

Understanding the Language of Commissioners

The following are most common terms and acronyms used in the health and social care context and a brief explanation of what they mean:

Agreement - The legally binding terms and conditions between the parties, another word for a contract.

Approved list - An eligible list of potential suppliers.

Commissioning - The process of identifying need and then procuring services to meet that need.

Consortium - A group of organisations that come together to undertake an enterprise or activity that would be beyond the capabilities of individual members.

Direct Payments - Direct payments are payments given to individuals by Social Services departments to enable them to buy services they have been assessed as needing. They can be given to disabled people aged 16 or over, to people with parental responsibility for disabled children, and to carers aged 16 or over in respect of carer services. The aim of a direct payment is to give more flexibility in how services are provided to people who are assessed as eligible for social services support.

Framework Agreement - An agreement with suppliers which set out terms and conditions under which specific call-offs (purchases) can be made throughout the term of the agreement. A framework may include more than one supplier and how suppliers get on a framework varies – for some there is a one off opportunity and then the framework is closed to new providers, for others the framework is open at any time for new providers.

GP Consortia/Clinical Commissioning Groups – Groups of GP surgeries which come together to form a single entity for the delivery and purchasing of services.

Health and Wellbeing Board – This is a new forum intended to be a forum for local commissioners across the NHS, public health and social care, elected representatives, and representatives of HealthWatch to discuss how to work together to better the health and wellbeing outcomes of the people in their area.

Healthwatch - Healthwatch will be set up at two levels: Healthwatch England in October 2012 and local Healthwatch to be introduced from April 2013 and will replace the Local Involvement Networks. Healthwatch will have a range of functions including providing a single point of contact for people wanting advocacy or help in accessing health services. It will also monitor local health and care services and make recommendations to commissioners.

ITT - an Invitation to Tender. If you get through the initial PQQ then you will receive an ITT which will include a description of the buyer's requirements and a general brief on the information that is required from your organisation if you wish to bid for the contract.

JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment This is one of the means by which the NHS, Clinical Commissioning Groups and local authorities will describe the future health, care and well-being needs of local populations and the strategic direction of service delivery to meet those needs.

Market Position Statement – A document produced by Devon County Council that sets out likely future trends in the provision of key services such as social care. It is a guide for providers about what services the Council is likely to want to buy in future.

Personalisation - The idea behind personalisation is that the individual decides what service they want to meet their needs, rather than someone else deciding according to the services that happen to be there. Personalisation in health and social care aims to give increased choice and control to individuals.

Personal budgets - A Personal Budget will be available to people who, following an assessment of their needs and financial position, are eligible for support and assistance from Devon County Council Adult and Social Care services. This money can be used to arrange an individual's care and support, after their assessment or review. The personal budget can be managed by the County Council or it can be taken as a Direct Payment, or a combination of the two.

PQQ - Pre Qualification Questionnaire. A questionnaire that is used as a pre-selection tool, which all interested suppliers must complete.

Procurement - The buying of goods, services and works required by an organisation.

SLA - Service Level Agreement. An agreement between a supplier and a buyer on services to be supplied. The level of service is usually negotiated or set out during the tender process.

Social value – The additional benefit to a wider community over that comes from the direct purchasing of services .e.g. a befriending scheme has a wide range of community benefits as well as improving the health and wellbeing of individuals.

Support Planning and Brokerage – A support plan says how someone wants to spend their personal budget. Brokerage is the process of helping the individual choose what services are available and what they want.

Tender - Documents submitted by an organisation in response to an invitation to tender This normally involves submission of the offer in a sealed envelope to a specified address by a specified time and date.