**Proposals for The Evaluation of the Commissioning for the Future Training Programme**

1. **Overview**

We are looking to procure a supplier with expertise in adult social care (ASC) to deliver an independent evaluation of the ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme.

We recently ran an invitation to tender to find a supplier to design and deliver the ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme for senior ASC commissioners in England to enhance strategic leadership and data analytical skills. This pilot programme will be designed between January – June 2024 and delivered between July 2024 – March 2025. The service specification for the pilot training programme is included below at ANNEX A. We are now looking to procure a supplier to independently evaluate that pilot programme.

We intend to award the evaluation contract in February 2024, for the supplier to engage with the training supplier for the latter 4-5 months of the design phase. The evaluation supplier will conduct an ongoing evaluation of the programme throughout the delivery phase and after its completion, with a final report anticipated by April 2025.

1. **Objectives**

The objectives of the evaluation include (but are not limited to) to:

* Assessing how effective the training has been in meeting its objectives and maximising the impacts it has for individuals as well as local and national governments;
* Analysing how effective the advertising and branding for the programme has been, through assessing the levels of local authority interest, take up and retention of commissioners on the programme, and line manager support for participants who are enrolled; and
* Reporting on any early indicators of improved commissioning practice as a result of the training, and insight into the potential impacts we might see if the programme were to be delivered over a longer period (5+years).

The findings of this evaluation will be used by DHSC to inform future decisions on the potential continuation or expansion of the ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme.

1. **Market feedback**

Before launching a procurement to find a supplier to evaluate the programme, we want to obtain market feedback. The primary focus of this feedback is to better understand market/supplier appetite, capacity and capability, as well as perceived risks and opportunities.

Your feedback is important as it will allow views from the market to inform the development and finalisation of the procurement strategy.

We are not specifying the methodology to be used in the evaluation and would therefore invite prospective suppliers to suggest the methods they would use. However, we anticipate this would include monitoring data collected by the training programme supplier and conducting interviews with participants. The findings of this evaluation will be used by DHSC to inform a possible scale-up and better manage the ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme.

1. **Questionnaire**

**The Evaluation of the Commissioning for the Future Training Programme Pilot: Market Consultation Questionnaire**

Please complete:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Supplier Name** |  |
| **Supplier Address** |  |
| **Supplier Company Registration Number** |  |
| **Key Contact Name** |  |
| **Email Address** |  |
| **Telephone Number** |  |

1. **Do you have any general comments on the scope of work which should be considered when developing the service specification?**

|  |
| --- |
| 500 words max. |

1. **What types of activities and methodologies would you undertake to gather the required evidence and deliver this evaluation?**

|  |
| --- |
| 500 words max. |

1. **What are the types of cost involved in this contract? We are considering a price in the range of £50k-£140k for this contract – would this budget allow you to provide all the required evaluation and outputs.**

|  |
| --- |
| 500 words max. |

**ANNEX A**

**Commissioning for the Future: a pilot training programme**

**SPECIFICATION**

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1. **Introduction**

This contract is an opportunity to design and deliver a ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme for senior adult social care (ASC) commissioners in England to enhance strategic leadership and data analytical skills.

The Department has made available up to £997,000 to fund this contract for 15 months over 2023/24 – 2024/25 financial years, which includes 6 months allocated to the design of the programme (January – June 2024) and 9 months allocated to delivery (July 2024 – March 2025).

This pilot programme will be independently evaluated and the organisation responsible for the evaluation will be procured separately.

***Background***

In December 2021, the Government published *People at the Heart of Care*: *Adult Social Care Reform White Paper* and set out a new ambition for local authority market shaping and commissioning which centered around:

* partnership working;
* building on existing community assets; and
* understanding what people want from their care.

In the recent publication *Next steps to put people at the heart of care,* published in April 2023, we committed to delivering a package of support for commissioners to strengthen the use of strategic, preventative, and outcomes-based market shaping approaches. Central to this is our proposal for the ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme – the intended output of this contract.

While local authorities are best placed to understand and plan for the local care needs of their populations, the Government recognises that this is a challenging undertaking. To do so effectively, commissioners must carry out a range of varied and complex activities, such as engaging with people who draw upon care, interrogating care market and population data to understand current and future demand, strategic planning and building relationships with providers of care, housing and health services. Evidence should be used to underpin all market shaping and commissioning decisions, but the available data sources are varied, dispersed and, in places, complex. It can be challenging for commissioners to know how to extract the right intelligence from data sources.

Last year we conducted a review into commissioning capabilities with the sector, to better understand the existing landscape of development opportunities available to commissioners and to identify where the gaps are in the training and support available. The review identified a significant gap around support to develop commissioners’ strategic leadership abilities, but also that that any offer designed to address this gap should be flexible to individual needs and local contexts. The review also emphasised the importance of peer learning as an effective way of sharing and developing specialist skills.

We have looked to similar sectors and the opportunities they offer for enhancing strategic leadership. The NHS has a range of programmes delivered through their Leadership Academy, and the Department for Education support frontline and local authority staff working in children’s social care through their ‘Pathways’ and ‘Upon Future Leaders’ programmes. We want to design and deliver similar support for ASC commissioners.

1. **The ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme**

The aim of this procurement exercise is to award a single contract, which could be operated by a supplier or group of suppliers, to design and deliver a ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme.

***Audience***The programme will be open to senior ASC commissioners in England who are responsible for making strategic decisions. The future supplier(s) will be expected to set clear eligibility criteria (more information set out in ‘*Places on the programme and recruiting participants’*, pg. 5)

***Programme aims***

The aim of this programme is to:

* + Strengthen strategic leadership skills by giving participants the tools to build relationships with providers, take a long-term view of their market and make effective market shaping decisions based on evidence.
	+ Enhance the practical application of key and specialist skills commonly used by ASC commissioners, including data analysis and the use of this to underpin commissioning decisions.
	+ Empower ASC commissioners to be the drivers of change, devising and delivering on innovative market shaping strategies that suit their local context.
	+ Provide opportunities for building networks between commissioners and maximise the benefits of learning from and alongside peers.

The experiences of those who access care, their families and unpaid carers should be at the heart of this training programme. Commissioners taking part will be equipped with the tools to gain greater insight into what local people want from care services and use this to inform decisions on market shaping strategies.

The Department has engaged with ASC commissioners to develop the proposal and plans for the content of this training programme.

***Structure***

The future supplier(s) will be responsible for the full design of the programme structure, however, there should be a minimum of two core modules. Additional optional components would allow participants to tailor some of the content to their learning needs.

Participants will need to complete 60 hours (8 days) across the core modules in order to complete the programme, and any time spent on optional parts of the programme will be additional.

The future supplier(s) will be expected to engage with commissioners on the delivery options and should design the programme structure that is most accessible. This may mean staggering the modules or staggering cohorts through the modules, or another approach.

***Content***

While supplier(s) will design the full content of the pilot programme, it is important that the content is 1) topical and covers common challenges we know are being faced by commissioners and 2) enhances participants’ ability to address these challenges.

Key insights into common challenges have been identified through analysis of local authority market sustainability plans (which were conducted as part of the Fair Cost of Care and Market Sustainability Plan Exercise).

These common challenges reflect core priorities of the Department of Health and Social Care and include how to effectively:

* Build capacity in domiciliary care
* Re-balance a market to meet changing need through:
	+ The development of neighbourhood models for care,
	+ Adapting contracting and payments to shape care home markets that more sufficiently meet current and future need, and
	+ Diversifying provision, such as through specialist and supported housing.
* Make use of the following variety of levers available to commissioners, including:
	+ Partnership working,
	+ Developing a skilled workforce,
	+ Integrated commissioning and discharge,
	+ Making use of assistive technology, and
	+ Quality management.

We encourage potential suppliers to consider these challenges when designing their bids for a future programme. Links with local and regional networks should be made throughout the programme’s design and delivery to ensure participants can ground learnings in real contexts and challenges that are relevant to their local authority.

We also know from analysis of local authority market sustainability plans that different areas are trialling ways to address these challenges. While this encompasses a variety of activities, making the best use of data is a key theme for those areas looking to address these challenges effectively and efficiently. Examples include (but are not limited to):

* Carrying out proactive and risk-based approaches to market oversight;
* Developing new Market Position Statements with near live and interactive data; and
* Making use of apps and developing new databases enabling people to arrange their own care, or to advertise Personal Assistant roles. This aims to improve choice, accessibility and the overall experience for those drawing upon care services.

Supplier(s) are therefore encouraged to focus a core element of the training on making the best use of data to inform commissioning practice and address challenges.

The commissioning cycle and [the process of improvement and transformation in healthcare](https://www.ihi.org/resources/Pages/HowtoImprove/default.aspx) should also be reflected throughout the programme to encourage commissioners to have the confidence and abilities to deliver change.

The below table is an example of how the programme content might be structured.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Example structure of the course content** | Module 1 | Module 2 |
| **Using a variety of levers to rebalance a market to meet changing need** | **Making the best use of data and using this to inform commissioning decisions** |
| Unit 1 | Understanding |  |  |
| Unit 2 | Planning  |  |  |
| Unit 3 | Acting |  |  |
| Unit 4 | Evaluating |  |  |

This table is an example of the programme structure only and bidders are encouraged to innovate and develop their own ideas. In their bids, the potential supplier(s) will need to provide an overview of their proposed course content and structure and are advised to provide a more detailed breakdown of training sessions, how different parts of the training would be delivered and examples of what a typical day on the programme might look like.

***Delivery***

The future supplier(s) should propose a blended delivery approach, considering the right balance of different methods to maximise learning benefits, accessibility and budget.

The supplier(s) will need to give careful consideration to the most appropriate delivery approaches for the different parts of this training. There should be some emphasis on peer learning, provider visits and meeting those with lived experience, but also taught sessions and time for practicing the application of new skills. Some virtual elements will also be key for maximising accessibility.

Through this programme participants should be given the opportunity to share their experiences and key learnings. Participants should also be introduced to new, emerging and/or potential commissioning practice, informed by experts, academic research and international examples.

***Funding***
The Department has up to £997k available to cover the costs of:

* Design: design project team salaries, sector engagement, branding and delivering a comms campaign, and the development of any digital tools.
* Delivery: participation costs for up to 153 commissioners to be enrolled on the course (a maximum of £3k per person). The Department will only cover the costs for enrolled participants, and this should cover any associated delivery costs (excluding participant travel and overnight stays, which should be covered by the participant’s employer).

This is not an exhaustive list and potential supplier(s) should set out any other types of costs in their bids for the Department to consider.

1. **Places on the programme and recruiting participants**

 ***Number of places***

The Department will fund a maximum of 153 places, and we will require a future supplier(s) to fill a minimum of 50 of those places. Supplier(s) will be expected to engage with the sector during the development period, report to the Department on the level of demand, and fill at least the minimum number of placements.

***Eligibility***
The programme is open to senior commissioners with some responsibility for making strategic market shaping and commissioning decisions. Directors of Adult Social Care Services (DASSs) and micro-commissioners are not in scope.

The future supplier(s) will be responsible for setting clear eligibility criteria, but we expect these to be based on types of job responsibility (as opposed to job titles). In order to not exclude potential suitable participants, there should also be some weight given to endorsement from a DASS.

***Cohorts***
At whatever scale the programme ends up being, participants should represent coverage across as many local authorities and regions as possible. On the programme there should be some cohorts of commissioners who are grouped according to the type of local authority and type of challenges they are facing. To facilitate this, a future supplier will have to engage with the sector and gain an understanding of local needs when commissioners apply to take part in the programme.

***Recruiting participants***Future supplier(s) will be expected to:

1. Develop an application process which is straightforward, transparent and equitable to all interested in and eligible for the programme.
2. Develop a clear assessment process to determine suitability of candidates applying to the programme. This should include endorsement by the applicant’s employer (a local authority).
3. Carry out a prioritisation exercise in the case of more applications than places. Prioritisation should be given to ensure there are representatives taking part across as many local authorities as possible before allocating two places to commissioners from working in same area.
4. Work with applicants to identify candidates’ development and local needs and meet those needs with high quality programme content.

1. **Measuring the programme’s success**

As part of this contract, the Department will request data to measure delivery outputs, to support the independent evaluation, monitor the quality of the service and to measure any improved outcomes that are being delivered as a result.

The successful supplier will be expected to work with the Department and the organisation responsible for the independent evaluation, to demonstrate, as far as possible, the impact the contract is having on the capability of ASC commissioners.

***KPIs***
The Department has provided example KPIs at Annex A, but these are indicative only and will be finalised and refined with the preferred bidder based on the delivery proposals. As bidders may take different delivery approaches to achieve the outcomes of the contract, they may require different measures to assess performance and delivery. Potential supplier(s) should outline up to 10 KPIs in their bids and these will be agreed with the Department prior to contract mobilisation.

Before the contract begins, the Department will also agree on the timelines and means for reporting and updates. While bidders may have their own proposals for reporting to the Department, this should include a minimum of monthly updates during the design period, bi-monthly during the delivery period, and an end of contract lessons learned report. These updates should report on KPIs and where any have not been met, the future supplier(s) shall be expected to submit a plan to the Department that demonstrates how these KPIs shall be achieved at in the next quarter. Where KPIs are not met in more than one successive QPM or where the resolution of the KPI has not been achieved in 30 business days, unless otherwise agreed, the Department may refer the matter through the appropriate escalation route (to be determined at contract award).

***Independent evaluation***

We will separately be procuring an independent evaluation of the pilot programme. Future supplier(s) of this contract will be expected to work closely with the organisation responsible for the evaluation to ensure they can monitor the quality and impacts of the programme.

The evaluation will inform whether the Department continues the programme, whether it should be scaled up, and what changes should be made to any potential future programme.

The aim of the evaluation will be to understand:

* What worked well and what could be improved in terms of recruiting participants, course content and the training delivery.
* Local authority and commissioner engagement with the programme, levels of take up and retention on the programme, participant satisfaction and line manager support for the programme.
* Participants’ and their line managers’ view of new skills and knowledge gained through the training.
* How effective any training materials and digital tools were for supporting learning development.

The evaluation may be able to map early indicators of improved commissioning knowledge or practice, to understand what impacts might be delivered and monitored if the programme were continued over a longer period or at a larger scale.

**4. The contract**

We envisage that the successful supplier or group of suppliers will design and deliver a high-quality training programme over a 15-month contract (6 months for design and 9 months for delivery). We aim to award the contract to the successful bidder in December 2023. The design stage will then run for 6 months from January 2024, and the pilot will be delivered for 9 months from July 2024.

The future supplier(s) will be expected to work extensively with sector partners, local authorities, care provider membership organisations, and commissioners to design the programme. It may be appropriate for organisations to collaborate together in a bid for a single contract.

To ensure the programme is credible, we expect supplier(s) to work with key stakeholder bodies. Supplier(s) will also be expected to work with the Department to deliver a communication and recruitment campaign targeted at local authority CEOs and DASSs to demonstrate the benefits of the programme.

The future supplier(s) will be required to manage the delivery of the contract within the specified timeframes. This will require the future supplier(s) to have robust project management and reporting processes to be in place.

**5. Requirements of a future supplier(s)**

A future supplier(s) will need to meet requirements associated with:

1. The design and deliver the ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme
2. Project management, reporting arrangements and supporting an independent evaluation

**Design and deliver the ‘Commissioning for the Future’ pilot training programme**

Future supplier(s) will be expected to:

1. Design, develop and deliver a training programme that will improve strategic leadership skills in commissioning practice and support participants with making the best use of data.
2. Work with the sector to design a programme that meets the needs of senior commissioners and local authorities, considering the views of providers and those with lived experience.
3. Develop effective branding and a communications campaign to advertise the programme and recruit at least the minimum number of commissioners who meet the criteria to take part in the programme.
4. Develop content that enhances practical application of skills particularly their ability to utilise data - to manage real-world challenges.
5. Use proven, evidenced delivery approaches as appropriate for different parts of the training, ensuring that participants have access high quality evidence-based learning and development, regardless of location.
6. Design an eligibility framework for participation on the programme, based on role responsibilities, as well as criteria for prioritising applicants in the case of oversubscription.
7. Recruit a minimum of 50 suitable participants onto the programme.
8. Develop and assess needs assessments for participants to identify skills gaps and tailor the course content to place-based issues.
9. Gather participant and line manager feedback on the programme.
10. Provide participants with some form of recognition of participation.

**Project management, reporting arrangements and supporting an independent evaluation**

Robust project management and regular accurate reporting is essential throughout the entire contract period. This will enable the department to monitor programme development and delivery, manage risks and issues, and fulfil governance-reporting requirements to give confidence that the programme delivery will be completed to the required level of quality.

The supplier(s) will be expected to:

1. Ensure that day-to-day operational management of the programme, both at design and delivery stages, is of the necessary quality and is conducted professionally against agreed ways of working and standards of behaviour by building a collaborative working relationship between the supplier(s) and the Department.
2. Attend regular meetings with the Department to update on the design progress, seek sign off at key design milestones, and feedback on the success of programme delivery.
3. Work with the Department to design KPIs based on the delivery model (example KPIs at Annex A).
4. Have robust management controls and management information to provide a comprehensive view of actual progress of delivery against an agreed plan, with supporting evidence as necessary.
5. Ensure potential problems are reported to the Department as early as possible and corrective actions are taken to keep delivery on track.
6. Develop a plan of comprehensive corrective actions, mitigations and specific timescales in the event of any slippage, in order to restore progress back to plan.
7. Put in place clear internal governance arrangements that allow for rapid and effective decision-making and the escalation of issues requiring resolution and provide the Department with a copy of the same (and any revisions).
8. Utilise sector knowledge to work with the Department to refine key delivery KPIs once the programme has been designed, including reaching agreement on design questions such as participant numbers at each level.
9. Work with department to develop participant and line manager surveys, agreeing on questions and methodology to monitor and support the independent evaluation.
10. Collaborate with and facilitate feedback for the independent evaluator, including obtaining agreement from participants and line managers that participation in the programme is a commitment to take part in feedback for the independent evaluation.
11. Produce an end of contract lessons learned report summarising the programme’s design and delivery. Content will be agreed with the Department at the start of the contract.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No.  | KPI Definition  | **Annex: Example KPIs** |
| December 23 - July 24: Design period | August 24 - April 25: Pilot running/operational  |
| Performance measure/success factor  | Milestones  | Performance objective | Performance measure/ success factor | Milestones\*TBC | Performance objective |
| 1a | Design programme milestones  | The full design of the programme which will:* Facilitate peer learning
* Support with managing real-world challenges
* Focus on enhancing the practical application of skills
 | Working group established with sector experts to get input into content designEngagement with 10 LA DASSs on content designMonthly check ins with DHSC to update on progress | All objectives’ milestones achieved | Complete the delivery of the programme within the timeframeFacilitating the practical application of skills to manage real-world challenges through peer learning | X\* number of taught days intended per month are delivered as plannedX\* number of peer workshops and action learning sets facilitatedX\* number of provider visits/ service shadowing facilitated | All objectives’ milestones achieved |
| 1b | Design – sector engagement  | Wide sector engagement to generate LA and commissioner interest in the programmeThe development of effective branding and a comms campaign to advertise the programme | Securing LGA/ADASS and CQC endorsementComms with all LAs and DASSs about the programmeLaunch of bold branding and comms campaign (to include correspondence and webinars) | The number of LAs engaged with/ expressing interest are at least 50% of available placements  | Continuous engagement with the sector to ensure the course remains topical and to ensure DASSs continue to support their participants taking part | Establish check in meetings with DASSs and sector leads to update on the programme’s delivery and to answer questions | 30\*% of available placements are filled with coverage across 20% LAs  |
| 2a | Programme outcomes – commitment and satisfaction | Design ways to monitor attendance and mechanisms for collecting participant/ line manager feedback. | Working with the organisation responsible for the independent evaluation to design impact assessment material and surveys. | All objectives’ milestones achieved | Participants and employers are satisfied with their experience on the training programmeParticipants report benefits the skills/knowledge they have gained from the experience  | Reporting on attendance rates. Send questionnaires/ surveys to all participants and employers. | 90\*% of participants completing the training course  Participants attend 90\*% of the facilitated sessions. At least 70\*% of participants and employers report benefits from taking part. |
| 2b | Programme outcomes – benefits/ improvements to local commissioning practice | Design a programme that delivers learning benefits for senior commissioners | Logbooks designed to facilitate a future theory of change and outcomes workshop – intended to map learnings from the training to outcomes.An application process which provides a baseline understanding of participant’s existing skills, knowledge, and local challenges (such as through individual/ local needs assessments) is implemented.Work with CQC to understand the baseline performance of LAs taking part and design a topical course to suit local contexts.  | All objectives’ milestones achieved  | Good practice is shared between commissioners, and new ideas generated through action learning sets.Deliver training that gives commissioners the tools to address challenges in their local area. | Case study examples shared, logged in a guide. Work with the independent evaluator to design a future outcomes theory of change workshop.  | 30\*% LAs with commissioners involved can track change/ innovation back to the learnings from the training.Testimonials and reviews of the content demonstrate that the programme design is well received by participants, line managers and the sector.  |