions and saves money.

An Ofsted³ evaluation on commissioning of young people's services noted that young people's participation in service design and delivery provided meaningful opportunities for young people to learn about local democracy, how councils operate and how to represent the views of their peers.

Hear by Right

The NYA and the Local Government Association (in conjunction with local authorities and partner organisations) have developed 'Hear by Right' (HbR)

to help guide organisations working with young people to develop young people's participation and engagement in services. HbR is a tried and tested participation standards framework for organisations to assess and improve participation policy and practice and includes a nationally accredited award scheme.

Hear by Right and Commissioning

HbR provides a framework for mapping and planning young people's involvement in commissioning young people's services. It enables strategic managers, commissioners and providers to share a common language for participation and a common framework for mapping and planning young people's involvement across services. Local authorities will need to decide how best to set participation priorities at strategic and operational level to ensure young people's participation within the commissioning cycle. HbR can be used to agree these priorities across a partnership as well as through commissioned services. This may be through annual performance targets, or commissioning processes.

Local authorities will also need to consider a range of practical approaches to the mapping and planning task which will involve managers, staff and young people. HbR involves collecting evidence of current participation and plans for improvement and must include evidence of dialogue and change from young people.

HbR is flexible as a tool and as a process. It requires backing from strategic managers, staff and young people as well as someone with responsibility to

Notes:

2 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/744/74408.htm>

3 Ofsted "An evaluation of approaches to commissioning young people's services", 2011.

drive the process. Be prepared to start small, make the process manageable, agree realistic timescales and targets for progress and develop the process incrementally.

Ways of Involving Young People in Commissioning

Young people should be involved at every stage of commissioning young people's services, which requires their input into:

1. **Understanding** – clarifying local outcomes, needs, resources and priorities;
2. **Planning** – considering different ways in which the desired outcomes can be achieved effectively, efficiently, equitably, and in a sustained way;
3. **Doing** – implementing the plan using the resource available; and
4. **Reviewing** – monitoring delivery and its impact against expected outcomes.

There is also evidence that involving young people as inspectors in reviewing services can have a powerful effect. An evaluation of the DfE-funded Youth4U Young Inspectors programme that trained 1400 young people in 32 authorities, showed that three-quarters of services re-inspected by young people had improved after their initial visit and report. Ofsted identified a number of approaches that included young people working alongside officers and elected members involved in short-listing and interviewing providers, awarding contracts, considering options for decommissioning, and monitoring and evaluating provision.

Other examples of how young people might be involved include:

- **Assessing needs** – through sharing life stories/experiences, workshops, conferences, voting, using photos/pictures, surveys and video making.

- **Identifying resources and setting priorities** – using workshops, ranking/voting sessions, debates and focus groups.
- **Planning** – looking at designs of buildings, locations and opening hours.
- **Procuring** – developing the specification, marking tenders, short-listing, interviewing and selection of tenders through presentations, young people's panels and ranking/voting exercises.
- **Monitoring** – mystery shopping, project advisory groups, surveys and blogs.
- **Evaluation and learning** – using case studies, life stories, photos, and video.

In determining young people's involvement, the process should allow sufficient time for young people to be trained and supported, be as flexible as possible particularly in relation to training and meetings outside of school hours, be a positive and fun experience and it should not be a one-off contribution.

Recognising and Rewarding Young People's Involvement

Young people's voluntary contribution within the commissioning process should be recognised and celebrated locally. Commissioners may also wish to offer a small financial incentive to young people for their contribution in line with local authority participation incentive policies and procedures. Regardless of whether a financial incentive is provided the authority should reimburse out of pocket expenses such as travel and refreshments. Local authorities may also wish to consider providing accredited training and/or accreditation for the volunteering experience as well. The following case studies illustrate some ways in which young people are recognised and rewarded for their involvement in commissioning processes.

Case study Examples

Involving Young People in Commissioning in the London Borough of Merton

Introduction

Young people's involvement in commissioning is part of a strategic approach to the development of youth services and facilities across the borough. The local authority enables young people to make a full contribution by providing support and access to relevant accredited training courses. A diverse group of young people are recruited to undertake specific commissioning work as well the young advisers and young people involved in local democratic engagement. The authority does not shy away from involving young people in difficult decision making such as where funding has had to be reduced due to budget pressures or an organisation did not meet its contractual obligations.

Involving Young People in Commissioning Substance Misuse Services

The recent re-commissioning of substance misuse services identified many benefits from young people's input at every stage of the cycle. Focus groups were held with young people to identify need and shape the service specification. Young people visited providers who reached the final tendering stage to talk directly to service users and meet staff. These visits provided a unique insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the different organisations. Young people's feedback to the formal interview panel was based on an agreed scoring matrix. Both the staff panel and young people were confident that the right decisions were made.

Involving Young People in Commissioning in Northamptonshire

Involving Children and Young People in Commissioning Toolkit

Developed in 2008 by Northamptonshire County Council and written from a youth work perspective, this toolkit was trialled and tested with targeted young people. It has been used extensively with a wide variety of young people involved in commissioning services in the county and has been acknowledged by the Cabinet Office as good practice, leading to it being adopted by many local authorities outside of Northamptonshire.

The commissioning toolkit provides a detailed interactive training programme to provide knowledge, skills and confidence to young people which is required to ensure they are effectively involved in commissioning. It involves a two-day training programme with tools including session plans, evaluations, ice-breakers, PowerPoints, handouts, trainer notes and certificates. The format includes a hard copy and a CD ROM.

The toolkit is a starter kit for any organisation that commissions young people's services and can be added to and adapted to suit young people's needs. It covers topics including an introduction to commissioning, equality and diversity, communication and listening skills, questioning skills, policies and procedures, young people's involvement, outcomes training and development of specifications. The council is currently developing a toolkit specifically for involving adults and carers in commissioning local services. The Children and Young People's toolkit is free to download from the local authority website at: <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/cyp/yp/Pages/Toolkit.aspx>

Chartermark

Northamptonshire County Council operates a children and young people's 'charter mark' which grades organisations on their level of youth involvement from bronze to platinum. The award scheme was developed by the Children and Young People's Partnership to encourage organisations and services to actively work with young people. The award is a self-assessment process to demonstrate how effectively they involve children and young people. Northamptonshire County Council encourages commissioned youth service providers to sign up to the charter and providers are expected to achieve bronze charter mark participation standard within the first year of commissioning.

Young Commissioners in Devon

Introduction

Devon County Council aims wherever possible to involve young people in commissioning services across the local authority. The authority began reviewing services and involving young people in commissioning after using Hear by Right to develop a participation strategy with young people.

The commissioning methods used to involve young people vary depending on the services commissioned but young people are involved in all four stages of the commissioning cycle: understand, plan, do and review. Key principles for young people's involvement at each stage of the process are as follows:

- **Understand** – existing service providers consult with young people to identify young people's priorities that in turn inform the needs analysis.
- **Plan** – co-designed events are held to explore what services young people want, where and when and how these services should be delivered.
- **Do** – young people are involved with procurement processes. Young people may set specific young people's assessment criteria within the tendering specification and assess this part of the application, or young people with high level support may be involved in the assessment of the full tender documentation. Young people have significant influence over awarding contracts and have the right to veto an organisation if they feel it isn't going to meet their needs.
- **Review** – Young people are involved in service inspections and evaluating commissioned services.

Young Commissioners Training

In partnership with Young Devon, the authority has developed 'Young Commissioners' accredited training and has tested the approach with various cohorts of young people over the past three years.

To ensure the most disadvantaged young people have a voice and influence over future service design, the Young Commissioners training has been adapted for young people with special educational needs to ensure young people with complex needs are key stakeholders in commissioning future services.

Young Devon employs a Young Commissioning Ambassador to ensure the most disadvantaged young people become key stakeholders in future service design and development. The Commissioning Ambassador works with the authority commissioning team to identify key priorities, develop specifications and assess tenders and help train young people to become young commissioners.

Young commissioners as volunteers receive significant recognition and accreditation for their involvement. Additional personal and social benefits include increased confidence, self esteem, as well as an understanding of their right to have a voice.

Enfield Summer University

"I have gained good listening skills, confidence and made new friends... I have also acquired the ability to think outside the box to find a solution to a problem"

Introduction

The London Borough of Enfield has an established culture of wherever possible involving young people in services that affect them to help young people determine their own futures. Involving young people in commissioning was established with the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds in 2005/6, where panels of young people were trained and supported to oversee the allocation of funding.

Enfield's Summer University, funded by the London Borough of Enfield and part of Futureversity⁴, has been running for four years and provides a £120,000 programme of over 100 free summer activities for 700 young people who live, study or work in Enfield. The Summer University provides fun and challenging activities and courses that enable young people to develop their knowledge, skills and values to widen their experiences and understanding, and to realise their aspirations. The programme offers a wide range of courses over the summer months including film, music, drama, sport, careers and life skills. The courses are open to young people aged 13 to 19 (up to 25 for those with a learning disability or difficulty). Some courses are nationally accredited such as youth work training, first aid and AQA courses. All courses have recorded outcomes and students receive certificates to recognise their achievements.

Involving Young People in Commissioning

The involvement of young people in commissioning the summer university programme begins annually in February with the recruitment of peer motivators via an advertisement in the local paper.

Beginning in March 2012, 20-25 young people supported by a team of four youth workers attend weekly training sessions to prepare them to commission the summer university programme. The accredited training includes an overview of the commissioning process including parameters for funding, ethics, team building, drug awareness, child protection, first aid, data protection and mystery shopper, conflict resolution and communication training.

A core group of around 10 young people, with youth work support, design the summer university specification and correspond with prospective course providers. They assess and award applicants, ensuring prospective courses address specific target groups and geographical hotspot areas linked to local authority outcomes. A sub group of Peer Motivators work with a local designer to create a summer university brochure advertising all the courses on offer that is distributed to all young people in the Borough, primarily through schools.

Note:

4 <http://futureversity.org/>

Over the summer Peer Motivators welcome young people attending Futureversity courses, take registers, run icebreakers, and ensure students enjoy their course. At the end of the summer the authority hosts a celebration event for young people involved with the programme. Peer Motivators are involved with the programme evaluation and by way of a thank you for their involvement are taken for a day out to a theme park. Some Peer Motivators go on to be involved in training new recruits the following year.

Commissioning Positive Activities in Shropshire

Introduction

Shropshire Council is transforming its approach to the commissioning of positive activities for young people. It puts young people at the heart of commissioning with support from youth workers and the portfolio holder. These new arrangements will be in place for 2014 onwards.

The process will be designed following the conclusion of a 'test and learn' pilot which looks at three different approaches. Called 'for you', 'with you' and 'you alone'. These approaches have been tested by young people in two different age ranges and in rural and urban settings. The research has been undertaken by a student from Glyndwr University.

Commissioning Positive Activities

Currently 36 per cent of the Positive Activities Team's operational budget goes to the voluntary/not for profit sector.

Part of this distribution is through the Shropshire Youth Fund, where young people have developed and oversee the process for the distribution of funds. This fund is approximately £40,000 in 2012 and will increase as the service is transformed. The authority endeavours to operate at Hear by Right advanced level.

The development of this fund is led by young people. They have designed the application form and require that young people fill it in on behalf of their club or organisation (unless there's a very good reason for adults to do it). Individual applications can be for up to £2,000.

The applications are then assessed by a diverse range of young people who are part of local youth forums who meet twice a year to assess and score the applications. Panel members are responsible for the decision to fund, reject or defer funding applications. They receive training and are supported by youth workers. A sample of funding decisions are audited by members of the UK Youth Parliament and Speak Out (a county-wide group of young people who help and support the MYPs), who also operate the appeals process for unsuccessful applicants.

All successful positive activity applicants must complete an evaluation/case study at the end of the period of funding in order to be able to apply in future rounds.

Young people are also involved in the peer inspection of the Positive Activities Team and the authority plans to extend this across all local authority funded projects. Young people involved in this work have their contribution accredited through NOCN or ASDAN awards to level 1 or 2 as appropriate.

Developing an employee led mutual⁵ in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

"We want to make sure that in terms of service users we have a much more co-production element and that they are involved in the service. We want them to have governance role and they are very enthusiastic about it".⁶

Introduction

An employee-led mutual provides a new way to operate young people's services not directly controlled by the local authority. This new approach to service delivery is being piloted by The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Youth Service who are currently in the process of transitioning out of the council into an employee-led mutual in the form of a social enterprise.

Involving Young People in Developing an Employee Led Mutual

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has an established youth forum that is made up of 30 young people who give advice on youth service delivery, quality assurance, mystery shopping and serve as the sounding board for new ideas. The youth forum, with support from an advisor, is being set up as a social enterprise to serve as a research and advisory group where members are trained and advise on peer research, deemed by the service as a highly valued commercial commodity. The authority's aims has been to create the employee-led mutual company form by April 2012 with a view to opting out of the Council in September 2012. A shadow board of directors including elected members of staff and two Youth Parliament representatives has been established and is overseeing the project.

Notes:

5 <http://www.fpmonline.co.uk/FPMOnline/media/FPM/Documents/Youth-First-Mutual.pdf>

6 <http://www.transitioninstitute.org.uk/case-study-brendan-okeefe/>

Involving Young People in Commissioning Top Tips

1. **Trust young people** – their involvement will add an interesting perspective that may not be considered by adults.
2. **Avoid tokenism**, young people's involvement needs to add value to the process.
3. **Make clear young people's roles** and ensure they understand the parameters of their involvement.
4. **Young people's involvement should be as flexible as possible**, and should not be a one-off contribution.
5. **Young people's involvement does not have to be through formal decision making process**, they can be involved through informal and indirect ways.
6. **Allow sufficient time** for young people to be involved in commissioning processes.
7. **Involving young people in commissioning processes** will require support and training to ensure they understand the complexities and legalities.
8. **Ensure clear and timely feedback** to young people on their involvement and what's changed in relation to their involvement and commissioning outcomes. This will help ensure the process is an empowering and motivating one.
9. **Involving young people in the commissioning process** should be fun and a positive outcome for young people.
10. **Recognise and celebrate young people's involvement.**

Involving Young People in Commissioning Self Assessment Tool

How to use

This is a simple tool that can be completed by staff responsible for commissioning young people's services, ideally with young people involved in developing the local youth offer. The purpose of this tool is to establish whether local participation processes for involving young people in commissioning are sufficiently rigorous and to ensure good quality young people's services.

The self assessment tool is drawn in part from indicators in the NYA's HbR Participation Framework and Quality Mark. In addition, this tool builds on specific minimum standards for young people's involvement identified in the commissioning readiness self assessment tool in Part 2 of this suite of documents as well as standards within the South West Regional Youth Work Unit's *Requirements for Commissioning Youth Work Services: A Self Assessment Tool*⁷. This self assessment tool provides a more detailed range of indicators that show progress on young people's involvement in local commissioning arrangements, and allows services to rate progress as being in place, in development or not in place. The final columns allow services to record evidence and any further action that may be needed.

Note:

7 <http://www.learning-southwest.org.uk/asset/Requirements%20for%20Commissioning%20Youth%20Work%20Services%20-%20A%20Sel..pdf>

Involving Young people in Commissioning Self Assessment Tool

Commissioning cycle stage	Commissioning Standard (HbR/Quality Mark indicator)	In Place	In Development	Not in Place	Examples of evidence	Action Required
Understand	There is a central commitment for the active involvement of young people in the commissioning of young people's services.					
Understand	Resources for the active involvement of young people in commissioning services have been identified including key staff roles and resources.					
Understand	Young people involved in commissioning have appropriate skills and support to allow them to participate fully in the commissioning process.					
Understand	A range of approaches are in place that encourage and enable the participation of a diverse range of young people in commissioning young people's services in their own terms and in ways they feel comfortable with.					

Involving Young people in Commissioning Self Assessment Tool (continued)

Commissioning cycle stage	Commissioning Standard (HbR/Quality Mark indicator)	In Place	In Development	Not in Place	Examples of evidence	Action Required
Plan	Young people views are integral to the needs analysis and planning young people's services.					
Plan	Young people are involved in procuring young people's services (e.g. panels, visits to potential providers).					
Do	There is a contractual agreement with successful providers to ensure there is a central commitment to the active involvement of young people.					
Do	Providers ensure young people are involved in the recruitment, selection and induction of staff across the organisation.					
Review	Young people's feedback is used to review the quality of the commissioning process and ongoing assessment of providers.					
Review	Recording and evaluation systems are in place to identify the impact of involving young people in the commissioning process.					

Notes



About the National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency works in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to support and improve services for young people. Our particular focus is on youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development, young people are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives.

Working with young people, we advocate for more youth-friendly services and policies. We have four themes:

- Developing quality standards in work with young people
- Supporting services for young people
- Developing the youth workforce
- Promoting positive public perceptions of young people.

We deliver our work through training and consultancy, campaigning, publishing and online communications. Through our activities we want to ensure that young people have a strong voice and positive influence in our society.

National Youth Agency
Eastgate House
19-23 Humberstone Road
Leicester LE5 3GJ
Tel: 0116 242 7350
Email: nya@nya.org.uk
Website: www.nya.org.uk

For more information visit www.nya.org.uk