Commissioning for Better Outcomes: Project Brief

Introduction

The Care Bill, Better Care Fund (BCF), transfer of Public Health to local government and the comprehensive re-organisation of the National Health Service has renewed the focus on the importance of effective commissioning to improve the experience of social care users and their families. Effective commissioning plays a central role in driving up quality, facilitating integrated service delivery, and making the most effective use of the available resources. The Health Services Management Centre (HSMC), in partnership with INLOGOV, at the University of Birmingham have been commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA) to develop commissioning standards to support effective commissioning practice.

Aim

The aim of this work is to provide Local Authorities, and their partners, with a basis for improving commissioning practice in order to deliver better outcomes for people requiring social care, as outlined by the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF)\(^1\) and Making it Real\(^2\). The standards are intended to support the implementation of the commissioning element of the Care Bill once it comes into force in 2015. The standards will provide a focus for sector led improvement developed by the LGA and Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care (TEASC). They will, therefore, support a local dynamic process of commissioning improvement, and through self-assessment and peer review, challenge commissioners, with their partners, to innovate and develop new ways of combining resources to support people requiring social care. The intended outcome of using the standards will be a local development plan, against which to evaluate progress, identify development needs and action plan.

Process

The process for developing the standards involves:

1. A literature review to identify:
   - Evidence for effective commissioning that leads to improved outcomes in social care
   - Examples of good practice in commissioning in the LG sector

2. Interviews with key stakeholders at a national level, identified in discussion with the Project Steering Group. These interviews will explore the main dimensions of commissioning to support the ASCOF and Making it Real outcomes.

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\(^2\) Think Local, Act Personal. *Making It Real: Marking Progress Towards Personalised, Community Based Support* [online resource] [accessed 100114]. Available at: http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/_library/Resources/Personalisation/TLAP/MakingItReal.pdf
3. Four development events in different parts of England to engage in dialogue with the sector to develop the standards, through the facilitated use of scenarios on key commissioning challenges for social care (e.g. personalisation in the context of strategic commissioning; integrated commissioning, developing capacity in the market, decommissioning, commissioning to tackle inequalities etc.).

4. Two webinars, one during the early phase of the project and one towards the end to engage a wider group of interested stakeholders. There will also be a regular blog, with contributions from key players, and a Twitter hashtag to create opportunities for dialogue.

5. Building on these earlier phases, the standards and case studies of good practice in commissioning will be developed, with reference to appropriate tools and evidence to support local development. This will include linking with, and complementing, existing resources and networks, i.e. the Cabinet Office Commissioning Academy.

6. The draft standards will then be tested in eight - ten areas with local health and care economies, be selected for their diversity in terms of their demography and geography. These tester sites will use the standards to evaluate their performance and identify action to improve their commissioning practice. As the purpose of this is to test and refine the standards, the results will not be shared beyond the site.

7. The standards will then be refined, in the light of the feedback and learning in the sites, and launched at a national event.

**Timescale**

The timescale for the development of the framework is February – October 2014. The development events will take place during May and June and further details will be posted at regular intervals.

**Team members**

HSMC and INLOGOV are at the forefront of research, policy guidance and teaching in relation to commissioning. The project is being led by Dr Karen Newbigging with Prof Jon Glasby and Robin Miller from HSMC, and Catherine Mangan and Carol Ward from INLOGOV. Their profiles can be found on the relevant websites:

HSMC: [http://www.hsmc.bham.ac.uk/](http://www.hsmc.bham.ac.uk/)


**Project Steering Group**

Oversight of the project is being steered through TLAP’s National Market Development Forum. A Project Steering Group has been established, chaired by Bill Mumford, with a wide range of stakeholders, including people with care and support needs themselves.
Further information

Further information and regular updates about the project are available at: http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/care-support-reform/-/journal_content/56/10180/6063569/ARTICLE