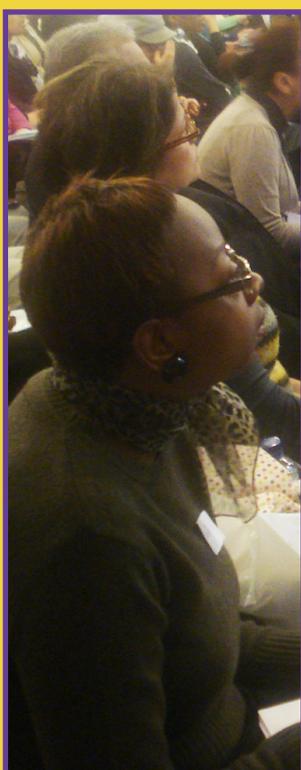


# A Lewisham Compact Code of Practice

## Commissioning Guidelines





Following extensive consultations involving LB Lewisham officers and Voluntary Action Lewisham, these Guidelines were approved by Mayor and Cabinet in January 2010.

Our thanks to Ed Knowles, who drafted much of the material, and members of the Lewisham Compact Steering Group who oversaw the development process.

The Lewisham Compact is an agreement between LB Lewisham and local voluntary and community organisations about how they will work together. NHS Lewisham and SLAM (South London & Maudesley Mental Health Trust) are also signatories to the Compact. Lewisham's Local Strategic Partnership has endorsed the Compact's values and principles.

Copies of a revised edition of the Compact are available from the Council's Community Directorate (or Community Sector Unit) and Voluntary Action Lewisham, or can be downloaded from [www.valewisham.org.uk](http://www.valewisham.org.uk)

Compact Codes of Practice, like the Compact itself, are not legally binding, but are an agreement about the good practice that should be followed to enable effective working between the statutory and voluntary sectors.

# Foreword

Mayor of Lewisham, Sir Steve Bullock



I am delighted to welcome the publication of these Commissioning Guidelines.

Lewisham Council is proud of its relationship with the many voluntary and community organisations in the borough.

By working together we are able to achieve so much more for the people of Lewisham than either of us can do alone. The Lewisham Compact, launched in 2001, continues to provide the foundations for our relationship, which has developed hugely over recent years.

The development of the Commissioning Guidelines is a further step forward in our partnership. Within the Council we are working hard to ensure the greatest possible consistency across all our departments and services; these Guidelines will contribute to that work. Equally important, however, is that organisations within the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector know what is expected of them and what can be expected from us when we work together on the delivery of services.

Accordingly, I commend these Guidelines to you; I am sure you will find them helpful. They have been developed through consultation between Council officers and voluntary and community sector representatives, with additional input from the Lewisham Compact Steering Group. As you will see, we have adopted a broad view of commissioning, to include all varieties of funding for activity that provides services and facilities for the people of Lewisham.

As we move forward, the work of voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises is likely to become ever more important. I look forward confidently to our work together.

*Steve Bullock*

# 1. Introduction

Supporting citizens and delivering excellent public services is a key challenge for the Lewisham Strategic Partnership (LSP). If the LSP is to deliver its vision, that 'Together, we will make Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn' it needs to draw upon the expertise and experience that exists across its partners. Within this, nurturing and developing the relationship between the statutory sector and the third sector is particularly important. In *Shaping our future* – Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy, the LSP agreed that the development of third sector organisations is one of the key ways of making Lewisham a better place to live, work and learn.

There are over 800 voluntary, community and third sector organisations in the borough, ranging in size and scope and involving a large number of local people and communities. Many of these organisations have specialist knowledge and experience: whether for their own neighbourhood; a particular part of the borough; or around a specific condition, problem or subject. This specialist knowledge is made even more effective by their closeness to citizens and their ability to work directly with some of the most vulnerable groups in society. This often means that third sector organisations can respond to local need effectively and make a real difference to the lives and the life-chances of local people.

There are many ways in which the statutory public agencies (the Council, the Police, the fire brigade, the local NHS) work with the third sector. By actively involving these organisations in the commissioning of services, public agencies have the opportunity to improve the quality and effectiveness of these services and third sector organisations have the chance to grow and to bring their benefits to a wider group of people.

This paper aims to make commissioning meaningful and understandable for organisations throughout the borough. It looks to improve the effectiveness of commissioning between the local authority, the Lewisham Strategic Partnership and third sector organisations by establishing a set of principles and expectations for both commissioners and for third sector partners. It also feeds into the broader review of commissioning being undertaken across the LSP.

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The Treasury's 2004 report 'Exploring the role of the third sector in public service delivery and reform' defines a third sector organisation as one that is non-governmental, value-driven i.e. primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental and cultural objectives rather than to make a profit per se and principally reinvest their surpluses to further their social, environmental or cultural objectives.

## 2. Understanding Commissioning

There are many different types of relationships and funding arrangements that can exist between statutory and third sector organisations and this can often cause confusion. Terms like grant-aid, procurement and tendering mean different things to different people.

This document sees all of these relationships as elements of commissioning. This is also a word that can cause confusion. However this document proposes a single, broad definition of commissioning as 'the strategic allocation of resources to improve outcomes in Lewisham.'

Such a broad definition means that commissioning is a lot more than just contracts and tenders. It incorporates the range of different activities and processes that go towards achieving improved outcomes for Lewisham's citizens. This local definition is in line with the recent definition of commissioning released by the Institute of Commissioning Professionals and endorsed by the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action. It is clear from the definition that commissioning is not the same as contracting. There is absolutely no reason why commissioners should not secure the services that "improve outcomes in Lewisham" through grants rather than contracts. Grants will often be much more effective, efficient and low cost than competitive tendering processes leading to contracts and are often more effective when a VCS organisation is being asked to undertake community development rather than to provide a specific service.

When setting up the funding relationship between the statutory agency and the third sector organisation, it is important to decide whether it is more suitable to go through a grant-aid or tendering route. In order to make that decision, a number of factors need to be considered such as the state of the provider market, the desired future state of the provider market, is the funding to invest in ensuring a vibrant third sector or, is it for capacity building etc. Guidelines are being developed by the National Audit Office to assist with this, which will be available from spring 2010.

Commissioning typically starts with a needs assessment looking at the issues at hand and the possible interventions. It moves onto an appraisal of how to deliver these interventions and, where appropriate, putting a contract out to tender. Finally it looks at whether the intervention is successful and what lessons can be learnt for future activity. The whole process is often referred to as the commissioning cycle. An example of the commissioning cycle is shown in diagram 1. (page 7)

Commissioning takes place across the LSP and the organisations involved. Many of the processes that make up commissioning will often take place as part of everyday business. For example, consultation work all feeds into an understanding of local challenges and needs even if it is not advertised or promoted as a formal 'needs assessment.'

For commissioning in Lewisham to be effective, third sector organisations need to be involved at all stages in the cycle. Some organisations will be able to bid for contracts to deliver services. Others will be able to represent and advocate the views of specific groups or neighbourhoods. Others still will have specialist knowledge about how best a service can deliver to the most vulnerable sections of our society. Indeed, in many situations the expertise and knowledge of the sector will be crucial in helping to develop the initial needs analysis, in advising how best to invite tenders or in providing monitoring and outcome analysis.

A distinction is often made between establishing a contract with a third sector organisation to provide or support services and the relationship established through the grant aid process. Lewisham maintains a grants programme, coordinated by its Community Sector Unit (CSU) with a clear remit to support the capacity and development of Lewisham's third sector organisations. While this grants programme has its own criteria for allocating grants, it nonetheless shares the same principles as other commissioning arrangements, i.e. it establishes a working relationship that allows both organisations to better contribute to improved outcomes. As such grant aid can be understood as a particular element of commissioning.

This means that there is a great deal of commissioning all ready underway and many organisations all ready involved in the commissioning process. It also means that commissioning is not just a top down process. It is one that relies on the everyday interaction of organisations and individuals. To make commissioning effective and deliver real improvements to citizens and communities in Lewisham, we need to ensure that partners on the LSP and Lewisham's diverse third sector understand each other, learn from the good practice that already exists and develop new ways of working and delivering together.

## Commissioning Principles

Before looking at the different ways of being involved in commissioning, there are some clear principles that should underline all activity. The principles set out below should underline all commissioning in the LAA and the borough more widely.

- All commissioning activities and decisions must be based on the clear rationale of improving the life chances of people in the borough and deliver against the overarching outcomes of *Shaping our future* - Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy and its supporting strategies
- Commissioning activity should be based upon the achievement of outcomes
- Funding relationships and contractual agreements should focus on the contribution that provider organisations can make in achieving these outcomes as well as the processes by which existing provision can be improved or enhanced
- The commissioning process will be transparent and fair, seeking to ensure long-term, sustainable relationships to achieve practical, successful outcomes
- A standard and transparent commissioning approach should be adopted with sufficient flexibility to encourage innovation and to allow for personalised and tailored interventions
- Commissioning should focus on developing early intervention and preventative services which help to improve outcomes and reduce future costs
- The entire commissioning process and all those involved in the process will recognise the value of diversity and will in no way discriminate against people on the grounds of race, faith, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability

## 2. Commissioning Compact

In 2001 Voluntary Action Lewisham and Lewisham Council signed the Lewisham Compact, a voluntary agreement to improve the working relationship between the two sectors. The Compact sets out clear principles on how the two sectors can work together better and what each sector could expect from the other. The Lewisham Strategic Partnership has also signed up to the values and principles of the Lewisham Compact.

The Compact commits all organisations to work together for the benefit of the people of Lewisham and to engage in dialogue to develop effective working relationships. It places an expectation on the Council and the LSP to recognise the role played by third sector organisations in representing and providing services to the community.

The Compact also outlines clear expectations on funding relationships. Improving commissioning in Lewisham requires actions from both those commissioning and those able to contribute to their expertise and services. In addition to the existing Compact agreement, commissioners and the third sector should recognise that they have their own roles to play in making commissioning activity effective.

| Commissioners Will:  | The Third Sector Will:  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the role that third sector organisations and the Third Sector more widely, can play in commissioning.</li> <li>• Ensure that third sector organisations have the opportunity to be involved at all stages of the commissioning cycle and are able to compete on an equal footing to other organisations.</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the role of commissioning and commissioners in providing local services</li> <li>• Work jointly with commissioners in developing services that benefit local people.</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Together we will help to achieve the aims of Shaping our future – Lewisham’s Sustainable Community Strategy by:</b></p>  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the effectiveness of the Lewisham Strategic Partnership, the Council and third sector organisations in meeting the needs of the community</li> <li>• Developing the third sector’s capacity to contribute to the development and delivery of services to the community and to the achievement of high quality and sustainable outcomes</li> </ul> |   |

## 4. The Commissioning Process

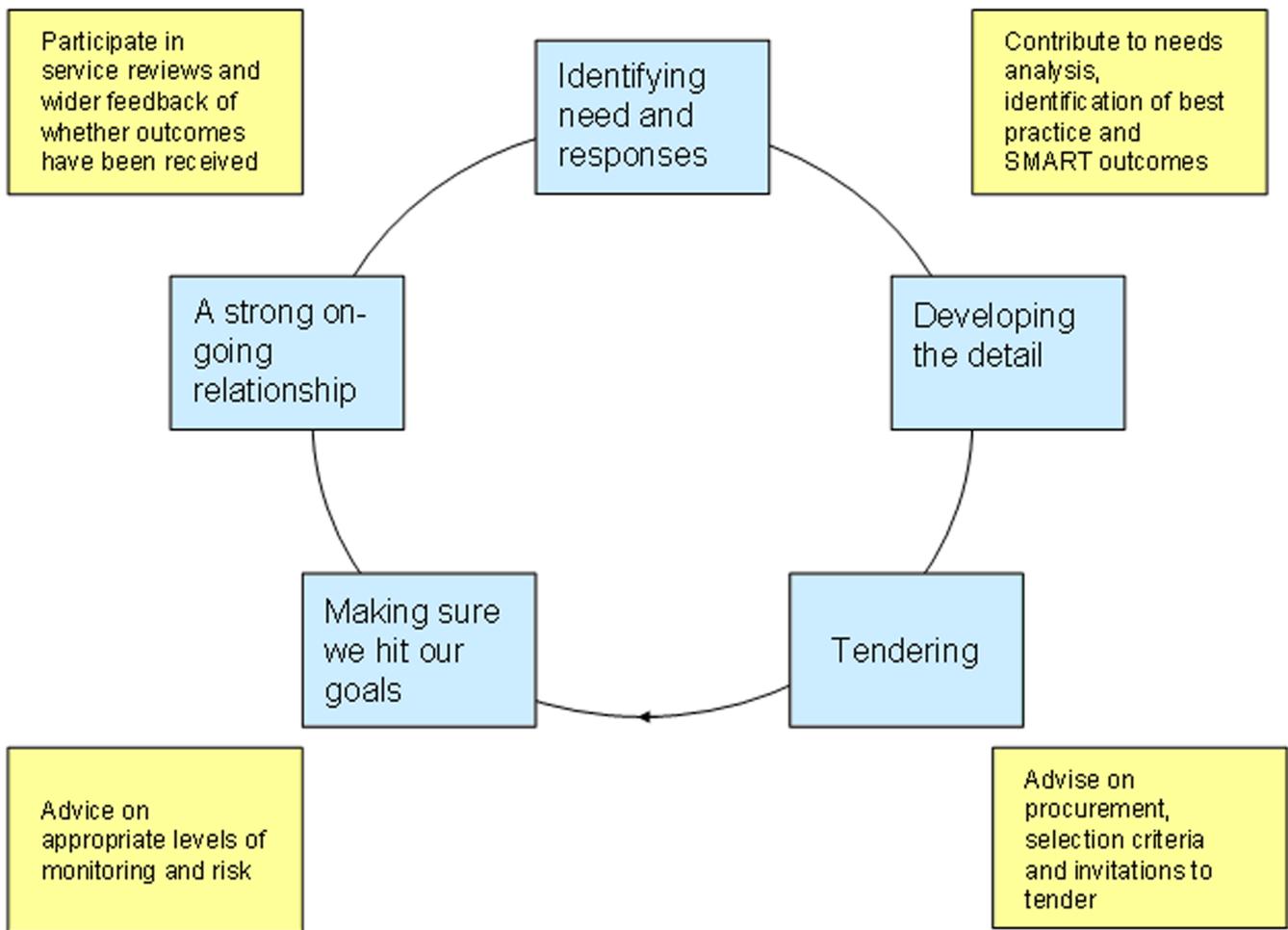
Now that we have defined commissioning, it is important to recognise some of the processes and activities involved. The following sections look at five different stages in a commissioning cycle.

- Identifying need and responses
- Developing the detail
- Tendering
- Making sure we hit our goals
- A strong on-going relationship

Each section explains what happens at each stage and what commissioners and third sector organisations can do, to ensure more open and effective commissioning activity. The role of the third sector isn't restricted to bidding for contracts nor is commissioning only relevant to those organisations that have the capacity to provide services. There are valuable roles that third sector organisations can play at all stages in the commissioning cycle, from contributing to the needs assessment and service development to helping disseminate information and monitor outputs.

As noted earlier, much of this already takes place as part of everyday business. However, all processes and services undertake a similar process of review development and delivery even if they don't think of it as a commissioning cycle. This means that all commissioners and managers of services should look at their own activities and explore how they can apply these commissioning principles. The diagram on page 7 shows this commissioning cycle. It also outlines some of the ways in which third sector organisations that do not have the capacity to deliver services could be involved at different stages of the cycle.

Diagram 1: A commissioning cycle and potential roles for non-service delivery third sector organisations



## 4.1 Identifying need and responses

| Commissioners  | Third Sector Organisations  |
|--|---|
| Involve third sector organisations in the needs assessment process, both as potential suppliers and as key sources of specialist knowledge | Understand the strategies and frameworks which public agencies are working to deliver and look to contribute experience and knowledge in the needs assessment process |

Effective commissioning requires the LSP and its partner organisations to identify and understand the needs that exist in Lewisham. The better we understand the problem the more likely that we can develop an appropriate and sustainable response.

The public agencies in Lewisham have a lot of information on the local area. Based upon this information they have developed strategies and organisational plans, setting out how they intend to tackle these challenges and deliver improvements for citizens and the local area. The key strategy for the local area is *Shaping our future* – Lewisham’s Sustainable Community Strategy which outlines the strategic vision for the borough and sets out six key outcomes. All plans and strategies should look to deliver these outcomes. (For detail of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA see Appendix A.)

Supporting *Shaping our future* are other strategies and plans which provide more detail on how improvements in the local area will be delivered. Key supporting strategies include:

- Children and Young People’s plan
- Safer Lewisham Strategy
- Volunteering Strategy
- Lewisham Housing Strategy
- Health Inequalities Strategy

Identifying needs doesn’t just rely upon statistics and data held by the public agencies. To ensure that the response to need is effective way, it is important to listen to the voices of our communities and to those who use services. This process also benefits from hearing from providers or organisations with specialist experience/expertise in the particular area who can provide an idea of what services are available and practical. This is sometimes called ‘soft market testing.’

### Case Study

Supplier Open Days are often held where the Council and other public agencies explain to interested parties what service is being tendered and asks for their views, this can relate to length of contract, sub-contracting opportunities etc.

At the end of the needs assessment a decision will be made as to the best way forward. Sometimes this might be keeping existing arrangements, if they are delivering effectively. In other situations it might require additional support for an existing service or in some cases developing a new service entirely.

If a change is necessary the next decision is where the change will come from. It could be carried out 'in-house' by the organisation in question or 'externally' through the support, services and expertise of another organisation. Consideration will need to be given as to how the change will be funded since this will inform the type of funding relationship employed.

Therefore in identifying needs and responses:

**Commissioners will:**

- Effectively communicate their strategic intentions and overarching priorities
- Ensure early supplier involvement, including third sector organisations, to gain a supplier perspective when shaping policies and programmes
- Recognise the role of advocacy and non-service third sector organisations in contributing to the needs assessment
- Ensure that all staff involved in the commissioning process have training and a good understanding of the role of the third sector in Lewisham
- Consider 'Meet the Buyer' events – good for third sector organisations to form alliances with prime contractors

**Third sector organisations will:**

- Actively contribute their knowledge and expertise in the needs assessment, planning and service design elements of commissioning
- Recognise the benefits of joint-working e.g. in consortia, to enable organisations to bid for larger contracts



## 4.2 Pre Tender Stage

Where services are being commissioned through a contracting and tendering process both commissioners and third sector organisations have a role in making the process a success.

| Key messages and responsibilities   |  |
|---|--|
| Commissioners   | Third Sector Organisations   |
| Ensure that service specifications do not present barriers to allowing all potential suppliers, including third sector organisations, to compete. | Develop robust governance and financial management procedures in order to ensure that they are in a position to bid for public sector contracts and/or apply for grants. |

Developing the detail is sometimes referred to as the 'pre-tender' phase, where the specifics of the service or intervention identified by the needs assessment are developed. If the service/intervention is going to be tendered externally i.e. offered out for other organisations to deliver, this is the stage where the contract details and the criteria by which competing organisations will be judged are developed. It is also at this stage that consideration will be given as to how the change/service will be funded since this will inform the type of funding relationship employed.

There is a role for relevant organisations, including those in the Third Sector, to provide advice and input to the development of service/contract specifications (this process is sometimes called soft- market testing.) This could involve the same organisations that were involved in the needs assessment or other providers that are experienced in this particular area or type of delivery.

This is also the opportunity for commissioners to consider different models of provision. For example, even in areas not traditionally covered by third sector organisations there might be opportunities to involve them and their expertise. For example, a commissioner might set an expectation that the eventual contractor would look to involve/sub-contract with local third sector organisations.

There are a number of elements of the service/contract specification that can often be seen to present unnecessary hurdles to third sector organisations looking to deliver public services. Where circumstances allow, the contract specifications should be:

- Multi- year contracts (minimum three years)
- Written with a minimal amount of jargon
- State clearly how the service will deliver against organisational priorities and the overarching outcomes of *Shaping our future* – Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy.

Before an organisation can look to bid for work or look to deliver a service or part of a service, it needs to meet certain minimum standards (eligibility criteria) that show that it is a legal, accountable and trustworthy organisation. These number and scope of these qualification criteria will depend on the nature of the contract, for example anyone bidding to provide services to children and young people should have a child protection policy, but as a minimum all organisations should be able to provide:

- Organisational details including information of directors, registration, staffing etc.
- Constitution
- Business Plan
- Annual Reports
- Financial information including audited accounts, insurance etc.
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Recognised Quality Standard Award and/or evidence of working towards a quality assurance system.
- Equal opportunities policy
- Child Protection Policy (where the contract involves working with children and young people)
- Protection of vulnerable adults policy

## Case Study

The devolved nature of procurement and contracting on the part of the Council in the LAA, can result in the same organisation being asked to submit the same pre-qualification information on multiple occasions.

This represents a duplication of effort on the parts of both the commissioned and the commissioner.

Local authorities are looking to develop standard documentation

Within the local authority this will be achieved through sharing information from Corporate Procurement's Contracts register and the Community Sector Unit's Grants register. In the future, the use of the electronic resource, Guidestar, will allow commissioners to check on pre-qualification criteria from a single source.

## In encouraging an organisation to get involved:

### Commissioners will:

- Involve relevant stakeholders in drawing up specification and consider how this process is resourced and facilitated to allow this
- Publish contract opportunities widely, including the third sector press
- Give early signal to market that third sector involvement in supply chain would be welcomed
- Commit to multi-year funding agreements unless there are constraining financial circumstances
- Where possible commissioning agencies will work with each other's records to ensure that those organisations that have successfully completed pre-qualification are not required to do so again
- Design specifications on externally tendered contracts which allow third sector organisations to be able to tender on an equal basis to other organisations
- Where appropriate develop models in which aspects of delivery are sub-contracted to small third sector organisations under the direction of the contractor

### Third sector organisations will:

- Put in place appropriate structures and mechanisms to achieve adequate standards of governance, staff and financial management, quality standards and performance improvement
- Develop strategies and business plans to ensure long-term sustainability of the organisation and its services and recognise that projects and services may be time limited.
- Consider working with other providers to be competitive for larger projects and tenders



## 4.3 Tendering

| Key messages and responsibilities  |   |
|--|---|
| Commissioners  | Third Sector Organisations  |
| Explain the evaluation process to tenderers at the outset, including the criteria to be used and their relative importance | Submit bids to support the delivery of local outcomes, where this is in line with the organisation's mission and in its capacity to do so effectively |

Tendering is the process by which service contracts are put out for competition and awarded according to which bid best meets the criteria.

Having put out a tender, public agencies receive bids and evaluate them according to selected criteria. These criteria will be clearly mentioned in the tender information.

The evaluation criteria will depend upon the nature of the contract. However, typical criteria include cost, sustainability and a strong case as to how the organisation will deliver the required service i.e. what the outcomes will be. In situations where a number of bids are received the best will be placed in a shortlist and assessed against the specific requirements of the contract.

In some cases third sector organisations can be involved in the evaluation process, helping to ensure that service users' views are better represented.

### Case Study

The Integrated Community Equipment Service evaluation team included the Director of the Lewisham Disability Coalition, this person evaluated the tender submissions and was part of the team that carried out site visits to the service providers to assess actual service delivery

A key criticism of the existing contracting arrangements with third sector organisations is that the customer (the body supplying the funding) does not purchase services based on price but on cost. If these organisations are to have the confidence to engage in the commissioning cycle they need to be assured that the terms of any contract will not threaten their sustainability or their ability to meet their overarching objectives.

Full cost recovery means funding or recovering the full cost of a service or project. In addition to the costs directly associated with the project, such as staff and equipment, projects will also draw on the rest of the organisation. Full cost recovery will ensure that the value of the contract and the money received from the public sector organisation covers all the costs of delivering the service or project. In other words, the third sector organisation is not subsidising the service.

In commissioning arrangements with Lewisham, third sector organisations should incorporate within their costs appropriate provision for the following, in proportion to the size of the contract:

- Chief officer/co-coordinator
- Finance management
- Telephone, fax, postage
- Premises (rent/mortgage)
- Associated premises cost (heat/light)
- Insurance
- Associated staff costs including insurance, pension, contractual rights cover
- Equipment (IT, printing etc)
- Premises management
- Research and Development
- Fund raising
- Membership – support of the membership infrastructure
- Governance – support of the trustee structure
- Project Management

When drawing up budgets and submitting tenders, organisations should demonstrate how their proposal represents good value for money in the way the work is managed and delivered.

Entering into a contractual, service-delivery relationship entails a number of risks for both the contracting organisation and the organisation providing the services. In certain fields, notably those dealing with vulnerable people, the level of risk is heightened.

Risks need to be recognised, discussed up front and shared appropriately between the commissioner and the organisation providing a service. In addition the cost of risks need to be understood by both sides and risk transfer funded appropriately.

In tendering:

**Commissioners will:**

- Effectively communicate an expectation that providers should include all relevant elements of overhead costs in their bids, using a commonly understood definition of full cost recovery
- Consider offering training to potential suppliers, outside of any particular procurement, to enable them to improve tenders
- Allocate risk to those best placed to deal with it
- Explain the evaluation process to tenderers at the outset, including the criteria to be used and their relative importance
- Let tenderers know that feedback will be provided. Offer feedback that is as helpful as possible and designed to promote future improvement

**Third sector organisations will:**

- Submit bids to help deliver local services, where this is in line with the organisation's mission and in its capacity to do so effectively
- Ensure that all bids include relevant overhead costs using a commonly held definition of full cost recovery and incorporate start-up costs where appropriate and costs related to training

## 4.4 Making sure we hit our goals

Delivering a service or awarding a contract is not the end of the commissioning process. To ensure that outcomes are being met and that public money is being spent effectively, organisations need to be monitored.

As with many elements of the commissioning cycle, specific monitoring arrangements will depend on the nature of the relationship and the contract/service in question.

In some cases the monitoring may be nationally determined, where services are regulated by law and subject to inspection regimes (e.g. those services regulated by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). However for most grants and contracts monitoring requirements can be determined locally. The scope and scale of the monitoring will depend on the level of risk involved and third sector organisations should recognise their responsibility to share this risk with the commissioning body. Project specification should define what aspects are to be monitored and those bidding for the contract should be expected to include required resources for such monitoring within their project costs.

In general monitoring requirements for a project ought to be in proportion to the scale and importance of the project and avoid an overly bureaucratic approach that might distract the contracted organisation from the delivery of the actual outcomes.

There is a role for the Third Sector at this stage of the commissioning cycle with representatives of the Sector being asked to provide an assessment of contract performance

### Case Study

Example (Local Involvement Network Host Organisation has to report to the LINKs executive on performance against local indicators and national benchmarks. The LINKs executive includes representatives of the Third Sector.

#### Commissioners will:

- Ensure clear ownership of monitoring and work towards more standardised and non-onerous models
- Where third sector organisations are funded from a number of sources, funders should consider coordinating their monitoring requirements to reduce the administration required
- Seek supplier involvement in the design of contract management procedures and ensure they are proportionate
- Focus management reporting on measuring key outcomes

## 4.5 A strong on-going relationship

The relationship between commissioners and third sector organisations is not just restricted to specific phases of the commissioning. For the cycle to work effectively, both sectors need to understand the changing context and situation in which each other operate. This is a process that requires continual dialogue using fora such as Voluntary Action Lewisham's Health and Social Care forum and Children and Young People forum.

There is a great deal of joint activity that could be undertaken to improve understanding and relationships on both sides. Joint training activity is a key area where both commissioners and third sector organisations can develop a better understanding of each other's work.

There is also a responsibility for both sectors to continue to examine their working practices and their long term arrangements to see how they involvement of the third sector in shaping public services can be improved.

### In on-going work:

#### **Commissioners will:**

- Develop and maintain an understanding of the third sector, how it operates and its key drivers and challenges
- Encourage new entrants into the market, including third sector organisations, to ensure that it remains diverse, innovative and competitive
- Regularly review the commissioning process and identify future improvements
- Agree a process whereby groups can be remunerated for their part in the commissioning process
- Undertake joint training to improve understanding between the sectors and encourage greater communication
- Review current contracts with prime suppliers to see if there is any scope for involving the Third Sector

#### **Third sector organisations will:**

- Develop an understanding of the public sector, how it works, and how its strategic outcomes can align with the work of third sector organisations
- Demonstrate the skills and strengths of the borough's third sector and its capacity to support and/or deliver public services

## Key Contacts

### **Voluntary Action Lewisham**

Tel: 020 8314 9411

E-mail: [info@valewisham.org.uk](mailto:info@valewisham.org.uk)

Voluntary Action Lewisham (VAL) provides information and development support to local voluntary groups.

It also facilitates network building for a strong, dynamic and independent voluntary sector in Lewisham.

VAL produces a monthly newsletter called Grapevine, organises several forums for voluntary groups and provides training and development advice to new and established voluntary and community groups in the borough.

### **Community Sector Unit – London Borough of Lewisham**

Tel: 020 8314 6579

E-mail: [sandra.jones@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.jones@lewisham.gov.uk)

The Community Sector Unit (CSU) provides one of the Council's strategic links with voluntary and community sector organisations across the borough.

The CSU develops partnerships with organisations that reflect our key priority areas. It provides a range of support to community and voluntary organisations in the borough including:

- funding for voluntary and community sector projects
- advice on organisation management and fundraising
- community centres, offices and other premises for community activities
- assistance to develop new initiatives and services
- support to help you engage with key central and local government policies.

### **Procurement Unit – London Borough of Lewisham**

Tel: 020 8314 8458

E-mail: [procurement@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@lewisham.gov.uk)

The Procurement Unit maintains a strategic overview of corporate procurement activity and ensure that contracts and purchasing arrangements are carried out in line with legal requirements and the Council's policies and procedures.

The Unit also provides advice and guidance on all aspects of the Council's contractual procedures, including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Lewisham's Procurement Guide, undertaking liaison as necessary to keep clients and service groups fully informed on contracting arrangements undertaken on their behalf.

## Other resources

### **ELN toolkit**

The East London Network of CVS has produced a toolkit to help organisations look at the 'health' of their organisation and get in shape to be able to bid for contracts. The toolkit comprises a CD and booklet.

Price: £10.00 on CD, + £5.00 for 3 hard copies (booklet)

[www.elcvnetwork.org.uk](http://www.elcvnetwork.org.uk)

\*\*\* Special offer! A small number of the booklets are available from VAL, free of charge to VAL members. Limited stocks – apply now!

### **East Tenders**

East Tenders is a consortium of third sector training providers, developed and managed for ELN by Redbridge CVS. Its main work is partnership development and contract management but East Tenders also offer a range of support services for organisations that provide training or employment services.

[www.easttenders.com](http://www.easttenders.com)

or email: [admin@easttenders.com](mailto:admin@easttenders.com)

### **National Compact Commissioning Guidance**

One of a series of Compact guidance booklets, this document sets out the principles and good practice that is expected of government departments, local authorities and voluntary and community organisations.

Download at [www.thecompact.org.uk](http://www.thecompact.org.uk)

or email [info@thecompact.org.uk](mailto:info@thecompact.org.uk) to request a hard copy

### **Futurebuilders**

A government sponsored scheme providing access to loans and grants to help voluntary and community organisations tender successfully for public sector contracts.

See details at [www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk](http://www.futurebuilders-england.org.uk)

## Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement

At the core of all commissioning activity is the imperative to improve outcomes for local people. In line with *Shaping our future* – Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy, all activity should look to reduce inequality and deliver outcomes in an efficient, effective and equitable manner. All local partners have signed up to the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Each commissioned activity will have its own specific outcomes and outputs. However, it should also be able to demonstrate how it is helping to meet the overarching priorities of *Shaping our future*, supporting communities that are:

- **Ambitious and achieving** – where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential
- **Safer** – where people live free from crime, antisocial behaviour and abuse
- **Empowered and responsible** – where people are actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities
- **Clean, green and liveable** – where people live in high quality housing and can care for and enjoy their environment
- **Healthy, active and enjoyable** – where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being
- **Dynamic and prosperous** – where people are part of vibrant communities and town centres, well connected to London and beyond

The Lewisham Local Area Agreement (LAA) Opportunity and Well-being for All establishes 70 indicators and targets to measure how well we are tackling some of Lewisham's key challenges. The LAA was developed alongside *Shaping our future* and reflects its priorities. To meet these targets, commissioners will have to devise new methods of developing and delivering services and will require providers and partners to help innovate.

**A Lewisham  
Compact Code of Practice**

Commissioning Guidelines