

ISLINGTON CHILDREN'S SERVICES

COMMISSIONING STANDARDS

September 2009

The purpose of this document is to provide a Quality Assurance Framework for the implementation of the Children's Services Commissioning Policy that was agreed by the Children's Services Commissioning Board in November 09.

The goal of these standards is to have a mechanism for checking systematically whether in relation to Commissioning, Children's Services are putting into practice what the Commissioning Policy says.

The standards will be applied in relation to each major area of commissioning activity on a rolling programme and the results will be reported to the Commissioning Board.

The aim is to learn from experience and work towards continuous improvement.

Suggestions as to how this Quality Assurance framework can be improved are welcome at any time. Please contact Sabrina Rees by emailing Sabrina.rees@islington.gov.uk or ringing 020 7527 1771.

December 2009

STANDARD 1: COMMISSIONING APPROACH

Commissioning activities are based on the guidance in the Islington Children's Services Joint Commissioning Policy.

Criteria	Evidence	Source
1.1 Commissioners use Islington's definition of commissioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner to provide evidence that Islington's definition of commissioning has been applied	Commissioner
1.2 Commissioners use the DCSF joint commissioning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As above	Commissioner
1.3 Commissioners adhere to the principles underpinning good practice specified in the Islington Commissioning Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner to provide one example of application of each principle	Commissioner

STANDARD 2: COMMISSIONING IN CONTEXT

Commissioning delivers the strategic plans of the Islington Strategic Partnership and Children's Board

Criteria	Evidence	Source
2.1 Commissioning activities implement the priorities identified in the Islington Children and Young People's Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner to provide evidence of the connection between commissioning activities and priorities in the CYPP 	Commissioner
2.2 Commissioning Strategies are delivered through direct services, procurement plans, service level agreements, grants and contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner to provide evidence of this 	Commissioner
2.3 The Commissioning Board co-ordinates and assures the quality of commissioning activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on commissioning activity in each major service area considered by Commissioning Board on a rolling programme and annually for each major service area 	Children's Partnership Commissioning Manager
2.4 The Children's Board scrutinises commissioning activities and ensures that they do help to deliver the aims of the CYPP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioners able to evidence that major strategies have been approved by the Children's Board 	Commissioner

STANDARD 3: STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING ACTIVITES

Commissioning is undertaken in accordance with the Islington Children's Services Joint Commissioning Policy

Criteria	Evidence	Source
3.1 The primary concern of commissioning is to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence from strategies 	Commissioner
3.2 Wherever appropriate, services are commissioned jointly by public agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence that joint commissioning has been actively pursued 	Commissioner
3.3 Commissioning plans are based on good quality needs analysis, evidence of what works, service reviews and the views of service users, carers, professionals and the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence from strategies 	Commissioner
3.4 Commissioners endeavour to involve providers from all sectors in all stages of the commissioning cycle, especially needs analysis, identifying unmet needs in the community and , where applicable, developing service specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence 	Commissioner
3.5 Commissioning encourages a culture of trust and mutual respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence from feedback obtained from Partnership Board and Providers 	Commissioner
3.6 Commissioning strategies are publicised and follow the format identified in the Islington Commissioning Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence that strategies follow the required format and are published 	Commissioner
3.7 Hard to reach communities have the opportunity to be involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence Vacancies for BME representatives to partnership or commissioning group publicly available and circulated to BME, faith and refugee forums and networks 	Commissioner
3.8 An Equalities Impact Assessment is completed in relation to major commissioning strategies. Drawn up in the course of strategy development this is amended, as necessary, in light of the consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to show that EIA has been completed and that this went out to consultation and was amended as necessary 	Commissioner

STANDARD 4: PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES (Overview)

Procurement is undertaken in accordance with the Islington Children's Services Joint Commissioning Policy

Criteria	Evidence	Source
4.1 The primary concern of procurement is to secure the best possible outcomes for the children and young people, making the best use of the resources available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Manager confirms that outcomes were specified as part of the procurement process and are included in service specification. 	Procurement Manager
4.2 Procurement, grant and contract arrangements are as open as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Manager confirms that feedback was sought from all providers who submitted bids. This feedback confirmed that the procurement process was seen as fair and equitable. 	Procurement Manager
4.3 Procurement, grant and contract arrangements are compatible with EU and UK law, regulations and guidance, and adhere to Council Procurement Rules and NHS commissioning regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Manager confirms that Procurement Officers were involved in all procurement activities to ensure compliance with statutory regulations. Procurement Manager able to evidence such compliance. 	Procurement Manager
4.4 Procurement encourages a healthy range of providers offering diversity and good quality services to meet needs and deliver effective outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence that they have actively considered the full range of potential providers and that where appropriate pre tender information sessions held to encourage providers to consider applying. 	Commissioner
4.5 The outcomes that children and young people need and want is the starting point in specifying and securing services. Outcome and output measures are developed for all services that reflect both national measures and local priorities, and are incorporated into templates, contracts and service level agreements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner evidences that outcomes are the starting point in specifying and securing services and that outcome and output measures are contained within all specifications. 	Commissioner

STANDARD 4: PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES (Overview)

Procurement is undertaken in accordance with the Islington Children's Services Joint Commissioning Policy

Criteria	Evidence	Source
4.6 Procurement, purchasing and contracting arrangements are proportionate to the scale and complexity of the service being purchased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner evidences that :• simplified contracts (Terms and Conditions) are used for all services with a total contract value of less than 30K• proportionate procurement has been followed in accordance with the Procurement Rules• contract monitoring is proportionate	Commissioner
4.7 Procurement arrangements do not discriminate against organisations from different sectors of the market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner evidences that umbrella organisations have been alerted to all forthcoming tenders in order to ensure that the information is disseminated to all relevant organisations• Procurement Manager provides evidence that tender documentation is in plain English, easy to follow and that there is a named person that potential providers can phone if they have a query.	Commissioner / Procurement Manager

STANDARD 5: PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES (Specific)

Procurement adheres to Council Procurement Rules or (where appropriate) the NHS Commissioning Regulations.

Criteria	Evidence	Source
5.1 Procurement rules are followed from procurement initiation to award of contract. A budget is agreed and an Equalities Impact Assessment completed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from Procurement Manager confirms that the Procurement Rules have been followed, budget agreed and Equalities Impact Assessment completed. 	Procurement Manager
5.2 A specification of services to be purchased is drafted. This may be an outline specification including indicative outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Manager confirms that specification was drafted for each procurement. 	Procurement Manager
5.3 A Project Team is established to drive and monitor progress of the procurement with a Project Initiation Document outlining roles and responsibilities, realistic timescales, implementation plan and risks (including contingency plans).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Manager confirms that a project team was established and Project Initiation Document completed. 	Procurement Manager
5.4 All stakeholders are involved in the process e.g. Commissioner, Finance and Legal (as appropriate), service users, parents/carers, specialist staff (Health professionals), lead officers. Commissioner endeavours to include a provider. This will be done taking into account Conflict of Interest guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Manager confirms that all stakeholders involved in the process. 	Procurement Manager
5.5 Tender panel members clearly understand the process and their roles and responsibilities. Service user/parent/carer involvement is integral to the process with support/training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Manager confirms feedback obtained from Panel members at the end of procurement process and confirms that service user involvement was integral to the process. Above feedback indicates that service users felt supported. 	Procurement Manager

STANDARD 5: PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES (Specific)

Procurement adheres to Council Procurement Rules or (where appropriate) the NHS Commissioning Regulations.

Criteria	Evidence	Source
5.6 All tender documentation is clear. This includes the evaluation criteria/weighting and both pre-qualifying and Invitation to Tender questionnaires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Manager able to evidence that all tender documentation is clear. 	Procurement Manager
5.7 Tender documentation prompts providers to specify the added value of their service. This may include added value which has a social component (i.e. relationships with users, standing and trust in the community, local contacts etc) and/ that which has a resource component (e.g. access to additional resources, infrastructure etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Manager able to evidence this Contribution to added value is included in the scoring/tender assessment criteria 	Procurement Manager
5.8 Advertisements are placed with a reasonable closing date. Stakeholder events are organised to encourage interest including opportunities for consortium bids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed by Procurement Manager 	Procurement Manager
5.9 Feedback on the process from panel members and applicants including unsuccessful bidders is built into the procurement process and a “lessons learned” meeting is timetabled. This information is made available to the Commissioning Board and the CYPVS Forum’s Executive.	Procurement Manager able to evidence that this has been collated into an evaluation report at the end of each procurement.	Procurement Manager
5.10 Payment schedules are clearly set out in agreement documents and contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence 	Commissioner
5.11 Signed contracts are in place for all commissioned services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence 	Commissioner

STANDARD 6: INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, PARENTS AND CARERS

There is meaningful involvement of children and young people, parent/carers in the commissioning process

Criteria	Evidence	Source
6.1 All those involved within the commissioning process work to the Islington Children's Services standards for the involvement of mothers, fathers and carers and the Listen Up children and young people engagement guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence adherence to both 	Commissioner
6.2 Partnership boards actively involve children/young people and parent/carers in the decision making process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence 3 examples in the last year 	Commissioner
6.3 Commissioning leads involve children/young people and parent/carers from the start, in the development of relevant strategies, needs assessments and service specifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence 	Commissioner
6.4 Procurement boards involve children/young people and parent/carers in relevant tender panels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence 	Commissioner
6.5 Commissioning leads ensure that resources to support involvement e.g. provision of childcare, expenses, venue and refreshment costs are provided in line with the Council's Reward and Recognition Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner able to evidence 	Commissioner
6.6 Monitoring Officers involve children/young people and parent/carers in the monitoring of relevant services and will offer ongoing advice and support to achieve this. Monitoring meetings will be held at convenient times and venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning Officers able to evidence 	Commissioner
6.7 Children/young people and carers are trained, skilled up and accredited for the work that they do and provided with feedback re their involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioners able to evidence that feedback obtained from children, young people and carers indicate that they felt equipped to participate and that they have had feedback on their involvement 	Commissioner

STANDARD 7: INVOLVING THE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY & FAITH SECTORS

The Voluntary, Community and Faith sectors contribute fully to commissioning and procurement

Criteria	Evidence	Source
	third sector as appropriate.	
7.4 The Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum is involved in all plans to consult with the VCFS about commissioning activities.	<p>Commissioner able to evidence that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum represented on all Partnership Boards • Information about all procurements disseminated through the Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum and umbrella organisations 	Commissioner Voluntary and Community Sector Involvement Officer
7.5 Information about commissioning plans, intentions, tenders and contracts is easily accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner able to evidence this • Feedback from the Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum and the wider voluntary sector re accessibility of such information • Information available on the Council's website • Relevant VCS organisations directed to information on Council's website 	Commissioner The Executive Group of the Forum
7.6 Training and support is available to those organisations/groups that need it, in order to take part in the commissioning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner and Children's Partnership Commissioning Manager able to evidence that training and support is available as required, particularly for smaller organisations. 	Commissioner and Children's Partnership Commissioning Manager
7.7 The VCFS is regularly given the opportunity to comment on the application of these standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of these standards in relation to commissioning activity in each major service area considered by the Commissioning Board (which has Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum representation) as part of a rolling programme. The sector consulted about this in 	Commissioner, Children's Partnership Commissioning Manager and Executive

STANDARD 7: INVOLVING THE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY & FAITH SECTORS

The Voluntary, Community and Faith sectors contribute fully to commissioning and procurement

Criteria	Evidence	Source
	advance of the Commissioning Board meeting to discuss.	Group of the Forum
7.8 The VCFS is invited to contribute to the updating of the Commissioning Policy and these standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People’s Voluntary Sector involved in updating every 2 years 	Executive Group of the Forum

STANDARD 8: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring of contracts is consistent, proportionate and outcome focussed.

Criteria	Evidence	Source
8.1 Externally commissioned services have an allocated Monitoring Officer who agrees with the Provider the detail of the contract monitoring process and works constructively with them through the duration of the contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Officers able to evidence 	Commissioning Officer
8.2 Contracts, SLAs and grants are monitored and reviewed regularly and systematically using agreed outcomes and performance indicators, visits and user feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Officers able to evidence from Contracts spreadsheet • Spot checking by Contracts Manager 	Commissioning Officer
8.3 Monitoring requirements are appropriate to the size of funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Officers able to evidence 	Commissioning Officer
8.4 Where services are funded from different funding streams within Children’s Services, monitoring arrangements are brought together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Officers able to evidence supported by Contracts spreadsheet 	Commissioning Officer
8.5 Where other Council Departments are funding the same organisation, joint monitoring arrangements are undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning Officers able to evidence 	Commissioning Officer

where possible.		
8.6 Quarterly monitoring information is obtained from all commissioned services and formal contract monitoring meetings are held as often as deemed appropriate (quarterly, six monthly or annually). Minutes of these meetings are sent out within 3 weeks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning Officer able to evidence supported by contracts spreadsheet 	Commissioning Officer
8.7 Visits are made to the Provider whilst in operation and user feedback is obtained from the Provider on a regular basis, with independent user feedback being obtained annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Commissioning Officer
8.8 Payment for contract delivery is regular and prompt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts Manager spot checks via Contempus 	Contracts Manager

APPENDIX 1

Guidance notes re implementation of commissioning standards.

Drawn up in response to further consultation with the voluntary sector

Standard	Guidance Notes
3.4	Not only voluntary sector providers but providers from other sectors need to be involved and encouraged to provide information on what the needs/gaps are. (This needs to take into account conflict of interest – prospective providers being excluded from being involved in developing specifications)
4.5	Commissioners need to ensure that providers are involved in setting outcome measures
5.7	Commissioners need to distinguish between added value which has a social component (i.e. relationships with users, standing and trust in the community, local contacts etc) and that which has a resource component (e.g. access to additional resources, infrastructure etc).
8.1	Commissioners need to ensure that there is a dialogue with providers about the best ways for the contract to work
8.2	Contracts and service specifications should include a glossary of terms