

# Commissioning for wellbeing

Career pathways and journeys into commissioning



# Contents

3

3

4

5

6

7

8

10

11

11

12

12

13

15

21

23

## What is this guide and who is it for?

This guide has been created to enable people to aspire to and know how to become a commissioner for **wellbeing**. It contains information useful for anyone considering a career in commissioning, as well as people who already work as a commissioner and would like to further develop their career.

Terms in **bold** are defined in the glossary at the end.

### What do we mean by wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a broad concept, and it is described as relating to the following areas in particular:

- personal dignity
- physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- protection from abuse and neglect
- control by the individual over day-to-day life (including over care and support provided and the way it is provided)
- participation in work
- education, training or recreation
- social and economic wellbeing
- domestic, family and personal relationships.

Commissioning for better outcomes: A route map (2015) Department of Health, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, Local Government Association, Think Local Act Personal.

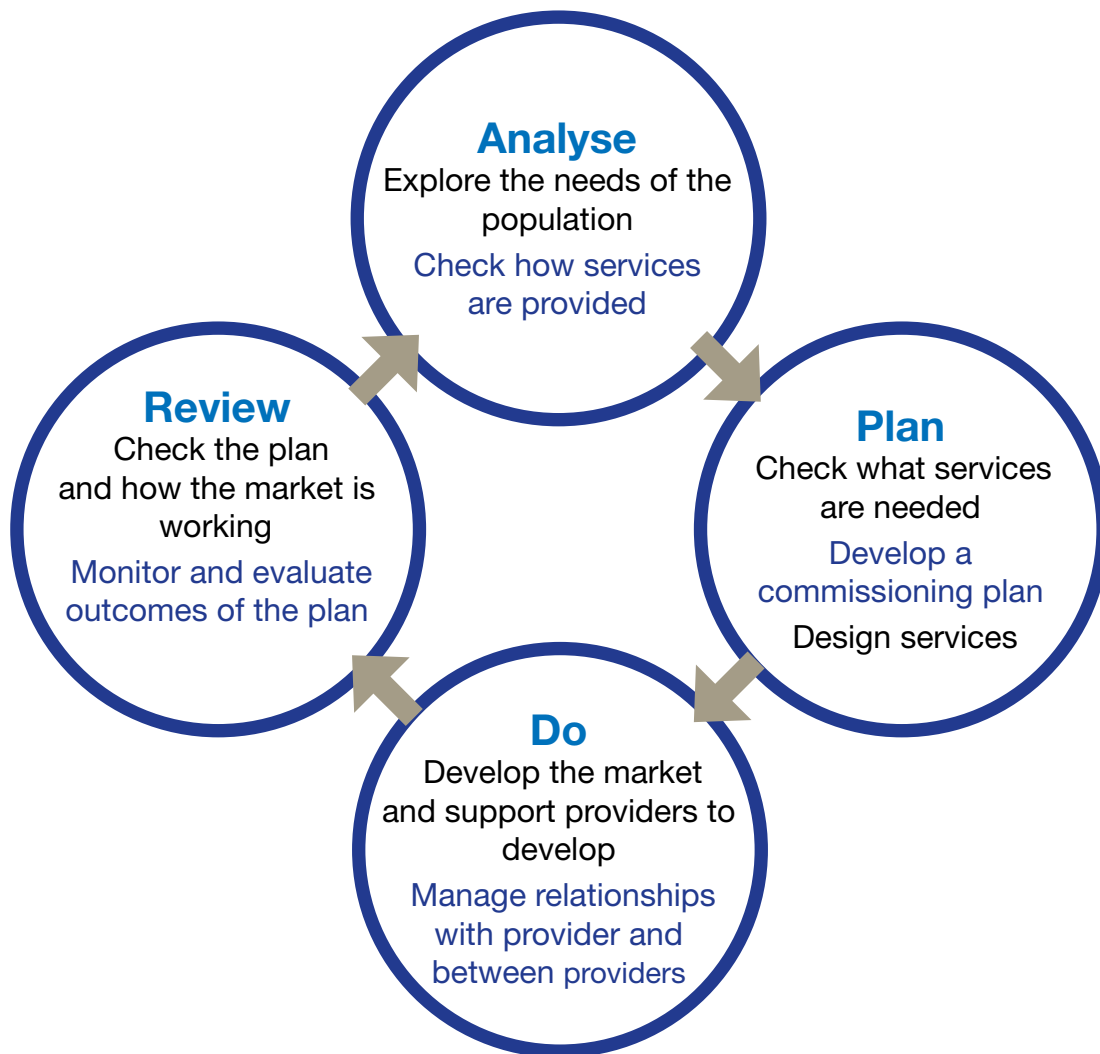
## What is commissioning?

Commissioning is the process that public bodies, including local authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other NHS services use to 'analyse, plan, do and review' the services that are needed by the people who live in the local area, ensuring that services are available and appropriate. It's about balancing quality, value for money and the outcomes that local people want to achieve in their daily lives.

Sometimes described as the 'commissioning cycle', this process doesn't happen in isolation. Throughout the commissioning cycle, commissioners work in close consultation and partnership with the local community and public, service **providers** and other key **partners**. Together they **coproduce** and shape services and communities, ensuring that local people have access to the high quality, **personalised** support they need both now and in the future.

Good commissioning understands the different needs and aspirations of local people, including those who choose to access and pay for support themselves, then delivers a range of provision to meet those people's different needs.

Commissioning does not always mean paying for services, but making sure that the services people need are available. Services are commissioned from a wide range of provider organisations, varying from large, national organisations to smaller, local providers and including organisations from the charity, independent, voluntary and community sectors.



## How does good commissioning make a difference?

Good commissioning enables people to direct their own care and support so that local people have choice and control over their lives and care, live well and reach their potential. Successful commissioners shape and build a diverse market of services, including **self-directed** and **preventative services**, developing skills in the community and equipping people to deliver safe and effective care and support.

Done well, commissioning plays an important role in the sustainability of service provision by supporting providers to invest in and innovate their services towards current social policy and to develop clear and sustainable workforce plans. This plays a central role in driving up quality of services, all whilst making the best use of the available finances and resources.

In the video below, staff at West Gate House tell us how good commissioning helps them to deliver support for people with dementia.

[Westgate House - commissioners, providers and people who need care and support working together](#)

**The best commissioners have the confidence to challenge the status quo, take on radical change, collaborate effectively with external stakeholders, gain a deep understanding of the need and target resources effectively to meet those needs**

The Commissioning Academy

## What do commissioners do?

We asked commissioners to tell us what they do on a day to day basis and they told us “No two days are the same”

Effective commissioners combine problem-solving, innovation and resourcefulness with empathy for the rights and wellbeing of the local population they are commissioning services for, often finding creative solutions to complex challenges.

The role might focus on commissioning specific support services such as substance misuse, housing support or nursing and residential care. Or a role could be about working with particular client groups such as older people or people with a mental health condition. Services are often commissioned across more than one support service and/or client group and are increasingly commissioned jointly across both health and social care.

Commissioning can be a very dynamic workplace – it can be changeable and people will need to think on their feet.

Solihull Council

### External partners

Depending on the role, a commissioner might be involved in meeting with **partners** to develop new services or may work to plan, coordinate and undertake quality inspection visits. They can procure multi-million pound contracts, identify future opportunities for income generation, cost-model a service to ensure value for money, or lead on evaluating the quality and effectiveness of services.

### Internal partners

Commissioners also work closely with internal **procurement** and **contracting** colleagues, ensuring services are provided in the best way possible, that they continue to be delivered well and ensuring maximum impact and value for money. There are times when commissioners may need to challenge services which are under-performing, either agreeing action plans which support providers to deliver tangible improvement or redesigning or decommissioning services as appropriate.

In the videos below, commissioners from the community wellbeing commissioning team at Hertfordshire County Council share what they do on a day to day basis, what inspired them to choose a career in commissioning and how their role makes a difference.

[Tom Johnson, Commissioning Officer](#)

[Susan Carter, Commissioning Manager](#)

[Tim Napper, Commissioning Manager](#)

[Ruth Harrington, Head of Commissioning](#)

## Commissioning roles

Exact job titles differ, but in general commissioning roles fall into variations of the following descriptions:

- Commissioning Assistant/Support
- Commissioning Officer
- Commissioning Lead/Manager
- Head of Commissioning

You may see variations of job titles based on seniority (i.e. Senior Commissioning Officer, Assistant Head of Commissioning) and inclusion of other areas of responsibility (i.e. commissioning and contracts support officer, strategy, insight and commissioning manager).

You may also see roles which fall within the commissioning function but do not include the word 'commissioning' within the job title (i.e. service development officer, contract and performance manager).

Working jointly with Unison, Unite and GMB, the Local Government Association has developed a suite of role profiles for commissioning, providing an overview of the knowledge, skills and ability levels required at each level of the discipline. These profiles can be used by existing commissioners to develop different levels of job roles within commissioning.

You can access the profiles as follows:

If you have a .gov.uk email you can access them free of charge by logging in and registering [here](#).

Others can subscribe for various fees.

It's all about having a varied, diverse team with different experience to bring to the table.

You don't need to be an expert, it's more important to be an expert at finding the answer.

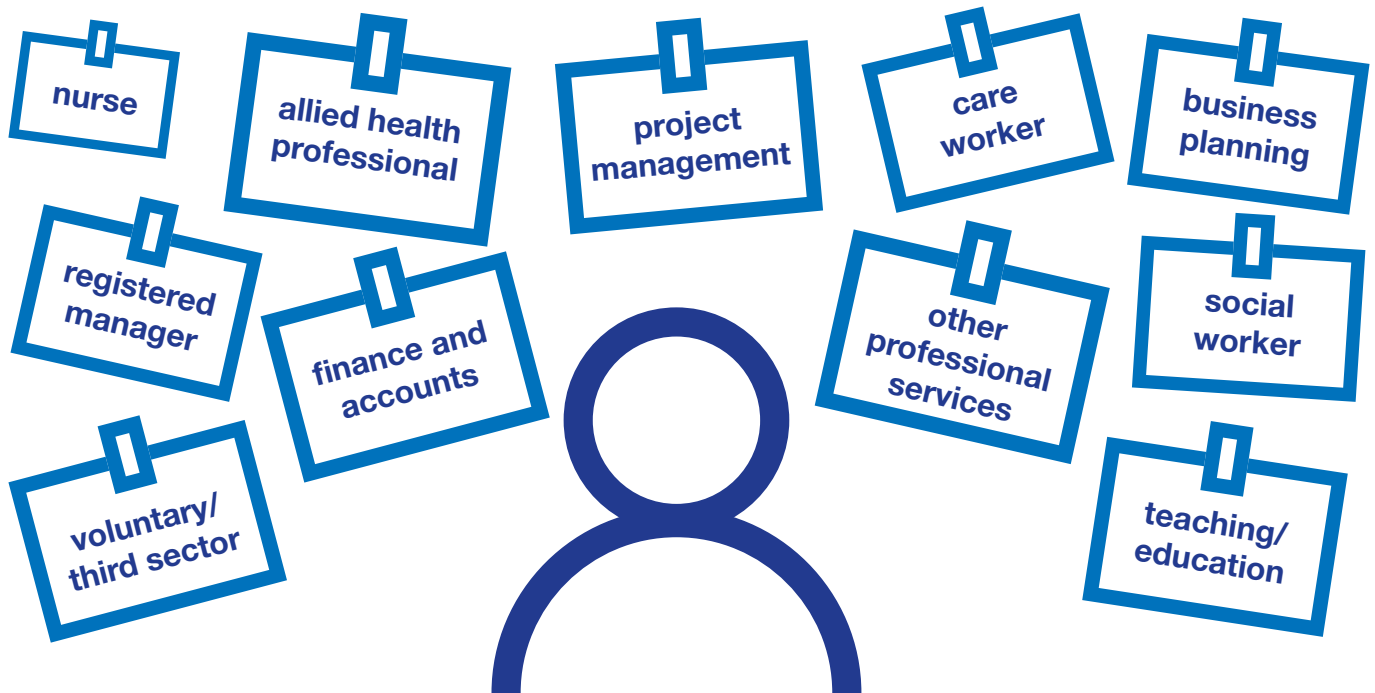
Kent County Council

## Could I work in commissioning?

Commissioning teams need people with a broad set of skills, abilities, knowledge and experience, with the right motivation, enthusiasm and initiative for making a difference to people's lives.

### Experience

People who work in commissioning come from a wide variety of sectors and professions. We asked current commissioners what jobs they had before working in commissioning and received responses which included:



At the back of this document we feature real-life example career paths of people working in commissioning to show just how wide-ranging routes into commissioning can be.

**We have a strong project management culture and look for individuals with good personal skills and a 'can do' attitude.**

Kent County Council

**We keep an open mind and look beyond qualifications to make sure we recruit people with the right skills for commissioning.**

Solihull Council

## Skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding

Commissioners tell us that individuals with the right transferable skills and abilities, values, behaviours and attitude, can be supported to develop and gain the relevant knowledge and understanding to be successful in their role.

Depending on the focus of the role, different transferable skills and abilities will be required. For example, a role implementing performance and quality monitoring systems to support wider activities of a commissioning team is likely to require good data analysis and assessment skills as well as the ability to implement quality assurance and monitoring mechanisms and produce reports. Whereas a role working largely to consult with partners and stakeholders will require communication and collaborative skills, the ability to influence and negotiate, build and manage relationships as well as potentially manage conflict.

The following list provides examples of the skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding a commissioner requires to successfully deliver their role.

(NB: The more senior the role, the more likely an individual will be expected to have the required knowledge and understanding).



### Skills and abilities

- ✓ **Communication and collaboration**
- ✓ **Curiosity and problem-solving**
- ✓ **Build and manage relationships**
- ✓ **Be flexible/ responsive to change**
- ✓ **Work in partnership**
- ✓ **Conflict management**
- ✓ **Negotiation and influencing**
- ✓ **Decision-making**
- ✓ **Innovation and creativity**
- ✓ **Project management**
- ✓ **Strategic planning**
- ✓ **Asset mapping**
- ✓ **Data analysis and assessment**
- ✓ **Financial analysis, forecasting, sourcing funding**
- ✓ **Research and report writing**
- ✓ **Stakeholder management**
- ✓ **Quality assurance and monitoring mechanisms**



## Knowledge and understanding

- Person-centred commissioning
- Local people's needs and aspirations
- Consultation and coproduction at every stage of the commissioning cycle
- Supporting individuals to commission services for themselves through personal budgets and direct payments (self directed support and micro commissioning)
- Local knowledge of the market for services that support wellbeing for the whole population in a locality
- Contract design and management, including outcome-based specifications
- Commercial understanding/ business intelligence
- Policy, legislative requirements and national initiatives that impact upon commissioning and commissioned services
- Political and economic awareness and awareness of impact of actions
- Integrated commissioning for better outcomes
- How commissioning for wellbeing fits with wider trends in health and social care, housing, funding and commissioning
- The place of procurement and contracting within commissioning
- Legal and financial compliance



## Learning and development

Whilst there are no formal entry requirements to work in commissioning, an overall sound level of education, or appropriate experience, is likely to be requested.

Below are examples of the qualifications and/or experience you might see in the person specifications of different commissioning roles.

<b>Commissioning Assistant/ support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Qualification equivalent to Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) Level 3, equivalent experience or evidence of voluntary/ work experience in the appropriate sector</li> <li>■ Commitment to personal and professional development</li> </ul>
<b>Commissioning Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Qualification equivalent to Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) Level 5 or degree level, equivalent experience or evidence of continuing professional development</li> <li>■ Advanced level qualification and knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Commissioning Lead/ Manager</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Qualification equivalent to Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) Level 5 or degree level, equivalent experience or evidence of continuing professional development (preferably in a relevant discipline)</li> <li>■ Recognised relevant qualifications in commissioning procurement or equivalent experience and training in a related field</li> <li>■ Training and experience in project management</li> <li>■ Management qualification or on the job experience supplemented with relevant training</li> </ul>
<b>Head of Commissioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Qualification equivalent to Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) Level 5 or degree level, equivalent experience and/ or hold a management qualification (Level 5 or equivalent)</li> <li>■ Evidence of continuing professional development</li> </ul>

## Getting started

You could start by take a look at the National Occupational Standards (NOS) which relate to commissioning. Developed for employers by employers, these standards provide consistent and clear benchmarks for the delivery of a quality commissioning service. [Find out more and start your search.](#)

### Practical experience

You might also want to consider exploring shadowing opportunities, work experience and secondments as part of your personal development programme to help further understand the commissioning role. Some commissioning teams operate apprenticeships and graduate training schemes which are an excellent way to get started in the role.

### Training and development

There are free and paid-for courses available which specifically relate to commissioning and cater for different levels of knowledge and experience. The following courses are appropriate for people who are new to commissioning or interested in commissioning as a career, or for commissioners who wish to refresh and update their knowledge.

- Certificate of Fundamental Knowledge in Commissioning for Wellbeing
  - Designed for new commissioners as a form of accredited induction, existing commissioners who wish to refresh and update their knowledge and people who wish to position themselves for future progression into the commissioning workforce.
  - Accredited at Level 5 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), equivalent to study at year 2 of a university or foundation degree. [Find out more here.](#)
- Academy for Justice 'Introduction to Commissioning'
  - This short online course offers an introduction to commissioning public services at both national and local level and is designed to help promote a shared commissioning language to support delivery of the best possible outcomes for users of public services. [Find out more here.](#)

## Going further

Paid-for training programmes are available to support commissioners to develop. These range from short courses catering for groups of employees through to postgraduate and MSc level qualifications.

Skills for Care offers the Commissioning Now development programme, designed to help commissioners of care understand what excellent commissioning looks like in practice and how it can be achieved.

The programme is made up of a series of four workshops, access to online tools and resources and a 100 page handbook. [Find out more here.](#)

## Pay and conditions

Salaries vary across the country but the following table provides an idea of pay levels you can expect within commissioning.

Commissioning Assistant/ Support	£20 - £24k
Commissioning Officer	£25 - £42k
Commissioning Lead/ Manager	£40 - £56k
Head of Commissioning	£63 - £88k

(Source: job descriptions provided by a selection of local authority commissioning teams in England, 2016)

### Working conditions

As well as working closely with internal colleagues and teams (e.g. care planning teams, finance), you are also likely to work in partnership with independent and voluntary sector providers, other external organisations, agencies, authorities and the local population you are commissioning services for to develop services and deliver **outcomes**.

Where you will work will depend to a large extent on which support service or client group you are commissioning service for. You may find your role involves travel across a wide geographical area to meet with local community groups, providers and other stakeholders in the pursuit of developing and shaping a market of services which are **person-centred** and meet the needs of local people.

## Where the role can lead

Once you're established in a commissioning role, there are opportunities to work in a wide variety of settings including other departments within local and national government, health services and CCG's, operational/delivery roles, service providers, the voluntary sector and private sector organisations.

In the videos below, Sarah Pickup, Deputy Chief Executive of the Local Government Association and Sara Livadeas, former Strategy Director at The Orders of St John Care Trust talk about their own career journeys from commissioning into their current roles.

[Sarah Pickup, Deputy Chief Executive, Local Government Association](#)

[Sara Livadeas, former Strategy Director at The Orders of St John Care Trust](#)

## Further support and resources

Below are some useful links where you can find out more information about commissioning. Local authorities often have information available regarding their own commissioning practices so it's always worth checking individual websites.

If you have any suggestions for resources useful for commissioners or people considering a career in commissioning, please email [Jim.Thomas@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:Jim.Thomas@skillsforcare.org.uk).

### Guidance documents

#### [Workforce shaping and commissioning for better outcomes](#)

This document is useful for existing commissioners. It can help you to think about the key steps and processes needed to commission the right workforce and can be used for any workforce transformation, from short term redesigning of a single service to developing long term integrated services across an area.

#### [Adult social care market shaping](#)

This document help people and organisations understand adult social care market shaping and how to take action. It's aimed at people who buy social care services including local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, personal budget holders and people who meet all or some of their own costs, providers of social care services including those regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

#### [Think Local, Act Personal - Top Tips: Commissioning for Market Diversity](#)

This guide will help council commissioners focus on the work they need to do in developing a care and support market that reflects the diversity of their local population and offers choice to all.

#### [The Commissioning Academy – Framework document – An introduction to commissioning](#)

#### [Think Local, Act Personal - People not process: co-production in commissioning](#)

Co-production is an important theme throughout much of the Care Act 2014. This resource is for anyone affected by the Care Act including people who use services, families, carers, organisations who provide services and people who commission services. It explains all the things that councils should think about to make sure they are working in the way the Act says they should.

### Toolkits

#### [Institute of Public Care – Market-shaping toolkit](#)

Supports both smaller care providers and local authorities to engage in market shaping, and to work together to develop innovative practice to meet local needs.

#### [Social care market sustainability toolkit](#)

Suggests a robust but straightforward way that councils can engage in light touch market oversight to help local authorities come to a view about the sustainability of their local care markets and the providers within them.

## Learning and development

### [Academy for Justice Commissioning](#)

The Academy identifies and promotes excellence in social justice commissioning and runs an extensive programme of free workshops to support commissioners and commissioning.

### [The Commissioning Academy](#)

The Cabinet Office and its partners developed the Commissioning Academy as a unique development programme for senior leaders from all parts of the public sector. It is designed to equip a small group of professionals to tackle the challenges facing public services, take up new opportunities and commission the right outcomes for their communities.

## Online resources and websites

### [Commissioning for better outcomes: A route map](#)

On these webpages, the Local Government Association provides information regarding market shaping and commissioning. In particular, the document 'Commissioning for better outcomes: a route map' has been developed to drive improvement, providing a framework for councils to self-assess their progress against best practice in commissioning and enable them to identify areas for further improvement.

### [Housing LIN – commissioning extra care housing](#)

These web pages contain items that relate to the commissioning of extra care housing.

## Career journeys

### Team Manager, Joint Commissioning and Performance Management



**Dave Wilson, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council**

#### Tell us about the service area(s) you currently commission

When I first started in commissioning some 10 years ago the team were exclusively adult services. As the council has shrunk in the last 5 years or so, the team has gradually taken on a wider remit including commissioning and procurement across children's services, supporting people, public health and neighbourhood services so that we've found ourselves working on services as diverse as substance misuse, supported accommodation and advocacy through to funeral services and aerial photography.

#### What inspired you to work in commissioning?

I had been a mental health social worker for some 10 years. As much as I loved the role, I was increasingly aware that I was becoming if not 'burnt out', then certainly a little jaded! A chance conversation with the service unit manager for the commissioning team, who also happened to head up the mental health strand, alerted me to the hitherto unknown world of commissioning. As luck would have it, a planning and commissioning officer post was about to go out to recruitment, specifically in mental health, and before I knew it, I'd been persuaded to apply for it. The rest is history!

Previous jobs		
	Job title and description	How many years?
<b>Current</b>	Team Manager, Joint Commissioning and Performance Management, Adults	6 years
<b>Previous 1</b>	Planning and Commissioning Officer	4 years
<b>Previous 2</b>	Senior Practitioner, CMHT Older People	3 years
<b>Previous 3</b>	Interim Manager, Tameside Mind	6 month secondment
<b>Previous 4</b>	Approved Social Worker, CMHT and Rehab teams	6 years
<b>Previous 5</b>	Social Worker, Adults	2 years
<b>Previous 6</b>	Unqualified Social Worker, Adult Placement	3 years

## What do you like/enjoy about working in commissioning?

- My colleagues are from a diverse range of career backgrounds.
- Working with providers – establishing productive partnership working.
- Working with users – less of this for me these days, but I do enjoy it.
- Re-designing services – particularly where there's scope to shake things up and bring a new rigour and vibrancy to services.
- Being creative – when I first started I couldn't see how, given the procurement regulations, the limited budgets, the competing interests, there was any scope to be creative, but, it turns out, there is!
- hearing/seeing that what we do makes a difference.

## How does your role make a difference?

We were instrumental in closing down two council day centres for people with learning disabilities.

Staff were redeployed – which most actually came to appreciate and no one lost their jobs – and instead we set up an approved list of (mainly) small social businesses who provided a whole range of activities that people could access to suit their interests.



Within six months of using Wild Ways to go out on country walks, learn how to light fires and drystone wall, one woman reported losing two stone and clocking upwards of 5 miles a week rambling. Prior to this she never left the day centre. Another woman who tapped into services set up in conjunction with the local sports trust learnt to swim!

Finally, services were meeting their needs and their aspirations (not just providing 'respite' for their families). Indeed, many a parent reported their sons/daughters coming home excited, engaged, knackered!

It's not all like that, but it does show how good commissioning can make a difference.

## What would you say to someone considering a career in commissioning?

Give it a go. It's true there's a fair bit of the slightly dry governance type stuff in there, but more than enough scope too to deliver changes, to shake things up and to really get under the skin of things, both inside 'service land' and out there in the wider community. Increasingly, asset-based approaches are re-energising the world of commissioning at a time when, for the last few years, it has been a bit grim at times.

 **When I first started I couldn't see how, given the procurement regulations, limited budgets and competing interests, there was any scope to be creative, but, it turns out, there is!** 



## Commissioning Specialist, Adults with Learning Disabilities

Manny Jhawar-Gill, Telford and Wrekin Council



### Tell us about the service area(s) you currently commission

I currently commission services for adults with learning disabilities and/or children and adults with Autism Spectrum conditions.

### What inspired you to work in commissioning?

I started work in the care industry as a Personal Assistant following my undergraduate degree and moved into the third sector before coming into local authority services. I have a background in psychological services, procurement, contract management and service development so it was a natural progression to move to commissioning and to try and effect change and transformation of services.

Previous jobs		
	Job title and description	How many years?
<b>Current</b>	Commissioning Specialist - ALD/Autism	3 years
<b>Previous 1</b>	Commissioning Contracts Officer	1 year
<b>Previous 2</b>	Procurement Project Manager	1 year

### What do you like/enjoy about working in commissioning?

I like the variety of the work and the autonomy to find solutions, to troubleshoot and to transform. I still enjoy research and this role certainly requires an element of this. I like that I am not too removed from the individuals who receive our services and I often get to interact with individuals and their families.

### How does your role make a difference?

Working in Social Care is very challenging with national directives and changes to funding putting increased pressure on local resources. My role ensures that local people have access to good information and advice about services, keeps people housed and cared for and offers just enough support some people who without it would come into services. Commissioners are always looking for new solutions to try and support people to be as healthy and independent as possible for them.

### What would you say to someone considering a career in commissioning?

If you like variety and want to make a difference to the lives of Vulnerable People, Carers and Families then a role in commissioning certainly offers that. There are times when you are working under pressure and managing complex pieces of work that require support from others whom you may not necessarily Line Manage. You can be dealing with an individual placement for a person leaving hospital one day and writing a board report the next. This role offers a healthy challenge and is very rewarding.

### Any further information or comments you would like to share?

Due to the level of responsibility some commissioning roles have, the requirement to be disciplined and organised is critical as the impact of not meeting deadlines may have a negative impact on vulnerable people, carers and families. Other officers may look to you for guidance, direction and leadership in decisions to be made that affect people.

# Career journeys into commissioning

## Head of Community Wellbeing Commissioning

**Ruth Harrington, Hertfordshire County Council**



### Tell us about the service area(s) you currently commission

I am currently Head of the Community Wellbeing Commissioning Team in Hertfordshire County Council, which is a role that encompasses the commissioning of preventative services from the voluntary and community sector, community transport and community based day and supported living services for people with learning disabilities. I have been in this role since September 2014 and I applied to be a commissioner following an operational career in the voluntary sector.

### What inspired you to work in commissioning?

My main motivation at the time was to find a role more local to where I live but I had also worked significantly with commissioners from ‘the other side of the table’ so I understood the job and recognised the strategic role commissioners play in improving services for vulnerable people, which is the key motivation in my career.

Previous jobs		
	Job title and description	How many years?
<b>Current</b>	Head of Community Wellbeing Commissioning – HCC	Just under 2
<b>Previous 1</b>	Director of Operations – Westminster Drug Project	2 years
<b>Previous 2</b>	Assistant Director Operations (Thames region) – Richmond Fellowship, a mental health charity	3.5 years
<b>Previous 3</b>	Assistant Director Operations – Richmond Fellowship Employment & Training (subsidiary of above)	2 years
<b>Previous 4</b>	Regional Development Manager (Southern region) - Alzheimer’s Society	5 years
<b>Previous 5</b>	Campaign’s Officer – Alzheimer’s Society	2 years
<b>Previous 6</b>	Director – One Stop Party Shop – own business	1 year

### What do you like/ enjoy about working in commissioning?

Since starting the role I have found it extremely rewarding and I have found that the skills that I gained as a provider have been essential on a day to day basis. Being a commissioner requires an understanding of the marketplace and a key eye on strategic development but it is hugely beneficial to also understand the challenges and realities of providing services and providing the data and information around service provision. I have been able to take a lead in changing how we communicate and work with the voluntary sector across Hertfordshire and by having a background in the sector I am able to have integrity in that position.

### How does your role make a difference?

The current challenges around funding of the statutory sector means it is essential that a 'community first' approach is developed to support people to continue to live independently in the community and although there are significant personal pressures around the delivery of savings and the transformation of services I find it very rewarding to be in the middle of this debate.

On a personal level I have a strong team and I am working with colleagues and a management team that I respect. There is a culture of challenge and debate but it's also very supportive. I have learnt a lot in the last year, I am now keen to stay in the statutory sector for the foreseeable future and can see development and promotion opportunities ahead of me

### What would you say to someone considering a career in commissioning?

If you're considering a career in commissioning it almost doesn't matter what you've done before, you will be useful in a team context and I would encourage someone to consider it.

### Commissioning manager (carers)

**Tim Napper, Hertfordshire Council**



### Tell us about the service area(s) you currently commission

I am a commissioning manager in Hertfordshire County Council's community wellbeing team. The team commissions preventative services primarily from the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and leads on the council's relationship with the VCS. My work focuses on commissioning support for unpaid carers. I also manage two staff, one leading on mental health voluntary sector services and the other leading on voluntary sector infrastructure and support for volunteering.

### What inspired you to work in commissioning?

I have been in this post and in commissioning as a whole for two years. Prior to that I worked in a variety of policy and project management roles across different council departments, having first joined the council through its graduate management training scheme.

Previous jobs		
	Job title and description	How many years?
<b>Current</b>	Commissioning Manager (Carers), Community Wellbeing Team, Hertfordshire County Council	2 years
<b>Previous 1</b>	Senior Policy Officer / Policy Officer - Localism and Engagement, Corporate Policy Team, Hertfordshire County Council	1 year
<b>Previous 2</b>	Senior Project Officer - Climate Change and Sustainability, Environmental Resource Planning Team, Hertfordshire County Council	1 year
<b>Previous 3</b>	Graduate Management Trainee, Hertfordshire County Council	2 years

### What do you like/ enjoy about working in commissioning?

I love the variety of the work and the range of people and organisations I get to interact with on a daily basis. The role combines lots of the transferable skills I developed on the graduate scheme and in previous roles, like data analysis, report writing, presentation skills, working with partners, influencing and negotiating, procurement, consultation and public engagement. This combination, alongside the chance to work closely with front line services and see the impact of what you do is what drew me to commissioning. I can definitely say I'm glad it did!

### How does your role make a difference?

We think of commissioning as a cycle; exploring people's needs, agreeing outcomes and developing plans to meet those needs, implementing those plans and then reviewing the results to make sure we meet people's needs in the right way. For me, when that works well, and you end up with the right services being delivered in the right way, it makes all the difference to the people receiving that support on the front line.

### What would you say to someone considering a career in commissioning?

"Can you work with complex data, write strategies, work with partners in different ways and involve stakeholders? If you feel that you have the transferrable skills then go for it."

## Glossary of terms

Some definitions are extracts from the glossary in Commissioning for Better Outcomes: A Route Map and are used by kind permission.

<b>Asset mapping</b>	A process which identifies the capacity, skills, knowledge, potential for connections and social capital in a community.
<b>Carer</b>	A person who provides unpaid support to a partner, family member, friend or neighbour who is ill, struggling or disabled and could not manage without this help. This is distinct from a care worker, who is paid to care for people.
<b>Contracting</b>	The means by which the procurement process is made legally binding. Contract management is the process that then ensures that the services continue to be delivered to the agreed quality standards.
<b>Co-produce</b>	This refers to viewing people who use social care services, their families, carers and wider communities as equal partners in decision-making. It recognises that people who use social care services (and their families) have knowledge and experience that can be used to help make services better, not only for themselves but for other people who need social care. This is also known as co-production, restorative decision making and peer decision-making.
<b>Decommissioning</b>	A planned process of removing, reducing or replacing care and support services.
<b>Direct payment</b>	Budgets paid directly to people in need of social care services.
<b>Integrated care</b>	Joined-up, coordinated health and social care that is planned and organised around the needs and preferences of the individual, their carer and family. This may also involve integration with other services, for example housing. This term is often used to mean different things by different people (or else not really defined at all). However, a key test is whether support feels joined-up to the person who receives it, and whether different services fit in to the needs and requirements of the individual (rather than the other way round – individuals expected to fit into the needs and requirements of individual services).
<b>Market Oversight</b>	Market Oversight is a statutory scheme through which CQC assess the financial sustainability of those care organisations that local authorities would find difficult to replace should they fail and become unable to carry on delivering a service.
<b>Market shaping</b>	Local authority collaboration with relevant partners, including people with care and support needs, carers and families, to facilitate the whole market in its area for care, support and related services. This includes services arranged and paid for by the state through the authority, those services paid by the state through direct payments, and those services arranged and paid for by individuals from whatever sources (sometimes called 'self-funders'), and services paid for by a combination of these sources.
<b>Micro-commissioning</b>	This is commissioning at an individual level, usually through an assessment and support planning process undertaken by the local authority. It is often referred to as setting up individual packages of care. Increasingly these packages are being set up using Direct Payments so that the individual has more choice and control over their support.

<b>Outcome</b>	An aim or objective that people would like to achieve or need to happen – for example, continuing to live at home, or being able to go out and about. When commissioning services for a local area, it is important for Local Authorities to be clear about what outcomes they are trying to achieve so that potential service providers can offer innovative approaches and so that commissioners can evaluate whether or not the services they have commissioned have been effective.
<b>Partners</b>	In order to commission effectively, commissioners need to work with a broad range of individuals and organisations. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ People who use social care, their carers and advocates</li> <li>■ Strategic partners, who are individuals and organisations who need to be involved to help the Local Authority plan and implement its strategy for commissioning for better outcomes</li> <li>■ Commissioning partners: organisations with responsibilities for commissioning other services, for example Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)</li> <li>■ Provider partners: Individuals and organisations providing care and support.</li> </ul>
<b>Personalisation</b>	A way of thinking about care and support services that puts people who need care and support at the centre of the process of working out what those needs are, choosing what support to use and having control over their life. It is about the person as an individual, not about groups of people whose needs are assumed to be similar, or about the needs of organisations.
<b>Person-centred</b>	An approach that puts the person receiving care and support at the centre, treating the person with care and support needs as an equal partner; putting into practice the principle of ‘no decision about me without me’.
<b>Preventative services</b>	Prevention covers actions to prevent people from poor health, including preventing more serious problems developing or stopping people from becoming frail and disabled in the first place. The aim of preventative services is to help people stay independent and maintain their quality of life, as well as to save money in the long term; for example, by avoiding more intensive support.
<b>Procurement</b>	The process of buying services and equipment to provide care and support. Commissioning covers procurement but includes the wider set of strategic activities.
<b>Providers</b>	Organisations which are commissioned to provide services direct to people who need them, including hospitals, mental health services, GP surgeries, social care services, etc.
<b>Self-directed support</b>	Self directed support allows people to choose how their support is provided, and gives them as much control as they want of their individual budget to meet agreed health and social care outcomes.

<b>Values</b>	Values are the beliefs and views that people hold about what is right or wrong and good or bad. They apply to all aspects of life and influence how a person behaves in different situations. How a person behaves in a particular situation can provide evidence of their core values and whether these align with those of your organisation. An example values and behaviours framework for adult social care can be found here.
<b>Wellbeing</b>	Wellbeing is a broad concept, and it is described as relating to the following areas in particular: personal dignity, physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing, protection from abuse and neglect, control by the individual over day-to-day life (including over care and support provided and the way it is provided), participation in work, education, training or recreation, social and economic wellbeing and domestic, family and personal relationships.

## Acknowledgements

The career pathway for the commissioning workforce was commissioned by the Department of Health and developed by Skills for Care in partnership with commissioners, employers and those who use services.

We are very grateful for the contribution of the project steering group including representatives from the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, the Association of Directors of Childrens Services, Barnet Council, Birmingham Council, Care England, Commissioning Academy, Cornwall County Council, Department of Health, Enfield Council, Essex Coalition of Disabled People, Hertfordshire County Council, Housing LIN, Kent County Council, Lancashire County Council, Local Government Association, Medway Council, National Care Forum, National Development Team for Inclusion, Oxfordshire County Council, Public Health England, Reshma Patel Service User Consultant, Staffordshire County Council, Suffolk County Council, Surrey County Council, The Orders of St John Care Trust, United Kingdom Homecare Association and the University of Birmingham.

We would also like to extend thanks to all those involved in the wider consultations contributing to the development of this resource including people who use services, representatives from local authorities and key stakeholders from across health, housing as well as the social care sector. Particular thanks go to Herefordshire Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Kent County Council, Kirklees Council, Leeds City Council, Suffolk County Council, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, Telford and Wrekin Council and Wolverhampton City Council.



[twitter.com/skillsforcare](https://twitter.com/skillsforcare)



[facebook.com/skillsforcare](https://facebook.com/skillsforcare)



[linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care](https://linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care)

---

Skills for Care  
West Gate  
6 Grace Street  
Leeds  
LS1 2RP

**T: 0113 245 1716**  
**E: [info@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:info@skillsforcare.org.uk)**

**[skillsforcare.org.uk](https://skillsforcare.org.uk)**