



**Joint Commissioning Strategy**  
**County Durham Children's Trust**  
**July 2009**

## 1.Vision

**The County Durham Children's Trust has a clear purpose:**

**“Improving the quality of life for all children and young people in County Durham by making it better, safer, happier and easier for everyone to believe, achieve and succeed”**

Achieving our vision will require the coordinated effort of all agencies working with and for children and their families. Through our Children's Trust, we will work together to develop and deliver the best possible services and opportunities for all children and young people. Commissioning is the means by which we will transform outcomes and services for children and young people and change cultures within separate organisations.

Commissioning is defined as:

“- a process for specifying and securing services in line with the needs of children, young people and their families and arrangements for monitoring the progress of planned change.”

*Audit Commission 2003*

The vision for children's services across County Durham requires an integrated approach to both commissioning and service delivery and relies upon co-operative working in determining commissioning strategy and intentions. The overall direction of travel is to promote the development of integrated services and teams at universal, targeted and specialist levels. Additionally, progress towards jointly agreed pathways of care offering a holistic approach to the needs of young people and their families is also seen as paramount to effective delivery. Integral to this approach is the roll out of the Lead Professional and the use of the Common Assessment Framework.

Both statutory and non statutory services will work together to tackle the key priorities within County Durham.

Our Joint Commissioning Strategy sets out the position of the County Durham Children's trust in relation to joint commissioning: why we commission, what we will commission, how we will commission and who and when we will commission. The structure of this document reflects these questions.

## Section 1: Why we commission

This section sets out why we commission outlining the purpose and scope of this strategy.

### **In summary:**

A number of key national strategies set out the vision for commissioning as the mechanism for improving outcomes for children and young people and their families.

When we talk about commissioning we mean the systematic process by which we identify:

- What the needs of our families, children and young people are
- What services are required to meet those needs
- What works and what doesn't (models of best practice)
- How we will put those services in place (secure services)

Sometimes this will mean changing who and how existing services are delivered (re-shaping and decommissioning)

Sometimes this will mean we will develop new services

Our Children's Trust is a multi-agency partnership through which we can deliver joined up, integrated working across (all) agencies. The Children's Trust is responsible for planning, commissioning and managing performance.

Our duty to work together to improve outcomes is outlined in some key legislation. This legislation makes provision for the sharing of budgets and resources across agencies to support this activity.

The Local Children's Boards are the operational 'arms' of the Children's Trust at a local level.

## Purpose of this Joint Commissioning Strategy

***'A Children's Trust is, in part, a commissioning partnership, commissioning services for children young people and their families. Strategic commissioning is a key means by which the Children's Trust partners come together to make a reality of the duty to co-operate and drive cultural change.'***

*Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families 2008*

The policies **'Every Child Matters'** and **'The Children's Plan'** and the Children's Trust Statutory Guidance 2008 emphasis that effective joint planning and commissioning is at the very heart of improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. It has also been acknowledged that no single agency can deliver the requirements of the **'Every Child Matters'** agenda and improve outcomes for children and young people. Collaboration and integrated working between agencies is essential to achieve this.

**The Children and Young People's Plan** identifies those priorities against which the County Durham Children's Trust intends to deliver improved outcomes. This strategy provides the framework and mechanism by which those priorities will be translated into improved outcomes through joint commissioning activity.

Through this commissioning framework we will seek to establish a shared vision and approach. By improving our approach to commissioning, we intend to develop a more open, transparent process, which actively involves and is responsive to stakeholders and ensures that our resources are used more creatively and to greater affect. This Strategy will provide a clear remit for service commissioning processes, and a baseline for reviewing future effectiveness and improvement.

## Aims and objectives of this strategy

The aim of this strategy is to provide a clear framework for all joint commissioning activity across County Durham Children's Trust. This will be achieved by basing our commissioning activity on sound principles and rooting our activity in transparent processes.

Commissioning activity will put the needs of children and young people and their families first through effective engagement and participation and in doing so we aim to ensure our joint commissioning activity is at the heart of improving outcomes for children and young people.

In adopting a strategic and co-ordinated approach to our commissioning activity we will achieve:

- Improved outcomes for children and young people
- More efficient and effective use of planning, resourcing and commissioning services

- Stakeholders engagement and involvement in the planning and commissioning of services
- Value for money through more efficient and effective use of resources
- Develop a menu of service provision that supports our integrated services framework.

## Context

### National

The requirement to develop an integrated approach to commissioning activity has been endorsed at National level both through statute and related guidance. Expectations for Children's Trusts to become the vehicle for integrated commissioning activity are clearly laid out.

Early foundations and legislative drivers for joint commissioning are contained in The Health Act 1999 which under s31 creates flexibilities for the pooling of budgets, introduction of lead commissioning and the development of integrated provision. Similarly, from April 2005, there has been a statutory duty on agencies and bodies delivering children's services to co-operate in arrangements to improve the well being of children and young people. Local Authorities with children's services responsibilities have a duty under the Children Act 2004:

**Section 10** – *to make arrangements to promote co-operation between agencies in order to improve children's well being, defined by reference to the five outcomes and a duty on key partners to take part in those arrangements. It also provides a new power to allow pooling of resources in support of these arrangements.*

**Section 12** – *creates a duty for the key agencies who work with children to put in place arrangements to make sure that they take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when doing their jobs*

**“Every Child Matters Next Steps 2004”** defines Children's Trust primary responsibility as “to secure integrated commissioning leading to more integrated service delivery and better outcomes for children and young people”. This expectation is similarly endorsed within **“The National Services Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services”**

**‘Children's Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families 2008’** states a central function for the Trust is to act as ‘a planning body which informs commissioning decisions and ensures, ...that front line services work together to improve outcomes.’

Further emphasis nationally has been placed upon the need to direct commissioning activity to early intervention and prevention services.

**'The Children's Plan'** focuses on services working together to intervene early to prevent problems turning into a crisis, and providing more support for parents to do the best for their child. It joins services up so that they are shaped around the needs of children and their families, reflecting the lives they lead rather than professional boundaries. This ethos is further developed in subsequent strategies and guidance such as **"Think Family"** which emphasises the need for joint working to cross traditional boundaries to focus on the strengths and difficulties of the whole family rather than those of the parents or child in isolation. This necessitates much closer working with adult services, including the joint commissioning of services.

The process and expectations for commissioning has been set out within the **'Joint Planning and Commissioning Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (March 2006)'** . The development of our Joint Commissioning Framework has had due regard to this national framework.

The development of integrated services will require the transformation of the work force. **The 20/20 Workforce strategy** sets out the government's vision for this. It also makes clear the need to match commissioning intentions with competences for the workforce and sets out plans to deliver this

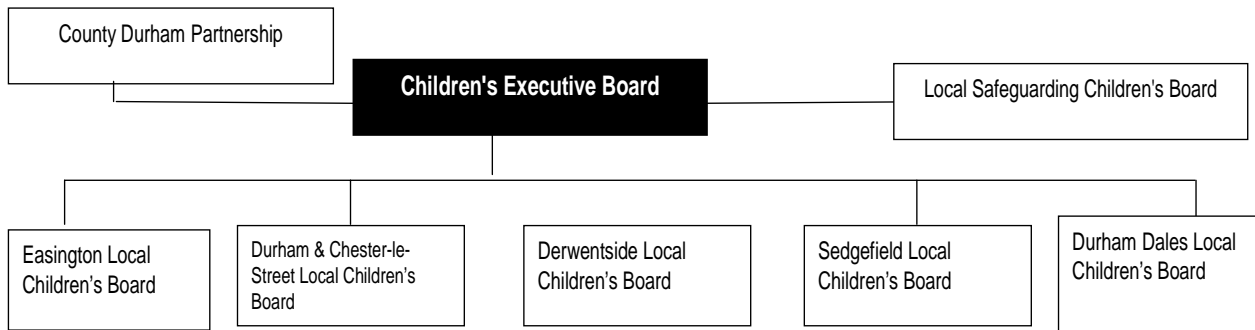
## Local Context

The County Durham Children's Trust is responsible for delivering improved outcomes for children, young people and their families and as such is responsible for strategically commissioning children's services. The Children Act 2004 and subsequent statutory guidance on Children's Trust in 2008 specifically identify a number of partners who are legally bound to co-operate and work together with the Children's Services Authority (CSA) in making this happen.

The governance and membership arrangements for County Durham Children's Trust are set out in the document: "County Durham Children's Trust Governance Arrangements", April 2009.

The Children's Trust comprises an Executive Board and 5 Local Children's Boards with representatives from all relevant partners.

## County Durham Children's Trust



The views held by children, young people and their families are vital in developing future services for children and improving outcomes, and this is reflected throughout the activity of the Children's Trust.

Our partnership arrangements and commitment to joint working to improve outcomes for children young people and families are well established. A consistent and joined up approach to all commissioning within County Durham is required to support County Durham Children's Trust in delivering improved outcomes for all. It is important therefore that Commissioning decisions by Children's Trust partners are taken within an accountable framework that is responsive to the needs of children young people and families, transparent and secure maximum value for money.

This strategy is intended to provide that consistent framework.

## Section 2: What we will commission

This section details what will be commissioned. Our commissioning activity will be rooted within a clear planning framework and will focus on translating “talk into action” through effective service delivery.

### **In summary:**

The most important priorities – what matters most and what action needs to be taken to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in County Durham have been outlined within Durham’s Sustainable Community Strategy.

County Durham Partnership brings together key organisations to make County Durham an even better place to be whilst improving services and access to them.

The Children’s Trust is one part of this partnership (a thematic group of the CDP).

The steps individual agencies need to take to deliver our agreed priorities are set out in a number of plans and strategies

For the Children’s Trust there is a single Strategic Plan called the Children & Young People’s Plan (CYPP)

The Key Improvement Priorities (KIPs) with the CYPP are the issues we need to address in order to make the most difference to the lives of the children, young people and their families

The KIPs will be the basis of what we will jointly commission

Our Commissioning Intentions (what we want to do to make a difference) will be set out in an Annual Commissioning Plan (ACP).

Our commissioning activity will be based on clearly identified needs and we will use the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Common Assessment

Framework (CAF) analysis and LCB knowledge of what works and what doesn't work to inform our commissioning activity.

Our commissioning activity will be underpinned by clear principles – these include:

- Commissioning services that will make a real difference to children, young people and families
- a commitment to work with children, young people and families in all our commissioning activity
- having open and transparent processes so that we can ensure we commission the best possible service to meet need – the best in class

## Planning for Improved Outcomes - the Children and Young People's Plan and other plans

Joint commissioning must respond to the direction of the priorities of the Children's Trust and reflect need identified by the Local Authority, the PCT and all relevant partners. Overarching priorities for County Durham are set through Durham's Sustainable Community Strategy which sets the general direction of travel.

The Children's Trust is the children and young people's thematic group of the County Durham Partnership and is responsible for ensuring that actions impacting positively on children and young people are taken.

**The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)** is the single, overarching strategic plan for the all partners of the Children's Trust. The CYPP sets out the agenda to improve outcomes for children and young people and identifies priorities on which all partners will work together to achieve.

These priorities and plans must also be reflected in other partnership plans, including:

- Economic Strategy
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Local Safeguarding Children's Board
- Community Safety Strategy
- 14 - 19 Strategy
- Building Schools For the Future and Primary Strategy for Change
- Environmental and Neighbourhood Strategy

Partner agencies own plans must demonstrate their service's contribution to achieving CYPP priorities. These include:

- Primary Care Trust (PCT) Annual Operating Plan
- Local Police Authority's 3 Year Strategy Plan and local policing plan
- Youth Justice Plan
- Probation Area Annual Plan
- DAAT Strategy
- BSF Strategy and Primary Strategy for Change
- Children and Young People's Services Plan

The above lists are not exhaustive but give a picture of the climate of change in which we work.

## **Commissioning Plans and Priorities: the Annual Commissioning Plan.**

The Children's and Young People's Plan has been developed in partnership with children, young people and families and is based on detailed locality and countywide analysis. Our key improvement priorities (KIPs) have been identified accordingly and will form the basis for all Trust joint commissioning activity.

Based on the Key Improvement Priorities, we will develop an Annual Commissioning Plan (ACP). The ACP will set out commissioning intentions for all our key improvement priorities to tackle inequality and gaps in service to address unmet need. This will be the basis for our strategic commissioning activity.

All commissioning plans must be firmly based on an accurate assessment of need and aspiration. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is a key document to inform and be informed by the Children and Young People's Plan. This evidence based document helps identify priority areas for commissioning across many agencies and supports joint commissioning.

We are committed to meeting the needs of children, young people and families at as local level as possible. The role and responsibilities of the Local Children's Board will provide the vehicle for understanding locality needs, shaping commissioning intentions and monitoring delivery performance locally.

We will build up our evidence base of unmet need and gaps in service at a local level through our analysis of Common Assessment Framework activity. This will help identify priority areas and will be the foundation for wider strategic commissioning intentions.

By aligning vision, needs assessment, priorities and plans across the County Durham Partnership, commissioning strategies and actions will be better coordinated and more effective in meeting the need of the community of County Durham.

### **Commissioning Principles**

All of our commissioning will be governed by clear principles:

1. All decisions are based on a clear rationale for improving outcomes for children and young people.
2. The meaningful engagement and participation of children and young people and families will be central to all commissioning activity.
3. Commissioning priorities for the Children's Trust will be determined and drawn from the Children and Young People's Plan.

4. Planners and commissioners will have a strategy and focus on moving resources to preventative and early intervention services.
5. Our planning and commissioning functions will be discharged in an open and transparent manner and thus encourage and support the active involvement of a wide range of service providers.
6. Commissioning activity will be undertaken in a timely and focused fashion so that we can put in place the services we need as quickly as possible.
7. Commissioning activity must translate planning into effective service delivery “turning talk into action”.
8. Commissioning activity must take place in accordance with legal requirements and guidance, and comply with European and UK law.
9. Joint commissioning will have regard for World Class Commissioning Principles.
10. Joint Commissioning actions should demonstrate value for money and long term sustainability

## Involvement of Children, Young People and Families

**“The meaningful engagement and participation of children, young people and families will be central to all commissioning activity”**

Children, young people, parents and carers are not passive recipients of services. We are committed to working with them to better understand their needs and jointly develop appropriate, valued and effective services. Reference groups will continuously gather views and involve children, young people and their parents and work to shape service developments at both CEB and LCB level.

Through the active engagement and participation of children, young and families we will ensure our commissioning activity is needs led. In this way we will be able to make a real difference to the lives of children, young people and families in County Durham.

We are committed to the genuine participation and engagement throughout **all** our commissioning processes.

## World Class Commissioning

World Class Commissioning is the principle by which Commissioning arrangements within the NHS are now governed. Whilst specifically aimed at the development of commissioning within the Health arena these principles can provide an effective basis and a strong driver on which to commission a

broad range of services. All joint commissioning should have regard for the principles contained within World Class Commissioning.

Key principles contained within the World Class Commissioning competencies are useful enablers and need to be included in the wider commissioning process. In particular commissioning developments should be based upon:

- Clear leadership within the commissioning arrangements.
- Strong involvement of key partners in commissioning development.
- Involvement of clinicians/ key providers in the development of service outcomes.
- Involvement of service users/ carers in commissioning services.
- Service development based on clear need and sound information.
- Effective stimulation of the market to achieve best value.
- Effective financial systems to ensure appropriate use of resources and accountability.
- An effective monitoring and review system.

## Practice Based Commissioning

Within Health, Practice Based Commissioning (PBC) plays a key role in helping to identify need and set Countywide and local commissioning priorities. PBC is about engaging practices and other primary care professionals in the commissioning of services. Through PBC, front line clinicians are being provided with the resources and support to become more involved in commissioning decisions

It is therefore important that there is strong link between Practice Based Commissioning and Joint Children's Commissioning; with involvement at both Joint Commissioning Board and Local Children's Board level. Practice Based Commissioning's role will be to ensure that this link is vigorous and that commissioning intentions are linked and converge wherever possible. Issues identified by Practice Based Commissioning Clusters should help to support and inform the progression of the wider Children's Commissioning agenda.

## Section 3: How and who will commission

This section outlines the Commissioning Framework, different levels of commissioning and specifically how the framework can be applied to support consistent commissioning practice across the Trust. It will detail the roles and responsibilities of the relevant commissioning bodies.

### **In Summary:**

The Joint Commissioning cycle describes the steps that need to be taken to determine:

- What services are needed
- Which organisation should deliver our services
- How required services should be put in place
- Whether the service provides value for money, in accordance with agreed outcomes; that is whether the service is the right service, for the right price at the right time in order to improve outcomes

This involves understanding what works and what doesn't; where there are gaps in services, where there is duplication so that we can change existing working arrangements to meet the needs of our children, young people or so that we can 'buy' services to meet needs.

The actions and steps that need to be completed at the different stages of the commissioning cycle will be outlined in our Joint Commissioning Toolkit.

Commissioning activity takes place at different levels and different structures and groups of people will be responsible for commissioning activity.

Individual commissioning –refers to activity and actions that are taken by any agency to meet any child / young person’s needs. This will be focussed around joint working and implementation of a care plan usually through CAF processes

Thematic / Lead Commissioning –will involve identifying shared and emerging needs across a geographical locality or identified group of children and young people that are not currently met. The commissioning cycle will be used to identify what services need to be in place to meet those needs.

Strategic Commissioning - this is the process of by which cross cutting commissioning activity is joined up in accordance with the vision and aims of the C.Y.P.P.

The vehicle for all our commissioning activity will be the **Joint Commissioning Board (JCB)** and the programme of activity will be outlined in an **Annual Commissioning Plan**.

All joint commissioning activity in respect of the CYPP will be routed through and ratified by the JCB. on behalf of Children’s Executive Board (CEB).

The J.C.B. is the commissioning arm of our Children’s Trust.

Key supports to the JCB include:

- **Local Children’s Boards** – who shape and influence commissioning activity through representation on the JCB; having an active role in developing service specifications; understanding what works and what gaps exist at locality level; using allocated Areas Based Grant to commission very local services
- **Lead Commissioners** – who are key members of the JCB (senior officers drawn from commissioners and providers for the PCT and CYPS) who are charged with ensuring that agreed commissioning intentions are progressed appropriately. Each lead commissioner will be assigned to one of the ECM. outcomes areas and their commissioning responsibilities will broadly fall into these outcome areas. However it recognised that outcomes are inter –dependent.
- **Commissioning Officers** – who will be responsible for operationally taking forward agreed commissioning activity. They will report to the Lead Commissioner for their aligned commissioning activity and ultimately the JCB. They will work closely with all stakeholders including service users and providers to ensure we commission the right service at the right time in the right place.

We are mapping and working towards implementation of these revised commissioning arrangements in a detailed transition and implementation plan.

Further support structures for our joint commissioning activity include:

- **Planning performance and delivery group** - this is responsible for performance monitoring of the Children's Trust on behalf of CEB. They will provide performance information in relation to how well the Trust is doing in relation to addressing our key priorities.
- **Delivery Champions** – are charged with driving performance and delivery at a County wide and local level – 'turning talk into action'.
- **Local KIP Leads** – together with the Delivery Champions will ensure there is a coordinated approach to driving forward delivery at both a local and Countywide level.
- **Integrated Data function** – in order to understand what needs to change, we need to understand: what we have; how well services are delivering the support children and young people need. Data is critical in this regard and our integrated data function and services will provide this information.
- **Contracting and Procurement Processes** – How we choose what we "buy" and the option we have for putting services in place are governed by legally binding rules. We are committed to using these rules. We need to make sure the rules and processes for selecting services are understood, agreed and followed consistently using expertise from both providers and commissioners and are inclusive of service users . In doing so we will ensure that we get the 'best in class' and that we follow our stated principle of commitment to having open and transparent processes.

A summary of these rules will be included in our Commissioning Tool Kit to be published in July 2009.

Our Commissioning Tool Kit will provide practical guidance for all of the stages and steps involved in the commissioning cycle. It will be developed as a good practice guide. It will include:

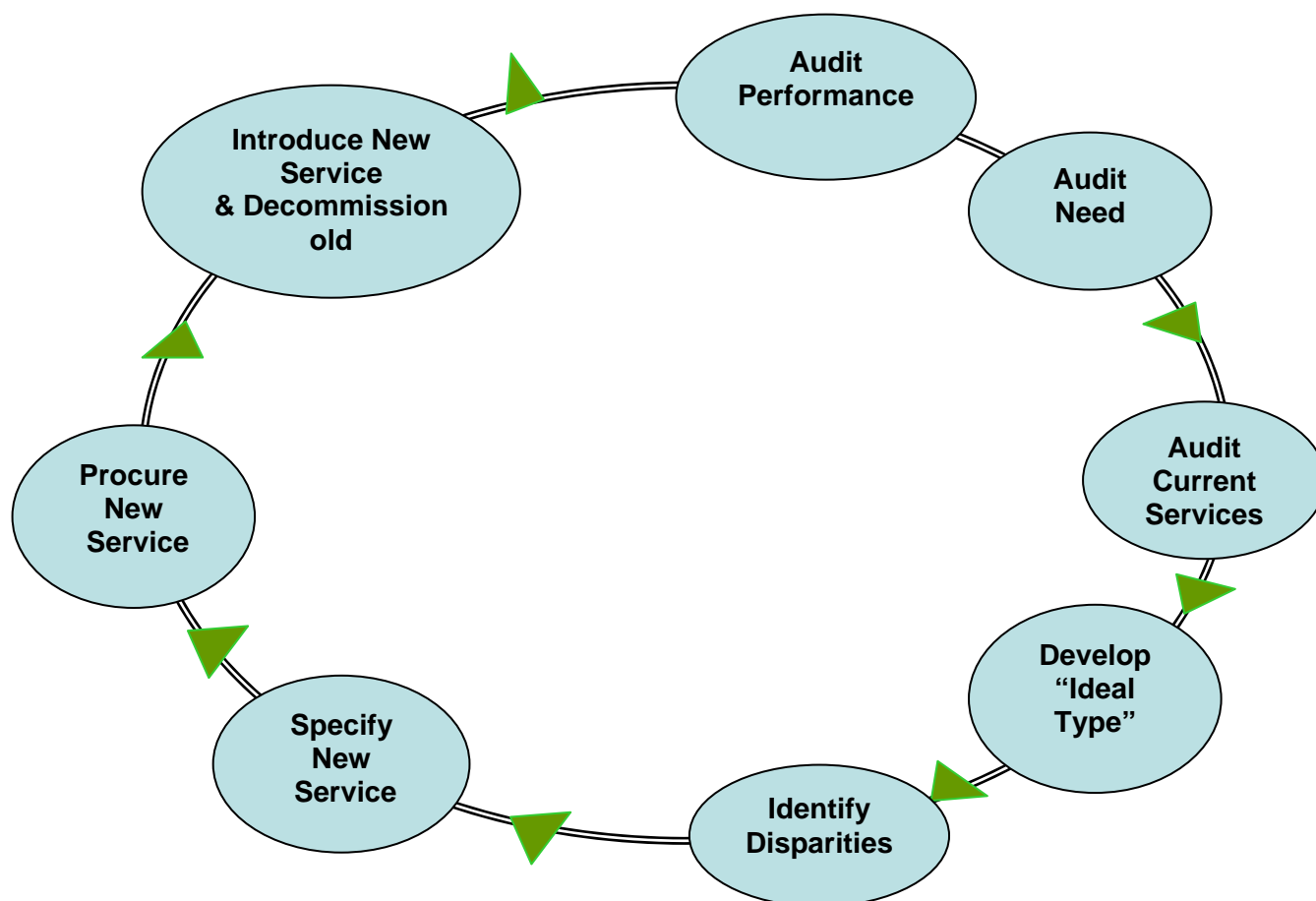
- Guidance on using RBA
- Guidance in respect of data collection and analysis methods
- Problems Solving Tools
- Improvement Tools
- Control Tools
- Procurement pack – including sample templates of service specifications, evaluation processes, outcome based contracts, flow charts of procurement routes , summary guide of contracting and procurement rules.

Our approach to working with the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) is outlined in this Strategy and the County Durham Compact. We recognise the

worth and contribution of the VCS in delivering effective services and the significance of their contribution and influence is reflected in the VCS being represented on the JCB.

Our commissioning principles include a commitment to developing the Market. We will do this through an inclusive approach to the development of service specifications, selection of providers, and a process of market testing / market awareness.

## Joint Commissioning Cycle



This framework is based on effective and inclusive strategic planning, community engagement as well as performance management, contracting and procurement processes.

It provides a systematic approach to deciding **what** service is needed, **which** organisation should deliver the service and **how** it should be delivered, with the aim of delivering a **value-for-money** service, in accordance with agreed **outcomes**.

Commissioning is not a mechanism for organisations to continue with their existing activities, but provides an effective quality assurance process for the provision of specific services or activities.

The Joint Commissioning cycle is an 8 step process that supports the implementation and delivery of services in accordance with assessed need.

By understanding what services we have currently, how well services are performing, where duplication exists and relating this to assessed need we can determine whether existing services are the right services to impact on specified outcomes. This is the audit stage of the commissioning cycle.

Where gaps in services or gaps in the effectiveness of services are identified, we can develop the ideal type of service that is required to make a difference. (Develop the ideal type). We will use research and models of best practice to inform this.

By comparing the ideal type with existing services we can determine the changes that are required to deliver of an improved service and begin to specify the service in accordance with agreed outcomes. This may involve the reshaping the existing workforce and de-commissioning of existing services.

**Decommissioning is the term used to refer to ‘the process of planning and managing a reduction in service activity or terminating a contract in line with commissioning objectives’.**

Identifying the resource that is available for the specified service will enable us to move to the stage of securing the new service and implementation – this is how we will put new arrangements in place.

The precise activities and tools to support commissioning activity at each stage of the commissioning cycle will be detailed in the supporting tool kit that accompanies this strategy, due to be published in July 2009.

## Levels of Commissioning

It can be helpful to understand commissioning fewer than 3 levels:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual commissioning</li> </ul>	Specifying and obtaining services to meet the needs of an individual and or young person.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic / local commissioning</li> </ul>	Specifying and obtaining a range of services to meet needs of a population of children and young people and describing how services will be organised at county and local levels to meet those needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic commissioning</li> </ul>	Programme of commissioning activity designed to achieve the priority outcomes of the Children’s Trust, including needs analysis, consultation, strategy development, resource allocation, procurement, monitoring and review.

This can be exemplified in relation to the different types and level of service provided in the table below:

	<b>Universal level</b>	<b>Targeted</b>	<b>Specialist / low incidence</b>
<b>Individual</b>	Arranging for child to attend an existing club	Arranging for child to access activities for children at risk of disengagement	Arranging for child to access a specialist service (usually after assessment)
<b>Local /Thematic</b>	Creating an activities service for all children in the area	Creating a service designed to meet the needs of a specific group of young people.	Develop a service to meet a specific low incidence need or that needs specialist skills
<b>Strategic</b>	Planning and commissioning full range of places to go, things to do for the area	Planning and commissioning full range of places to go, things to do for the area	Planning and commissioning full range of places to go, things to do for the area

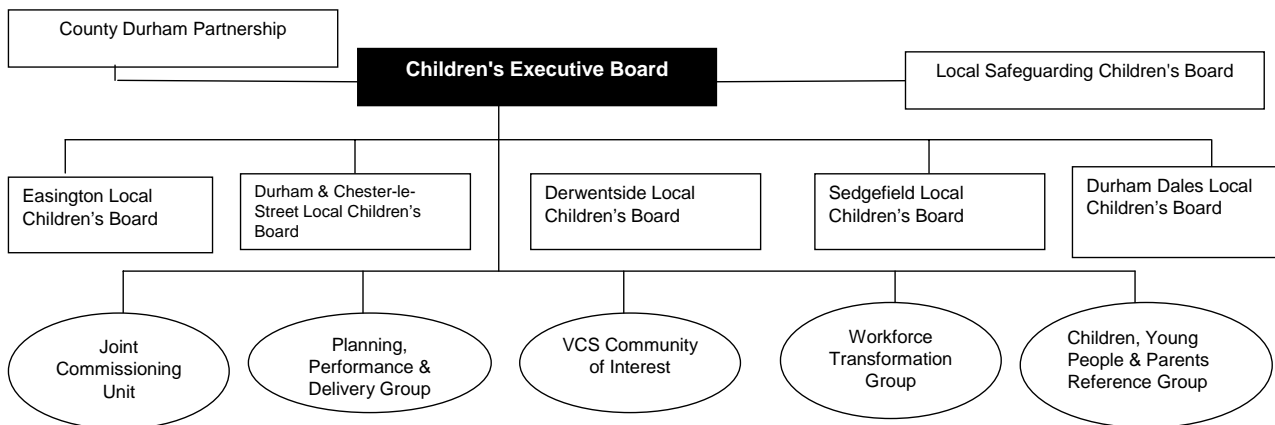
## Structures and Processes for Joint Commissioning

The Children's Trust is responsible for all commissioning activity. In practice this responsibility will be discharged through a set of joint commissioning arrangements.

The Trust is supported by 5 primary work groups:

- The Joint Commissioning Board
- The Planning, Performance and Delivery Group
- The Workforce Transformation Group
- Voluntary and Community Sector Community of Interest
- Young People and Parents' Reference Groups

## Children's Trust Support Structures



## County Durham Partnership

The County Durham Partnership (CDP) has developed strong relationships and an inclusive approach with a governance structure that links the countywide with the local. The Partnership is the vehicle for developing and delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and achieving or exceeding the 3 year targets set out within the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The Children's Trust is one of the 5 thematic groups represented on the CDP and is a key partner in ensuring that comprehensive delivery plans are in place and that performance is rigorously monitored and improved.

The CDP is supported by the Delivery and Improvement Group (DIG) who ensure that the Partnership has a good understanding of the key issues affecting its ability to meet the priorities set. This is achieved by providing balanced and realistic challenge and helping partners to identify innovative ways to achieve more by looking at new ways to utilise resource effectively. The DIG group also support the thematic partnerships, including the Children's Trust to ensure that delivery plans are in place and that partners can address cross cutting issues and break down any obstacles which prevent significant improvements. This provides a synergy in approach to planning and performance for all children, young people, families and residents in County Durham and ensures that improvements can be made across a range of outcomes by working together.

In instances where changes are identified to improve performance against LAA targets, the Joint Commissioning Board will undertake commissioning on behalf of the County Durham Partnership where this relates to services specifically for children and young people.

## The Children's Executive Board

In relation to joint commissioning, the Children's Executive Board's responsibilities are to:

1. Agree joint priorities and targets
2. Undertake strategic joint commissioning
3. Determine funding arrangements
4. Resource priorities
5. Establish a framework for delivery that recognises both quality and quantity
6. Intervene where services commissioned by the Trust fail to meet requirements
7. Establish new ways of working to deliver services more effectively
8. Exercise a power of veto in relation to the commissioning of a service where a service consistently falls short of requirements, or is ineffective.

The Children's Executive Board will be responsible for ensuring that all joint commissioning activity is effective, both at local and county-wide levels and for commissioning those services that can most efficiently be delivered on a county-wide basis. These will be usually low-incidence, high need or specialist services.

## Local Children's Boards

The LCBs have a key role and responsibility within all commissioning activity, in order to turn agreed priorities as defined within the Children's and Young People's Plan into effective service delivery at a local level. They will influence commissioning activity on a number of levels.

At the heart of our locality commissioning activity we will focus on:

- Understanding what the needs of our children, young people and their families are through effective participation and engagement at a local level;
- Understanding which services are in place to meet those needs and how well they currently meet needs;
- Developing a clear view of what best practice/best service should be;
- Working together with children, young people and families to deliver the right services that will make a difference;
- Changing services and the way in which people work in order to make them 'best in class';
- Achieving value for money.

Local intelligence and understanding will provide the platform upon which priorities and commissioning intentions are formulated and ultimately which services are delivered. This will be the responsibility and focus of activity for the Local Children's Board.

Key responsibilities for the Local Children's Board will include:

1. Providing local intelligence and data with regard to need and service
2. Provide local analysis of CAF activity to inform commissioning intentions and priorities
3. Work in partnership with Commissioning Officers to develop the "ideal type" in accordance with locality need
4. Work in partnership with Commissioning Officers to specify the service required in accordance with agreed outcomes and locality needs;
5. Participation in procurement processes to 'select' the best service in order to meet agreed outcomes at locality level
6. Support implementation of new services locally
7. Manage and monitor service delivery, working closely with local providers, through an agreed contract monitoring process
8. Support market development through the management and monitoring of select lists of preferred providers in respect of the key improvement priorities.
9. Reporting on performance to the Planning, Performance and Delivery Group.

Local Children's Boards will work with Lead Commissioners and Commissioning Officers to shape commissioning plans and subsequently to implement commissioning decisions at a local level. This role will apply to commissioning for all children and young people, whether they receive universal, targeted or specialist services. (please see pages 19/20)

## **Chairs of Local Children Board**

Chairs of the Local Children's Boards will be members of the Joint Commissioning Board and as such they will be charged with ensuring that locality issues are represented within our strategic commissioning activity and are appropriately reflected within the Annual Commissioning Plan.

Chairs responsibilities will include:

- Providing the JCB with their respective Board's Commissioning Plan and intentions
- Seeking approval and ratification for locally commissioned activity by the JCB
- Ensuring that LCB commissioning plans are locally informed and led and coordinated with the strategic direction of the Trust
- Ensuring that the Annual Commissioning Plan (the work programme of commissioning activity for the JCB) appropriately reflects locality needs and addresses gaps in service for communities.

- Reporting to the JCB performance information in relation to services that are commissioned and procured on behalf of their respective Boards, this will include whether contracted providers are meeting the aims and objectives as specified within their contracts
- Providing the JCB with locality needs assessments that incorporate local CAF analysis and the identified needs of the community as identified through the relevant participation strategies and mechanisms, and the Area Action Partnerships

The Chair's role in this regard will be one of providing information both to the JCB and back to the Local Children's Board. It will ensure that our joint commissioning activity is intrinsically linked to locality needs.

Chairs will be supported in this through their locality sub structures and the support arrangements for the Local Children's Boards.

The development of local performance monitoring processes will be critical in this regard.

### Area Based Grant

Local Children's Boards will have the opportunity to commission and procure services through their allocated Area Based Grant (ABG) funding. **Procurement is the term used to refer to 'the process of acquiring goods, works and services covering both acquisition from third parties and from in house provider' – in essence how we 'buy' services.**

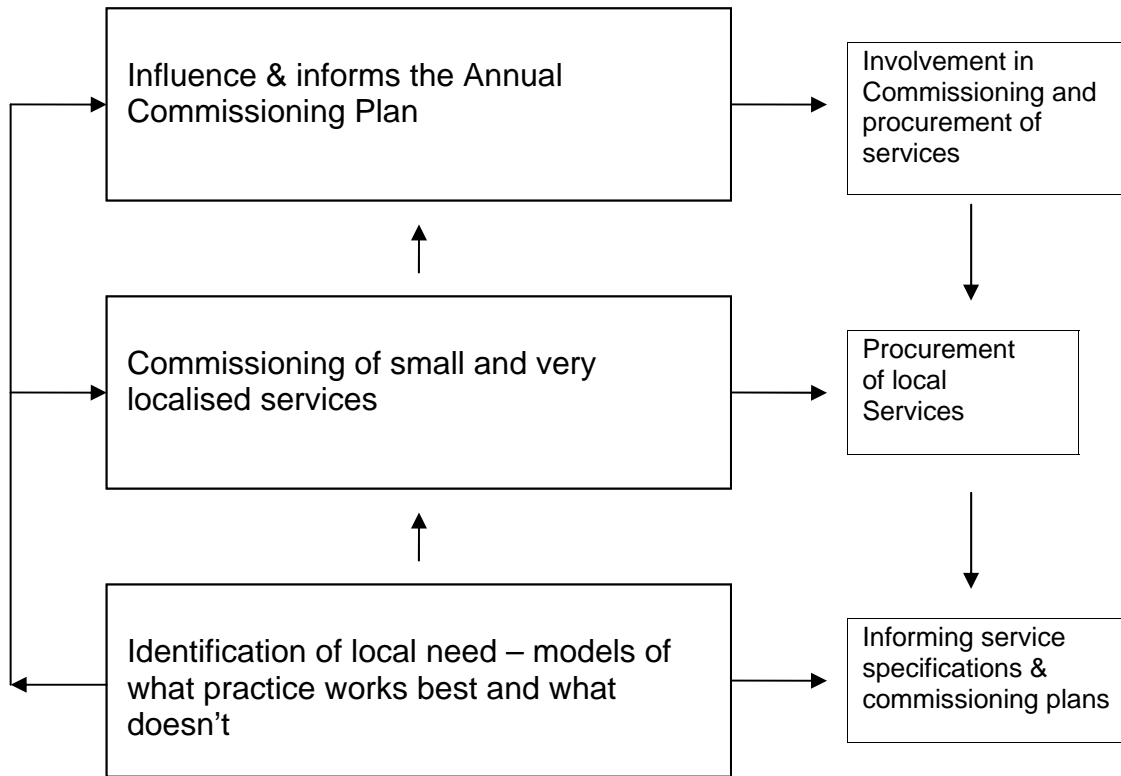
ABG will be used to commission services in relation to very localised needs, and will generally represent small financial investment. Turning the Curve methodology will help identify low cost initiatives that could be implemented and procured at locality level.

This commissioning activity will provide the opportunity to directly assess what services locally are most effective in meeting locality needs. Contract monitoring and review processes will provide a direct route for assessing how effective services are in delivering agreed and specified outcomes through the provision and delivery of required services.

This locally driven and implemented commissioning activity will be subject to the same principles and processes for all joint commissioning activity.

The way in which the Boards will inform and influence our joint commissioning activity is summarised below.

**Summary of Local Children Boards Influence in Joint Commissioning activity.**



## The Joint Commissioning Board

Joint Commissioning in County Durham will be managed through a Joint Commissioning Board.

The activity of the Joint Commissioning Board will be organised in relation to the 5 ECM outcomes, under the leadership and direction of dedicated outcome leads (Lead Commissioners). These arrangements are shown in the diagram below do not represent static groups but are functional arrangements to facilitate timely, coordinated commissioning activity being translated into services on the ground.



The JCB will lead, drive, co-ordinate and quality assure all joint commissioning activities linked to the development of children and young people's services. The work undertaken within the ECM outcome themes will replace existing individual commissioning groups wherever possible. This will streamline existing development processes to produce a more co-ordinated and rationalised approach to service commissioning.

## **Functions of JCB**

The JCB will lead the development of robust commissioning processes, practice and procedures and ensure that commissioning plans deliver sound operational services, which are accessible, equitable and value for money.

The JCB will deliver commissioning priorities based upon robust needs assessment and local information, including evidence provided through the Practice Based Commissioners and the Local Children's Boards.

The JCB will report to the CEB on all aspects of commissioning, but in particular progress against the Annual Commissioning Plan.

Specific responsibilities for the JCB are:

1. Retain an overarching view of the priority outcomes, needs and strategic development of children's services in County Durham.
2. Respond to the priorities set by the CEB and outlined in the CYPP by commissioning relevant services.
3. Agree the approach to the procurement of jointly commissioned services.
4. Monitor and address gaps or duplication in service provision and develop plans to address these issues.
5. Commit through delegated responsibilities where appropriate, agreed levels of funding from partner organisations to integrated services.
6. Co-ordinate the delivery of commissioning strategies and plans of single agencies with the CEB strategy.
7. Assure the quality of all Children and Young People's related commissioning activity across all partner agencies, by ensuring adherence to agreed Children's Trust joint commissioning framework and processes.
8. Develop effective and embracing commissioning practice that is implemented across the whole of County Durham.
9. Develop strong and explicit priorities under the five Every Child Matters Outcomes and identify responsible key commissioning leads and commissioning officers for each area.
10. Develop robust budgets and financial plans to reflect the priorities identified within the overall commissioning strategy.

11. Direct market stimulation development across children and young people's services.
12. Ensure and demonstrate that value for money is achieved through the commissioning process.
13. Demonstrate the delivery of improved outcomes through the implementation of effective commissioning.
14. Develop and disseminate good practice in the commissioning of services for children and young people.
15. Respond to any overview and scrutiny findings as they relate to commissioning activity.
16. Demonstrate involvement of users/carers in the commissioning process in both an appropriate manner and at an appropriate level.

In carrying out its functions and responsibilities the JCB will have due regard to, and operate within, the spirit and ethos of the commissioning principles as set out within the Joint Commissioning Strategy. In doing so the JCB will put the needs of service users at the heart of its activity.

## Membership

The membership of the JCB will comprise:

Chair	Head of Strategic Commissioning	Carole Payne
Commissioning Lead - Being Healthy	Assistant Director, Commissioning Durham PCT	Anthony Prudhoe
Commissioning Lead - Stay Safe	Head of Specialist and Safeguarding Services	Gail Hopper
Commissioning Lead - Enjoy and Achieve	Head of Achievement Services	Dave Ford
	Head of Access and Inclusion Services	Maureen Claire
Commissioning Lead – Make a Positive Contribution	Head of Extended Services	Amanda Johnson
Commissioning Lead – Economic Wellbeing	Head of Economic Regeneration	Andy Palmer
Schools Forum Representative	As nominated	Bruce Guthrie
Practice Based Commissioning County Lead		Barbara Gallwey
Joint Commissioning Manager		TBC
PCT Children’s Commissioner		Ian Williams/Lorrae Rose
Planning and Performance Manager		Sue Carty
Children’s Trust Development Manager		Julie Scurfield
VCS Representative	As nominated	
LSC Representative until 2010		Christine Usher/Linda Bailey
Chairs of the LCB		
Co-opted Members as required		
Finance Advisor to JCB	Head of Financial Services	Phil Barclay

Adult Services representation will be secured through their membership on the Children’s Executive Board. They will be co-opted into commissioning activity as major stakeholders where relevant. This will also be the approach for developing links to the Economic Partnerships. Ultimately our commissioning activity will be aligned with the County Durham partnership structure and will be consistent with over-arching plans and priorities.

Membership of the JCB will be drawn from commissioners and providers across a number of major sectors. This diverse membership will ensure that the JCB has capacity and delegated responsibility to challenge, assess and ratify commissioning activity thereby ensuring our decision making at the highest level is fair and does not promote vested interest.

## How this model will Work

Each Lead Commissioner will be responsible for driving forward the commissioning activity of their respective ECM outcome area in accordance with Children and Young People’s Plan KIPs and within the ACP. Commissioning intentions will clearly identify what actions need to be taken, what services are required in order to improve outcomes, and the timescale for this activity.

The Lead Commissioner will be supported by a Commissioning Officer, who will work with appropriate stakeholders to develop commissioning specifications for each priority area. Through this coordinated approach we will ensure that there is an overarching and local element to the development of commissioning plans. The role of the Local Children’s Boards will be critical in this regard.

Commissioning specifications, setting out what the service is required to do, the target group for service delivery (who the service is for), the intended agreed outcomes (what we want to achieve) and how performance against those agreed outcomes will be measured and monitored, will be developed. This is the responsibility of the Lead Commissioner.

By following agreed procurement processes these specifications will be translated into services on the ground. This will be how we determine who will deliver the required service.

Our Lead Commissioners are:

Being Healthy	Anthony Prudhoe	Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning (NHS County Durham)
Staying Safe	Gail Hopper	Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services, CYPS
Enjoying and Achieving	Dave Ford / Maureen Clare	Head of Achievement Services, CYPS Head of Access and Inclusion, CYPS
Make a Positive Contribution	Amanda Johnson	Head of Extended Services, CYPS
Achieving Economic Wellbeing	Andy Palmer	Head of Economic Regeneration

## Lead Commissioner

Each Lead Commissioner will be responsible for:

1. Leading and driving toward commissioning activity for all key improvement priorities under their respective outcome area
2. Ensuring that commissioning activities are planned and executed in line with the agreed joint commissioning framework and processes
3. Production of joint commissioning intentions for all KIPs within their responsibility with the input of relevant stakeholders including children, young people and parents, providers and voluntary sector.
4. Regularly reporting performance and progress against the ACP , with regard to their respective commissioning priorities, to the Joint Commissioning Board.

## Commissioning Officer

Each Lead Commissioner will be supported in the development of joint commissioning intentions by a Commissioning Officer.

Commissioning Officers will be drawn from Local Authority and PCT Commissioners. Commissioning Officers will be responsible for executing the joint commissioning framework and processes for individual Key Improvement Priorities by:

1. Co-ordinating all activity to establish need, including engagement of service users and the community, service providers and analysis of data on need and service performance
2. Developing a clear understanding of what resource is currently deployed in meeting needs and the quality of existing service provision
3. Developing a vision of 'best in class' service
4. Setting out clear commissioning intentions for that KIP
5. Work with Local Children's Boards to understand local need and delivery options
6. Establish clear outcome based measures by which implementation of these intentions will be monitored

Commissioning Officers will draw on expertise, as relevant and required from service experts, research best practice nationally and internationally in completing this work. **This will include engaging with children, young people and families.**

Appendix 5 provides a case example of how this process will work in practice.

The inter-relationship between the Lead Commissioner, Commissioning Officer and the LCB activity is summarised in the table below:

<b>STAGE</b>	<b>JCU / LEAD COMMISSIONER</b>	<b>COMMISSIONING OFFICER</b>	<b>LOCAL CHILDREN'S BOARD</b>
<p>Audit Performance</p> <p>Audit Need</p> <p>Audit current services</p>	<p>Receive and consider audit information</p> <p>Agree commissioning activity &amp; timescales</p> <p>Identify Commissioning Officer to lead on the work</p>	<p>Develop and gather central data by locality.</p> <p>Analyse existing data</p> <p>Present analysis to JCB</p>	<p>Provide local intelligence, soft data, participation outputs</p> <p>Complete local mapping exercise</p> <p>Provide PM info from contract reviews</p>
<p>Develop ideal type</p>	<p>JCB approve model</p>	<p>Facilitate stakeholder event</p> <p>Use RBA</p>	<p>Participate in stakeholder event</p> <p>Provide examples of best practice based on locality knowledge and expertise</p>
<p>Identify what needs to change</p> <p>Specify new service</p>	<p>Resources for new services agreed</p>	<p>Produce specification (s) including desired outcomes</p> <p>Ensure specification reflects locality needs</p>	<p>Shape specification in accordance with locality need</p> <p>Contribute and inform service specification</p>
<p>Procure new service</p>	<p>JCB award for specialist services</p>	<p>Organise and complete procurement process</p>	<p>Participate in selection panels for local service</p>

Introduce new service		Manage planned process of change	Support implementation locally
Decommission old service		Manage planned process of change	Support implementation locally
Monitor contract	Receive performance & contracting monitoring information	Receive provider reports and contribute to contract review process	Work closely with providers to monitor delivery, agreeing amendments as required. Receive detailed activity reports and outcome reports from providers. Identify rep to act as Lead Contract Officer.

We have developed a detailed transition and implementation plan, outlining the steps that will be taken to in order to move from our current joint commissioning arrangements to the revised arrangements and are currently working through these.

In doing so we will describe the relationships between stakeholder forums and groups and our commissioning arrangements. This will make explicit how such forums will further inform and support a coordinated, expertly informed approach to all our joint commissioning activity.

## Support Functions and roles

Commissioning activity is dependent on a number of functions and activities- in order to commission effectively we need to ensure we have the underpinning processes and supports in place.

The section below describe some of the mechanism that in place to support our commissioning activity.

### Planning, Performance and Delivery Group

The Children and Young People's Plan action plan contains targets for outcomes, against which performance can be monitored. It is essential that the effectiveness of commissioned services are monitored and evaluated. Service redesign or commissioning is not an end in itself. These can be judged positively only insofar as they produce improved outcomes and are valued by those who use them.

The management of performance of the Children's Trust is undertaken by the Planning, Performance and Delivery Group (PPDG) on behalf of the Children's Executive Board.

This group will coordinate collation and analysis of performance data at county and local levels and priorities based in plans from across the Trust.

The Joint Commissioning Board will be charged with agreeing Commissioning activity in accordance with these plans in respect of the KIP's.

The link between planning, performance and commissioning activity will be provided through the Trust's Planning and Performance Manager being a member of the Joint Commissioning Board. A quarterly performance report will be produced for the JCB.

Membership of the Planning, Performance and Delivery Group comprises of:

Carole Payne	Head of Strategic Commissioning, CYPS
Suzanne Carty	Quality, Planning and Performance Manager
Julie Scurfield	Children's Trust Development Manager
	Locality Development Managers
	County Durham Delivery Champions – on a needs basis

The Planning, Performance and Delivery Group will develop a rolling programme of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that:

- There is regular information gathered relating to commissioned services.
- That delivery against outcomes is achieved and maintained.
- That Commissioning managers and/or the JCB are alerted to any problems in relation to performance.

- That deficits in service are highlighted and plans agreed and put in place to either operationally or strategically address the issue.
- The JCB is furnished with robust, concise performance information to support its commissioning role and ensure that effective services are maintained.
- An annual performance report is produced for the CEB.

This role is a vital link in determining what, we have and how well plans across agencies are translated into services that a make a difference.

The Locality Development Managers will be responsible for ensuring locality performance information is brought to the PPDG. They will need to proactively engage with the performance sub structures at Local Children's Boards.

### **Delivery Champion and KIP Lead role**

Delivery champions and KIP Leads are charged with driving performance and delivery at a County wide and local level – 'turning talk into action'. Meetings convened under the guidance of the Trust Planning and Performance Manager will be the vehicle through which we review our progress of turning talk into action.

Our delivery champions will have a key role in this regard. They will be required to bring together local KIP leads to ensure action is being taken at a local level to drive forward delivery. Activity must be coordinated with the strategic direction of the Trust. This will be the responsibility of the County Wide Delivery Champion.

Turning well developed commissioning intentions into effective services that improve the lives of children and young people is the responsibility of the Delivery Champion, working with KIP Leads in each LCB.

The KIP Lead role will involve:-

- Co-ordinating Board activity and delivery against the KIP;
- Providing the link between locality and countywide KIP delivery and liaise with County KIP Delivery Champion;
- Ensuring provision of data to delivery groups and board on progress towards achieving improved outcomes through liaison with Planning and Performance ;
- Supporting the relevant Delivery Group pursue actions and delivery that will impact upon performance;
- Acting as a critical friend to the Board for achievement of KIP improvement;
- Ensuring the delivery of Results Based Accountability "Turn the Curve" plans into action.

The Commissioning Officer must work closely with the Delivery Champion and the local KIP Leads throughout the development of commissioning intentions as they are the service experts.

## **Integrated Data Function**

Commissioning activity must be founded on a clear evidence base. This requires an effective integrated data function.

To manage performance effectively, the Children's Trust needs accurate and timely information at both local and County-wide level. To support this, an integrated data function has been established to bring together information from all partners. Much of this data already exists, so this function involves the coordination of existing activity to focus on outcomes and impact on children and young people. It will also involve developing cross agency data collation in relation to commissioning strategies.

Data will be available from Super Output Area to County-wide area, to identify need, to measure performance and to monitor trends.

The relative performance of LCBs and levels of need will be monitored. Locality profiles will be a tool to assist in understanding performance locally as will analysis of CAF activity at a local level, and the JSNA

Each Board will need to ensure they have mechanisms at a local level to monitor and analyse performance, including the monitoring and review of contracts held on behalf of the Board.

Through understanding how well contracted providers are performing against the agreed outcomes as stated in the service specification we will develop our understanding of which services have an impact and improve the lives of our children, young people and families. This is at the heart of our commissioning activity. We are committed to having the best in class services – those that truly make a difference.

The continuing development of performance management processes at a locality level must be consistent across the County. Performance Management and Monitoring locally will be a critical function in relation to the Boards shaping and influencing the strategic commissioning activity of the Trust.

The strength of the Boards lies in understanding their community's needs and which services are available and effective locally to meet those needs.

## **Procurement and Contracting Function**

The JCB is supported by a Contracting and Procurement Function

Expert advice and support in contracting and procurement will be provided through teams in Children and Young People's Services and the Primary Care Trust in the first instance.

Our approach to procurement is rooted in our commitment to have transparency and open processes. **The term procurement is used to refer to “the process of acquiring goods, works and services, covering both acquisition from third parties and from in-house providers”. This is how services are secured.**

Procurement of services will in every case include a specification of outcomes to be delivered and targets to be attained. In order to ensure we get the best service to meet the needs of our communities we need to clearly state the aims and objectives of the service; how effectiveness of service delivery will be measured; the outcomes to be achieved.

For all services we commission there will be a service specification. This will set out the details of the service to be provided, with identified targets and outcomes.

Each service specification must include:

- The aim and purpose of the service
- What outcomes will be delivered through the service
- Delivery method or model – this may be explicitly stated in the service specification or directly linked to outcomes (i.e. identified in the tender document to demonstrate how outcomes will be achieved)
- How outcomes will be measured in accordance with key performance indicators

The use of outcome based contracts will further ensure the services we commission have a clear focus on delivering meaningful improvements to service users. Outcome based contracts will ensure that all contracts include measured outcomes and agreed targets as laid out in binding arrangements between the service provider and the commissioner. We will also include measure / steps that will be taken to support improved delivery where targets are not being achieved through ongoing dialogue with providers, robust monitoring processes and our contract review process.

These approaches will enable value for money judgements and comparisons to be made and critically they will provide rigour to the process of identifying and selecting the best provider of services to meet the needs of children and young people. A clear aim of commissioning activity is to ensure that we secure the best possible services for our children, young people and families. In the case of locally commissioned services, it is clear that outcomes are not the same in all areas.

Targets for improvement must therefore be negotiated locally between commissioners, providers and children young people and their families if they are to be meaningful. However, a county-wide perspective should be

developed which sets out how outcomes deficits will be reduced over time between localities, by effective targeting of resourced and services. The balance between this local and county-wide perspective will be negotiated through the JCB.

Procurement and contracting activity will follow Durham County Council's Contracting and Procurement rules and/or those of the PCT, and the County Durham Compact. All commissioning 'authorities' are bound by these rules legally. The determination as to whether the PCT rules or the Local Authority rules take precedence will be made in accordance with which agency is going to take lead responsibility for the procurement activity, funding levels and the resource that has been dedicated to the commission.

The County Council contracting and procurement rules apply to Grants for which the Local Authority is the accountable body and as such the appropriate procurement routes for such Grants will be followed.

In order to ensure our procurement activity is timely and appropriate we will utilise expert advice from providers, commissioners and procurement experts to ensure that we maintain our focus of getting **the right service, at the right time in the right place.**

In practice, the commissioning of thematic/local services under £50,000 will be achieved through a quotation route (please refer to appendix 1). The monitoring and review of contractual arrangements put in place on behalf of the Local Children's Boards via this route will be a joint responsibility between the Boards and the Contracting and Procurement team.

In respect of services to be commissioned over the value of £50,000 the majority of commissioned services will follow a tender route (please refer to appendix 2).

As with all rules and procedures there are circumstances in which exceptions / exemptions can apply. Broadly speaking these will apply:

- where we are buying more of the same (service / goods) and there has previously been an open and competitive process
- where services are unique / only a single provider exists . This would need to be evidenced through previous market testing/ market sounding events
- involve unique specialist knowledge and skills
- where continuation of a previously tendered service forms part of an overarching single programme

A summary guide of the contracting and procurement rules will be included in the Commissioning Tool Kit.

All contracting and procurement activity will be monitored and review through the LCBs, JCB and ultimately the CEB.

## Commissioning Tool Kit

The Children's Trust recognises that our joint commissioning processes and the successful implementation of this strategy will require the commitment and support of all partner agencies. A critical factor in gaining and maintaining support will be ensuring that our processes and strategy is understood and implemented on a consistent basis.

To support this endeavour we will develop a Commissioning Tool Kit that will provide practical guidance to assist with all stages of the commissioning cycle.

This will include:

- Guidance on using RBA
- Guidance in respect of data collection and analysis methods
- Problems Solving Tools
- Improvement Tools
- Control Tools
- Procurement pack – including sample templates of service specifications, evaluation processes, outcome based contracts, flow charts of procurement routes , summary guide of contracting and procurement rules .

The Commissioning Tool Kit will be published by September 2009.

## Our approach to Commissioning and the role of the Voluntary and Community Sector

Durham County Council Joint Commissioning Board has a commitment to developing and maintaining effective working partnerships with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in order to enhance capacity and ensure delivery of effective services which meet the needs of children and young people throughout the county.

As highlighted within the County Durham Compact, partnership makes the best use of resources and meaningful consultation and dialogue builds relationships, improves policy development and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes. Our partnership with the VCS is vital to the effective development and implementation of our joint commissioning processes.

Durham Children's Trust has robust support and communication systems in place through the Communities of Interest. These systems supported by the County Wide Development Officer ensure that the VCS has a position of equality and value within the Children's Trust arrangements. This is reflected in the VCS. being critical members of the JCB.

Through the Communities of Interest structure and the representation of the VCS within the Joint Commissioning Board we will ensure that our commissioning activity recognises the enormous diversity and complexity of the voluntary and community sector throughout the county, as well utilising the

potential and the capacity of the sector to deliver high quality needs led services for children and young people.

As stated within County Durham Compact 'An independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is fundamental to the wellbeing of society. The sector provides vital services, responds to needs, advocates, and campaigns as well as providing opportunities for individuals to volunteer and so contribute to the development of their communities'.

To further support the effective engagement of the VCS within the commissioning process and in line with Durham Compact funding code, we will work in partnership with the VCS through the Community of Interest, to develop consortia approaches which will reflect local need and offer 'real' and achievable opportunities for small voluntary and community groups to become involved within service delivery via commissioning.

The development of the supporting 'toolkit' and programme of familiarisation and development will ensure practical guidance and support is available to the VCS in relation to all commissioning activity including procurement processes. The programme of support development and learning opportunities will also be published and commenced by September 2009.

A key element of the Joint Commissioning procurement arrangements will be to use market awareness approaches as a tool to explore issues and opportunities within localities and service provision in order to enhance the capacity for effective involvement of all sectors and ensure reflection of local need and current delivery on the ground.

In order to ensure transparency and impartiality our Joint Commissioning processes will directly involve and support representatives from Local Children's Boards including the VCS at all stages including using the VCS as "experts" to inform the development of service specifications.

Where tender panels are established they will be made up of representatives from relevant sectors and service areas. We are similarly committed to the participation of service users in all of our commissioning processes.

In this way we will ensure that the services that we commission are rooted in expertise and knowledge on the ground.

As highlighted within the Compact funding code our commissioning and procurement activity will reflect the need to adopt flexible approaches to the length and duration of contract awards in order to support market development, build capacity and promote sustainability.

## Section 4: When we will commission

**Our commissioning activity will be aligned with financial and planning cycles. In doing so we will ensure that our commissioning activity is undertaken in a timely fashion linking priorities to resources.**

In summary:

We are committed to making sure our planning and financial cycles are joined up so that our ACP is responsive to need as outlined in agency plans and priorities. We need to match our intended and planned activity with the resources that will enable us to 'talk into action'.

We recognise that many services and their ability to impact on outcomes will take longer than a year to be evident. However progress needs to be considered within the overall strategic context.

Our financial plans will therefore channel through the JCB.

## Aligning the commissioning cycle with other strategic cycles

So that resources can be aligned with commissioning priorities, a calendar of activity will be put into place. This ensures that strategic plans, budget allocation and commissioning activity relate to improve efficiency, focus and outcomes. The diagram at appendix 3 shows how this annual cycle will operate.

## Resourcing

The Joint Commissioning Board (JCB) will create and sustain an overview of strategic resource deployment across the Children's Trust. This will involve understanding how budgets are aligned with priorities. This strategic perspective will allow the JCB to monitor the effectiveness of strategies to increase earlier intervention and will ensure that improvement priorities are adequately resourced.

Consideration will be given by the JCB to the creation of pooled budgets. Experience of Children's Trusts in other areas is that much progress can be made short of pooling of budgets and that pursuit of pooling as an end in itself can be time-consuming and unnecessary. Where pooled budgets are seen as bringing specific advantages, then these should be promoted. However, absence of pooled budget arrangements should not be used as an excuse not to improve outcomes or to work together.

All budgets for children and young people will channel through the JCB, so that the Children's Trust can gather a strategic view and be assured that resources are being used appropriately and efficiently in pursuit of improved outcomes.

## **Monitoring this Joint Commissioning Strategy**

This joint commissioning strategy will be monitored at a number of levels.

The effectiveness of the Annual Commissioning Plan will be monitored by the Children's Executive Board and will be reported bi-annually.

The effectiveness of the joint commissioning arrangements set out in this strategy will be subject to annual review by the CEB

In addition to this internal oversight, the County Durham Children's Trust will be subject to agreed scrutiny processes and to external inspection via the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

## Appendices

### **Appendix 1:**

Locality Procurement Process for Services under £50,000

### **Appendix 2:**

Locality Procurement Process for services over £50,000

### **Appendix 3:**

Annual Improvement Cycle

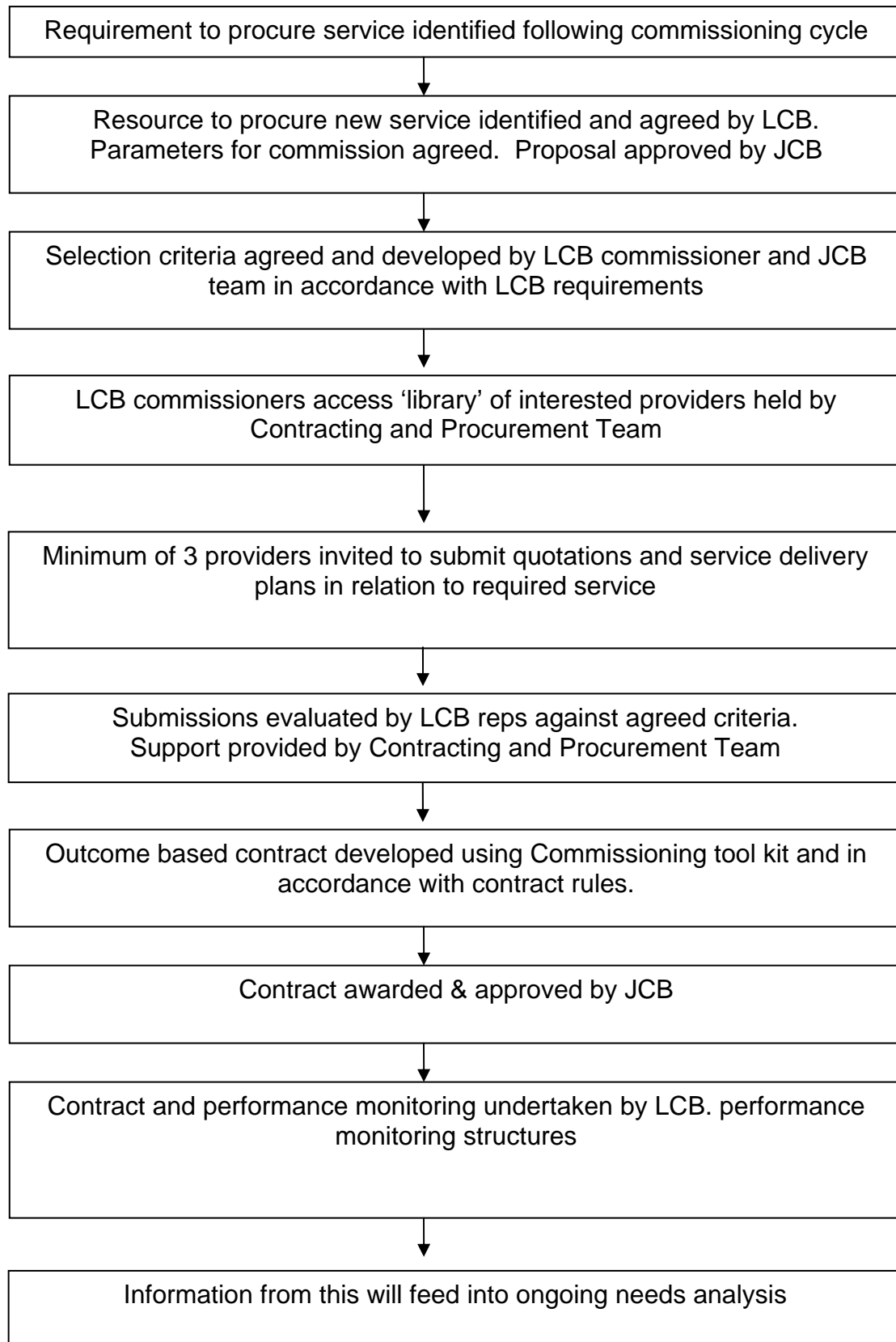
### **Appendix 4:**

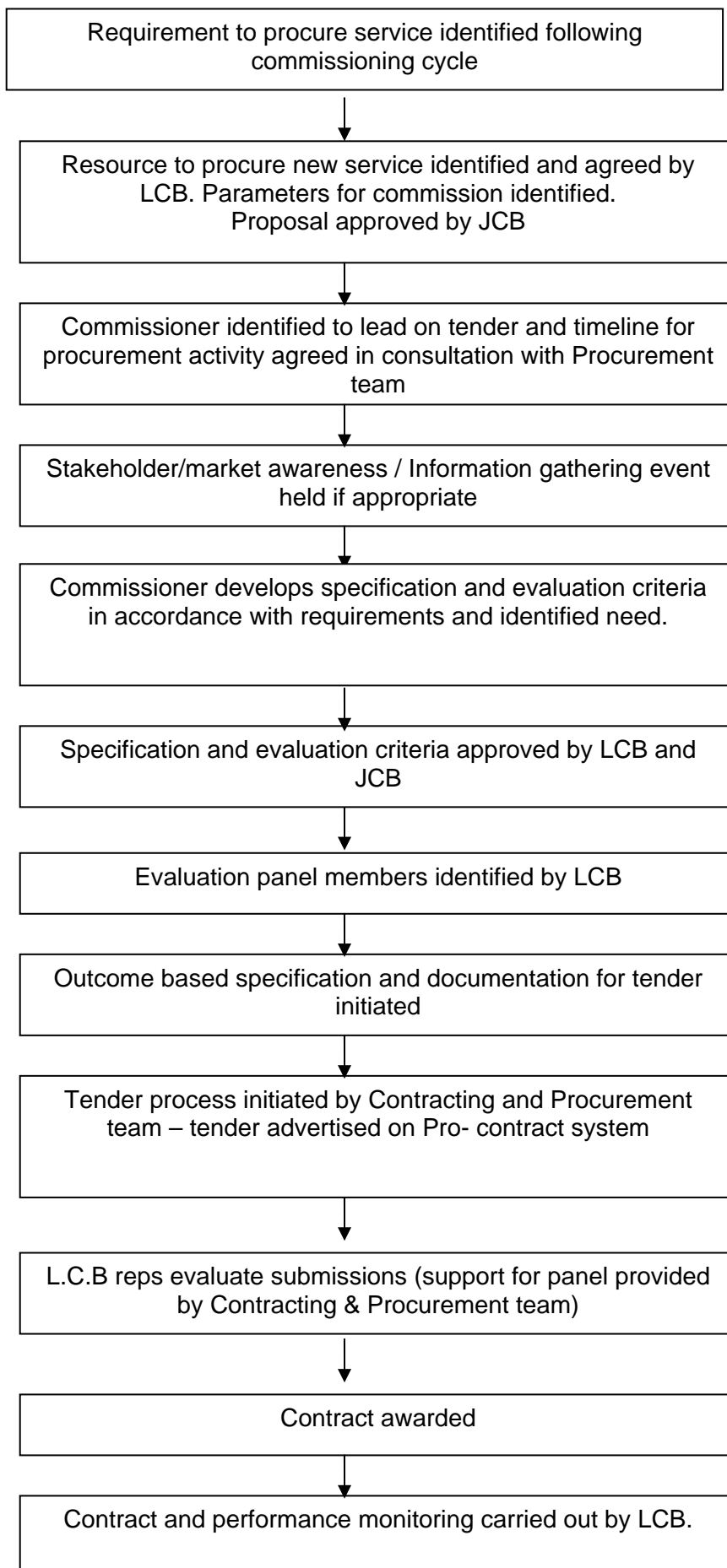
Glossary of Terms

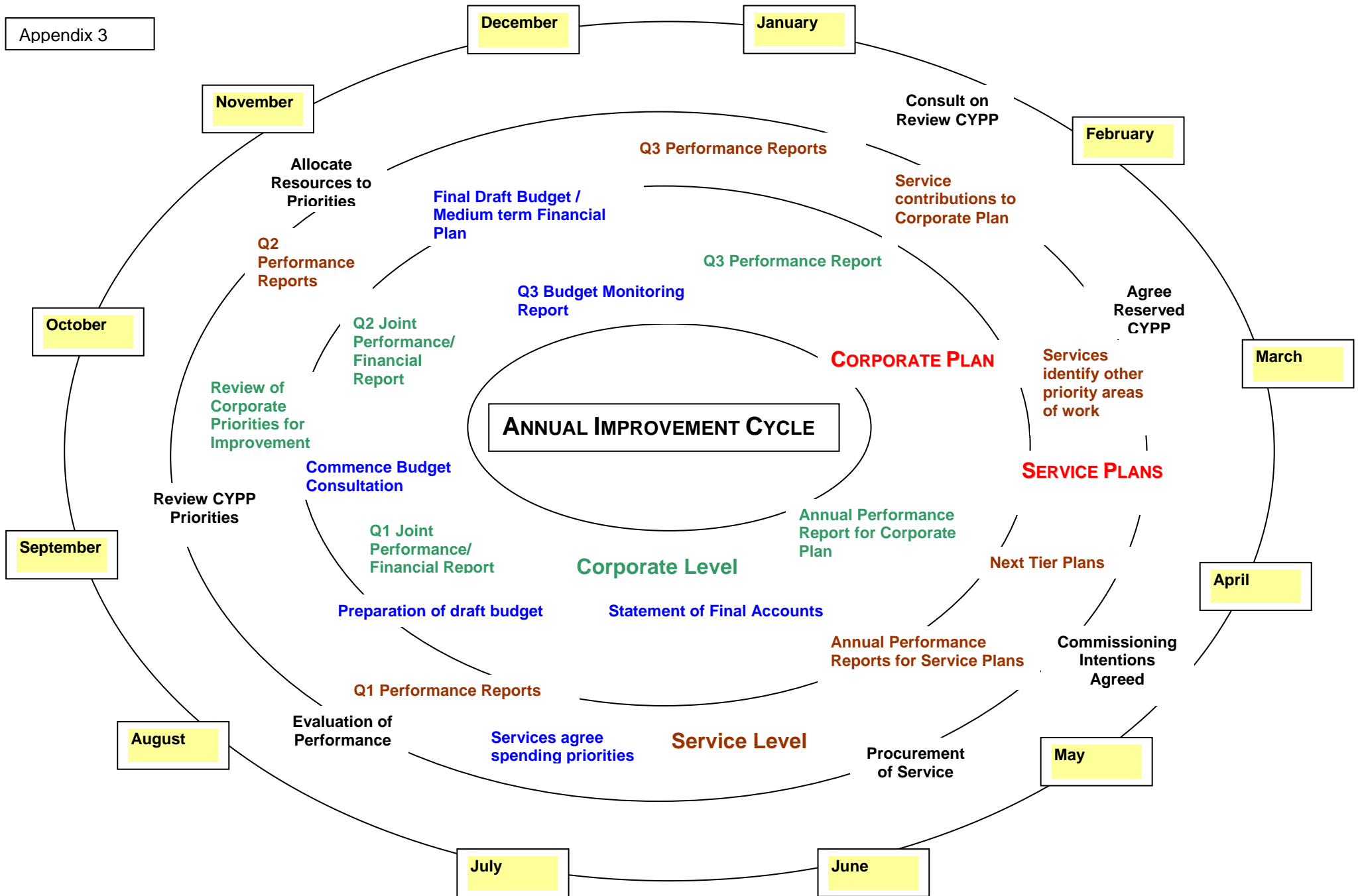
### **Appendix 5:**

Case Example: How commissioning arrangements work

**Locality Procurement Process for Services under £50,000  
as defined by total worth of the contract**



**Locality Procurement – Tender Process for services over £50,000**



## Durham Children's Trust

### Glossary of Terms used in Commissioning

Term	Definition
Accountability	<p>Overall management and responsibility of day-to-day services - continuous duty to report and inform all stakeholders as relevant.</p> <p><b>Population accountability</b> – where the aim is to achieve better outcomes for particular groups (such as all children and young people) in a defined geographical area; and</p> <p><b>Performance accountability</b> – intended to improve outcomes for the users of individual services, agencies and departments as a contribution towards achieving better outcomes at population level.</p>
Assessment	The collection and interpretation of data to determine an individual's need for health, personal and social care and support services, undertaken with the individual, his/her relatives or representatives, and relevant professionals.
Block contract	A contract which guarantees a given volume of business with the service provider for set cost.
Capacity building	Activities that aim to increase the ability often of the charity and voluntary sector but not exclusively to provide services or take action, mainly relating to the training and development of staff in both campaign and hands-on work, and related jobs such as financial management and information technology. Sometimes related to building the infrastructure of the sector through umbrella bodies and networking groups.
Clinical Governance	A framework through which NHS organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in clinical care will flourish.
Commissioning	<p>A process for specifying and securing services in line with the needs of children, young people and their families and arrangements for monitoring the progress of planned change.</p> <p>Three levels of commissioning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individual commissioning</b> - subsumes activity to define and procure services for individuals</li> <li>• <b>Service commissioning</b> - describes the process to specify &amp; secure and monitor individual services for children, young people and families</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic commissioning</b> – process needed by Children’s Services Authority to plan &amp; deliver the Service to all children, young people and families.</li> </ul>
Consortium	A joining together of organisations/stakeholders to strengthen commissioning through aggregating/pooling resources and having a common objective.
Co-operative	Enterprises that are owned by members who are workers or consumers in the organisations. They are businesses and organisations, which operate in all sectors of the community, and they carry on a wide range of activities. Those who work within them and who wish to become members of them share responsibilities, profits and opportunities according to a set of agreed principles.
Customer satisfaction	How individuals relate to service delivery and their perspective of the way the service has been delivered and whether it met their expectations.
Contestability	The process of ensuring that there is a viable market of alternative providers by reducing barriers to market entry and encouraging competition.
Contract	Legally binding agreement that details service requirements and terms and conditions, including required outcomes.
Decommissioning	The process of planning and managing a reduction in service activity or terminating a contract in line with commissioning objectives.
Direct Payments or Individual Care Accounts (or individual Budgets)	The budgets allocated to individuals, according to agreed priorities, with which the individual is authorised to commission their own services to meet their assessed needs.
Efficient	The minimum use of resources necessary at the right time to achieve projected outcomes.
Evidence based	An essential element of decision-making and action-planning. Decisions are made based on data – which will show what works or does not work to achieve outcomes.
Framework	A guide that provides support and structure around what you want to do.
Full-cost recovery	Recovering or funding the full costs of a project or service. 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. For example, adequate finance, human resources, management, and IT systems, are also integral components of any project or service.

Golden thread	The concept of a `Golden Thread' is useful to explain how all plans and strategies are connected and how teams and individuals impact on the priorities for improving outcomes for children and young people. The `Golden Thread' links corporate and community objectives, through to the individual needs of children and young people.
Good practice	Where work delivered has been recognised by using a range of indicators (e.g. consultation, etc) as being of a consistent high standard.
Governance	The process of holding people to account.
Improved Outcome	A planned improvement in the condition of well being for...
Independent Sector	An umbrella term for all non-statutory organisations delivering public care, including a wide range of private companies and voluntary organisations.
Integrated Commissioning	Two or more agencies co-ordinating their strategies for using their resources to achieve agreed outcomes.
Intelligence	Information and analysis from a range of sources.
Joint Commissioning	Two or more agencies pooling their resources to implement a common strategy for providing services.
Joint purchasing	Two or more agencies co-ordinating the actual buying of services, generally within the context of joint-commissioning.
Level Playing Field	A situation which offers no advantage to any particular side or group or person.
Local Area Agreement	A Local Area Agreement is a three-year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area in certain policy fields as agreed between central government, the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
Mainstreaming	'The process of transferring policy, good practice or activity from area-based initiatives or special programmes into the core of mainstream service provision.' Source: The Revision of Area Based Initiatives by the Regional Co-ordination Unit.
Model	A representation or illustration. A model should be the best fit of its type. For this purpose, the model is used to depict the situation around an area of work.
Needs assessment	A process that involved the identification and analysis of needs (and using the results to inform and influence).
Neighbourhood renewal	'...is about reversing the spiral of decline. It is about working from the grassroots to deliver economic prosperity and jobs, safer communities, good education, decent housing, physical environment as well as fostering a new sense of community amongst residents.'

Outcome	A condition of well-being for children, adults and communities.
Outcome indicator	A measure that helps quantify the achievement of an outcome.
Output	Measure of the quantity or amount of effort, how much service was delivered.
Partnering	A relationship between purchasers and providers of goods and services throughout the supply chain, which is designed to maximise the effectiveness of each participant's resources.
Partnerships	Structures that exist to deliver programmes. They bring together a number of formal organisations, for example statutory authorities, private companies and voluntary organisations. It has been unusual for community sector groups and organisations to be represented, although there are now attempts to include community interests.
Performance measure	A measure of how well a service or service system is working from identified and agreed baselines, achieving outcomes. Three types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much did we do?</li> <li>• How well did we do it?</li> <li>• Is anyone better off?</li> </ul>
Plan (Action Plan)	The actions that need to be taken to get where you want to be. The plan should relate directly to strategy.
Primary Care Trust (PCT)	'Evolved from primary care groups, PCTs are free-standing statutory bodies that provide primary and community services and commission secondary (hospital) care on behalf of their local population. By April 2004, all PCG's are expected to be PCTs, which will commission 75% of the NHS budget.'
Process	The set of fixed steps taken to do something.
Procurement	The process of acquiring goods, works and services, covering both acquisition from third parties and from in-house providers.
Providers	Any person, group of people or organisation supplying goods, works and services. Providers may be in statutory and non-statutory sectors.
Purchaser	A budget-holder who contracts to buy a service from a provider.
Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF)	Part of the contract PCT's have with GP's. It is negotiated nationally and rewards best practice and improving quality.
Quality Process	Where a set of established standards can be monitored and evaluated by service users and commissioners.

Regeneration	'The process of upgrading an area through social, economic and infrastructure investment and improvement.'
Responsibility	Overall `responsibility' /control management.
Service Level agreement	Written undertaking agreed between purchasing and providing agencies.
Service Specification	Sets out the detail of the service to be provided, with identified targets and outcomes.
Social capital	The idea of trust and cooperation that can be measured within communities. This is increasingly seen as being of fundamental importance to social inclusion and regeneration programmes.
Social Care markets	The collections of purchasers and providers of social care services in a specific area or field of service and how they do business with one another.
Social enterprise	Usually, but not always, non-profit-distributing enterprises but they take many institutional forms, including voluntary, co-operative, mutual or companies limited by guarantee. They seek high levels of accountability to their stakeholders. Social enterprises are increasingly recognised as part of a crucial third sector, distinguishing them from the public and private sectors.
Social exclusion	'The Government has defined social exclusion as "a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown." This is a deliberately flexible definition and the problems listed are only examples...The most important characteristic of social exclusion is that these problems are linked and mutually reinforcing, and can combine to create a complex and fast moving vicious cycle...The term includes poverty and low income, but is broader and addresses some of the wider causes and consequences of poverty.
Social justice	Enabling people to claim their human rights, meet their needs, and have greater control over the decision-making processes which affect their lives.
Spot purchasing	A method of purchasing services for individuals to achieve the most flexible responses to an individual's needs.
Stakeholders	All the relevant parties including councillors, managers and staff of local authorities, other related commissioning bodies such as health, service providers in the statutory, private and voluntary sectors and, above all, service users and their carers and their associated advocacy organisations.

Standards	Requirements of essential criteria.
Statutory authority	An organisation that is required by law to provide public services and receives central or local government funding, for example health authorities and local authorities.
Stimulate the Market	To meet demand and secure required clinical health/care and wellbeing outcomes; a knowledge of current and future provider capacity and capability; alignment of provider capacity with health/care needs projections; Creation of effective choices for patients/clients.
Strategy	A document that shows you where you want to be, within a clear contextual framework
Targets	A desired level of achievement for an indicator or performance measure.
Tariff	A set price for each type of procedure carried out in the NHS.
Tender	A formal offer to provide services as a response to a specification, usually for a stated price or in accordance with a schedule of stated.
Tendering	This is a purchasing procedure whereby potential suppliers are invited to make a firm and unequivocal offer of the price and terms which, on acceptance, shall be the basis of the subsequent contract.
Third sector	Generic collective name for charity, voluntary, community, non-government and campaigning organisations.
Universal services	Services provided for the whole community, including education and health, housing, leisure facilities and transport.
User involvement	Actively engage all users in the planning, development and evaluation of services.
Value for money	Achieving the best possible outcome with the resources available (not just money).
World Class Commissioning	World class commissioning is a statement of intent, aimed at delivering outstanding performance in the way we commission health and care services.

### Case Example: How commissioning arrangements work

Play Strategy and gap analysis identifies need for opportunities for all children and young people to play in a safe environment



Commissioning Intention presented to JCB adopted and incorporated into ACP as gap in service has been evidenced



Amanda Johnson, Lead Commissioner (Make a Positive Contribution) identified as lead responsible for commissioning activity



Commissioning Officer identified e.g. Bridget Atkins, Integration Coordinator for Family Support



Commissioning Officer develops draft plan of activity and timeline to progress commissioning intention in accordance with commissioning cycle under guidance of the lead commissioner in consultation with relevant stakeholders



Draft plan and timeline for commissioning activity presented and ratified by the JCB



Commissioning Officer manages commissioning plan as agreed and involves all relevant stakeholders, reporting directly to Lead Commissioner



Commissioning Toolkit will be used to support staged activity to develop:

- More detailed needs analysis
- Consultation and engagement of **all** stakeholders
- Develop ideal type and formulate detailed draft service specification
- Identification of resources/potential source of resource and potential decommissioning
- Potential procurement options considered



Resource implications and draft specification and procurement proposals considered by JCB and approved



Procurement plan/sourcing strategy actioned and led by Commissioning Officer with support from contracting Procurement team / operation service area. Procurement activity must be in accordance with CPR.



Service implemented via agreed route – tender / quotation / service development



Implementation of service transfers to relevant service area e.g. Extended Services



Performance information and monitoring presented to JCB via Lead Commissioner / Planning, Performance & Delivery Group / Delivery Champions on an agreed basis



Monitored at local level by locality performance structure, including contracts monitoring if contract held on behalf of Local Children's Board



Performance information will feed into ongoing needs assessment