

COMMISSIONING SELF ANALYSIS

In Oxfordshire the Trust is expected to complete three steps in order to access the resources of the CSP:

- Self-analysis and planning exercise
- Outline change plan → Strategic change plan
- Commissioning support agreement

This paper sets out the main findings from the self-analysis exercise and the proposed next steps towards developing a new commissioning strategy.

Action required by the Board

The Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Trust Board is asked to:

- Note the key messages arising from the self-analysis process;
- Agree any action that is required to address these issues;
- Agree the proposed next steps, in particular what role the 'commissioning support local lead' should be asked to provide.

1. Introduction

The DCSF requires every local area to engage with the Commissioning Support Programme (CSP). This will run until April 2011, and it aims to provide Children's Trusts with support to develop best practice in commissioning to deliver better outcomes for children, young people and their families. The CSP will provide tailored support as and when Trust's need it with a local lead nominated from the CSP to provide a link between the local Trust and the CSP. The local area provides a 'Commissioning Champion' to be the main point of contact with the CSP.

2. Process

During August and early September 2009 the county council conducted ten structured interviews with a wide range of OCYPT members (this covered six organisations and included politicians) and also took on board the views of the joint commissioning sub-group.

Each interview went through 12 statements, provided by the Commissioning Support Programme, to obtain a snap shot of members' views of the current state of commissioning in Oxfordshire and identify strengths and weaknesses. This baseline will provide the foundations to develop a new commissioning strategy over the autumn period.

2. Summarised findings from the self-analysis

Average scores for each of the twelve statements are shown below. All statements were ranked out of 5 (5 being 'the standard is fully achieved across the Children's Trust' and 1 being 'we have no clear agreement about what is needed to meet the standard').

	Statement	Average score
Highest score	We really understand the needs of children, young people and families in our area.	3.9
	We monitor the impact and manage the performance of services in order to improve outcomes.	3.85
	We are clear and agreed about the outcome improvements we need to achieve for children, young people and families in our area.	3.4
	We have the right people with the right skills, knowledge and expertise to deliver change and improve outcomes through commissioning.	3.25
	Our commissioners work effectively together to secure improved services and outcomes.	3.2
	We have a culture of continuous learning and improvement involving all commissioners, providers and stakeholders.	3
	We have the right governance arrangements to improve outcomes through commissioning.	2.8
	We have robust, up-to-date commissioning arrangements which allow us to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.	2.75
	We successfully secure major service reconfiguration and change to improve outcomes through commissioning.	2.75
	Partners and stakeholders, including children, young people and families, understand and support the approach we take to commissioning.	2.65
	Our leaders understand commissioning and work together to deliver change through best commissioning practice across the Children's Trust.	2.4
Lowest score	We invest wisely and influence the market effectively to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.	2.35

Detailed (anonymised) scores and a selection of representative quotations are provided in Annex A.

3. Key messages from the self-analysis

A number of consistent themes emerged during the course of the interviews. The key messages are summarised below:

- a) Many respondents felt that the Trust's understanding of needs had dramatically improved over the past year, and this came across as a real strength.
- b) Approximately half of respondents felt that the Trust needs to do more to use data to drive performance – for example by ensuring that providers are adequately held to account for their performance. Several people mentioned the need for more disaggregated data and data that enables longer term tracking of particular cohorts.
- c) Several respondents talked about the need to ensure that the Board takes a more strategic view, with members taking a corporate, rather than organisational perspective. Some felt that more clarity is needed about why they are on the Board and what their role is.
- d) Some members knew little about current commissioning activity, others knew a lot. The need for better communications on commissioning came up several times.
- e) Several respondents talked about the need for the Board to become more forward looking in order to ensure that commissioning decisions will meet future needs rather than just reflecting historical performance.
- f) There were differing views on whether the Trust should take responsibility for commissioning services that fall to a single organisation, or just those where there are partnership requirements.
- g) Several people talked about current confusion about roles as providers / commissioners and felt that resolving this was important to enable progress to be made.

- h) There were different views about the future commissioning role of Area Trust Boards, and whether commissioning decisions should always be taken at the county rather than area level.
- i) Several respondents raised the need to ensure that sufficient support is provided to the voluntary sector to enable them to engage in the opportunity that a new approach to commissioning would provide.

4. Next Steps

Proposed Timeline:

- 18 November Commissioning Strategy Workshop for Trust members, and a small number of Area Trust Board representatives

This workshop will consider the Trust's future approach to commissioning, given the children and young people's plan priorities. It will consider what needs to change in the way the Trust functions, given the key messages from the self-assessment. It will explore what needs to change and how in the light of the new Children and Young People's Plan, will secure members commitment to the process of agreeing a partnership commissioning strategy and will agree at a strategic level, the overarching commissioning priorities for the next three years.

- Commissioning Sub-Group

Will oversee development of the new strategy, on behalf of the Trust, ensuring that the strategy links to the priorities in the children and young people's plan

- Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Trust, January meeting

Agreement of a new partnership commissioning strategy.

5. Engagement from the Commissioning Support Programme

We have been nominated a 'Commissioning Support Programme Local Lead' to support us in developing a new strategy. The Board is now asked to consider how they would like to use this support, for example, based on members suggestions for content, we could

ask them to help to design and facilitate the November work shop and then work with us to turn the outputs from this session into a new strategy.

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Anonymised scores and selected comments from interviews in August / September 2009

	Interview number										Average score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1. We are clear and agreed about the outcome improvements we need to achieve for children, young people and families in our area.	4	3	1.5	3.5	3.5	4.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.4
	<p><i>'The Trust is clear about groups of interest but doesn't disaggregate enough by geography – so particularly the city gets lost';</i></p> <p><i>'The Trust is clear about the outcomes for some parts of the population, though less so about others';</i></p> <p><i>'There has been significant progress since the restrucutre'</i></p>										
2. We have robust, up-to-date commissioning arrangements which allow us to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.	3	2	Don't know	3.5	3	3	1	3	Don't know	3.5	2.75
	<p><i>'There is a commissioning team that works across OCC and the PCT, need to review now to ensure it is fit for purpose';</i></p> <p><i>'We don't have robust arrangements at the moment';</i></p> <p><i>'I don't understand the current approach; more communications are needed'</i></p>										
3. We have the right governance arrangements to improve outcomes through commissioning.	1	2	2	3.5	3	3	3.5	3	2	5	2.8
	<p><i>'We have a commissioning sub-group, reporting regularly to the Trust - so we have the governance but now need to get on and deliver';</i></p> <p><i>'Not sure – the Children's trust is doing the right things, eg locality working, but not sure about what it is doing on commissioning';</i></p> <p><i>'There is a lack of accountability at the meetings and I don't think that there is true integration between partners';</i></p> <p><i>'We do have governance about commissioning within the Trust, but I'm not sure it works – there is no clear commissioner / provider split so it is a bit of a fudge at the moment.';</i></p> <p><i>'Board members still seem to guard their own patch rather than taking a truly corporate perspective'</i></p>										

<p>4. Partners and stakeholders, including children, young people and families, understand and support the approach we take to commissioning.</p>	3	3	2	3.5	4	2	1	2.5	2	3.5	2.65
<p><i>'Governance is clear to the Trust but not to all partners and stakeholder - a consultation and communication plan is required';</i></p> <p><i>'The Trust consistently engage children and young people really well';</i></p> <p><i>'There is no firm understanding in terms of our approach to commissioning';</i></p> <p><i>'At the moment I don't think that the Trust Board makes any decisions about commissioning and I don't think that I have anything to do with it'</i></p>											
<p>5. We really understand the needs of children, young people and families in our area.</p>	4	4	3	3.5	4	5	3.5	4	3	5	3.9
<p><i>'Our children and young people's plan reflects everything that children and young people tell us and reflects the JSNA, CYPP needs assessment, DPH Annual Reports';</i></p> <p><i>'We understand generally but don't break down the information enough by geography or ethnicity (in the city and Banbury especially) and don't act on the needs as we should'</i></p> <p><i>'I think we have significantly improved at this in the last 12 months';</i></p> <p><i>'We're getting quite good at the data, now much better than we were'</i></p>											
<p>6. We invest wisely and influence the market effectively to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.</p>	2.5	3	Don't know	3.5	Don't know	3	1.5	3.5	3	3.5	2.35
<p><i>'There is evidence of this around individual care groups but lack of strategic overview for 'total resource pot'';</i></p> <p><i>' We need to understand the total resource base';</i></p> <p><i>'Early days- we don't influence the market yet';</i></p> <p><i>'Commissioning tends to be backward looking, we need to do more to identify tomorrow's problems'</i></p> <p><i>'Joint team is in place, not afraid to decommission if needed'</i></p>											

<p>7. We monitor the impact and manage the performance of services in order to improve outcomes.</p>	4	3	3.5	4	2	5	3.5	4.5	4	5	3.85
<p><i>'I don't see enough of a link between conversation and action – the scorecards on targets are useful but it is unclear how these are used to lever performance improvement';</i></p> <p><i>'Information is collected and available but not used – we review performance but don't seem to really drive it, for example by holding providers really to account or taking commissioning decisions';</i></p> <p><i>'The Trust struggles with who is holding who to account – I think that the Trust is uncomfortable with the idea of having 'teeth' and doesn't do this effectively at the moment';</i></p> <p><i>'We have good data, but don't hold people accountable and therefore don't sufficiently drive action. For example there isn't regular enough reporting back about what happened as a result of a conversation we've had at the last meeting, when we do this (eg teenage pregnancy) I really think that it works';</i></p> <p><i>'We should be more thoughtful in what we look at and how – particularly taking a longer term view – eg tracking outcomes of care leavers over many years to identify what works and what doesn't';</i></p> <p><i>'Performance management sub-group of Trust does this well'</i></p>											
<p>8. Our commissioners work effectively together to secure improved services and outcomes.</p>	2.5	2	Don't know	4	3	3	3.5	4	3.5	3.5	3.2
<p><i>'Complex interfaces need more clarity e.g. adult services';</i></p> <p><i>'I'm not sure that the Trust should be taking decisions when service delivery is owned by one organisation';</i></p> <p><i>'There are some joint posts but we are not 'there' yet. We need to be more joined up and linked to priorities';</i></p> <p><i>'We are getting better at joint commissioning between OCC / PCT but other partners have important role to play eg VCS and districts. Lack of resources shouldn't stop their involvement, they need a greater voice'</i></p>											
<p>9. We successfully secure major service reconfiguration and change to improve outcomes through commissioning.</p>	3	2	Don't know	3.5	Don't know	3	1.5	3.5	2	3.5	2.75
<p><i>'I don't know yet – I think it is too early to tell';</i></p> <p><i>'I am not clear that we have been radical enough in major reconfiguration, or what this really means. Connexions contract was not about reconfiguration but a procurement exercise. We get the same delivery, just a different provider'.</i></p>											

<p>10. Our leaders understand commissioning and work together to deliver change through best commissioning practice across the Children's Trust.</p>	3	2	1	3.5	3	1	1.5	3.5	Don't know	3.5	2.4
<p><i>'It can be hard for Trust Board members to take corporate responsibility beyond their individual responsibilities – the Trust needs to mature so that this is the case in order to commission effectively.'</i></p> <p><i>'The Trust is evolving and developing, it is still not well embedded. I am hopeful that we will be able to work better together in the future, like the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership now does';</i></p> <p><i>'I am not as sighted about commissioning as I should be';</i></p> <p><i>'I don't think that the voluntary sector has had any input to commissioning – for example there is no voluntary sector rep on the commissioning sub-group. We need to be involved at the start of the process, not just the end. But it is hard to have someone without their own agenda who can represent the sector';</i></p> <p><i>'Different organisations don't agree on a definition of commissioning';</i></p> <p><i>'Senior leaders understand but not those lower down the organisation';</i></p> <p><i>'The PCT and OCC are main players and we are well aligned'</i></p>											
<p>11. We have the right people with the right skills, knowledge and expertise to deliver change and improve outcomes through commissioning.</p>	2	2	Don't know	3.5	4	3	3.5	3.5	Don't know	4.5	3.25
<p><i>'There is a small core team with a specialist function. But there is also significant other commissioning activity across other teams who may not have the best skills.'</i></p> <p><i>'The membership of the Trust is right to be able to do this';</i></p> <p><i>'The lack of a proper commissioner / provider split hampers ability to do commissioning well as some people are doing both'</i></p>											
<p>12. We have a culture of continuous learning and improvement involving all commissioners, providers and stakeholders.</p>	1.5	3	3	3.5	3	3	3.5	3.5	3	3	3
<p><i>'We don't share learning enough with other Trusts or the Safeguarding Board';</i></p> <p><i>'We need to do more horizon scanning to get ahead of the game – the trust should be more forward looking'</i></p>											