

## Streamlining social care procurement in the East of England

### Summary

Streamlining social care procurement to develop and agree a standardised toolkit for purchasing adult social care and housing support services for the East of England.

<b>Authority/partner organisation(s):</b>	<b>JOINT IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP, ADASS EASTERN REGION, IMPROVEMENT EAST, SUPPORTING PEOPLE EASTERN REGION AND THE THAMES GATEWAY</b>
<b>Improvement theme:</b>	<b>East PERFORMANCE</b>
<b>Improvement initiative (workstream):</b>	<b>East ADULT SERVICES: EFFICIENCY WORK STREAM</b>
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<b>Date:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 2009</b>

### Main messages

The Joint Improvement Partnership (JIP) for adult social care in the East of England has developed regional standardised documents and processes for contracting standards for Care Homes, Home Care and Supported Living. As a result of the regional work, councils in the region have agreed common documents and processes for all the main components of the procurement process, including:

- contract terms and conditions;
- service descriptions or specifications;
- pricing and placement arrangements; and
- quality and performance standards.

Through the development of workbooks, the eleven councils are now able to monitor services delivered under the terms of the contract and to determine whether those services are of satisfactory quality and compliant with the contract, as well as safe. The workbooks are structured to reflect the Care Quality Commission (CQC) registration guidance to ensure ease of reference and to reduce the risk of duplication in monitoring or reporting.

The underlying philosophy of the project was to improve regional adult social care through effective procurement standards and to identify potential efficiency gains.

### Streamlining social care procurement in the East of England

The objective of the programme was to streamline social care procurement and to develop and agree a standardised toolkit for purchasing adult social care and housing support services for the

East of England. The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services – Eastern Branch saw this work as an opportunity:

- to improve the purchasing process;
- to be more consistent in our engagement with providers; and
- to ensure a firm foundation for future collaboration.

The work initially analysed all of the current documentation used in the region and reviewed other examples of good practice prior to producing first drafts of documents. The project used a process of full engagement and support from the region using a ‘collaborative’ approach. Work has now been completed on developing and agreeing common quality standards for the three specialisms.

Through this project we have now developed quality and performance requirements for adult social care services within in three workbooks which will form Appendix 1 of Schedule 3 of the Regional Standard Contract. The workbooks will allow the councils to monitor services delivered under the terms of the contract and to determine whether those services are of satisfactory quality, compliant with the contract and safe. While the contract standards embody the councils’ own requirements, the workbooks are structured to reflect the CQC registration guidance to ensure ease of reference and to reduce the risk of duplication in monitoring or reporting.

The programme was sponsored by JIP (funded by Improvement East), ADASS in the Eastern Region, the Social Care and Local Partnerships Team for the Department of Health in the East of England, Supporting People East Regional Group and the Thames Gateway.

### **Key outcomes**

As a result of the collaboration, the East of England has now develop a standard set of documents and processes for contracting for adult social care and housing support (Supporting People) services across the region. This offers:

- Streamlined processes for providers;
- An agreed contracting platform for integrated social care and supporting people services;
- Widespread support from providers for the introduction of a regional standard; and
- Estimated potential savings of up to 5% following full implementation.

The implementation of the Regional Standard will reduce the administrative burden for providers and councils across the region. In addition integrated contracts for home care and Supporting People services will reduce the burden within individual councils.

The region is now starting to work towards:

- Sharing performance management information across the region with a view, potentially, to delegating monitoring of out of area placements to the local authority;
- Better co-ordinated approaches to the market; and
- Identifying the opportunities for lead contracting - where a single council takes on contracting responsibilities for a specific service on behalf of either the region or neighbouring councils.

The Supporting People East Regional Group has agreed to adapt the Regional Standard for services funded entirely by the Supporting People programme. This is with a view to the Regional Standard

replacing the current “Steady State Supporting People” contracts as these expire over the next few years. The Supporting People contract can then for part of the suite of regional standard documents

Some of the critical factors for success were

- The contract standards were developed through consultation and collaboration – this ensures that the process is embedded across the region and tailored to suit regional and local needs, and
- From the outset there was broad support for establishing a standardised information sharing protocol across the region.

### **Moving forward**

In order to fully exploit the benefits of the common approach to contracting for services, there is a need to raise the profile of the Regional Standard as a whole. In particular, the full potential of the Contract Standards to reduce duplication in contract monitoring by councils sharing monitoring information and to focus work on improving performance, need to be communicated.

It is proposed to launch the Regional Standard at the Joint Improvement Partnership conference on 11th March. To accompany the launch and to communicate the message to the widest possible audience, a range of briefing materials for elected members, senior managers, commissioners, contract managers quality monitoring officers, PCT <sup>1</sup>staff, and for providers, will be produced and distributed by email and via the JIP East website. Details can be found at <http://www.jipeast.org/>

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<sup>1</sup> Initial discussions have been held with the East of England NHS Collaborative Procurement Hub on a common approach to contracting for Nursing Homes.