

# COMMISSIONING BASICS

## WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE NHS?

All healthcare systems are facing increasing demand for services because of ageing populations in which chronic disease is more prevalent, higher patient expectations and often expensive medical advances.

The financial climate has dictated that the NHS in England has a zero rate growth in its budget – if expenditure continues at the same rate then there will be a £20 billion deficit by 2015 – for BANES this means £7-12m savings must be found each year [a total of 35m minimum to 50m maximum over 4 years]

## WHAT IS QIPP?

This stands for Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention and is a programme designed to find the savings outlined above whilst improving quality of care. It is specific to each PCT and will be inherited by consortia.

There are 9 work streams – urgent care, elective care, long term conditions, mental health, primary care, learning disabilities, prescribing and administrative efficiencies, so called back office improvements. The ninth stream is public health and prevention and it is seen as being an integral part of the 7 clinical areas.

## WHAT IS COMMISSIONING?

The commissioners are the ‘purchasers’ of healthcare

There are 2 levels of commissioning – ‘macro’ or strategic and ‘micro’ commissioning

Strategic commissioning is a complex cycle of analysing the health needs of the population, identifying funding priorities, designing services, allocating resources and then monitoring and evaluating the services provided. This evaluation then feeds the continuation of the commissioning cycle: it is very much a dynamic process and is one of the reasons why it can feel a very pressured environment: it is similar in many respects to a day’s work in primary care- it is never completely finished!

Micro commissioning occurs every time a clinician allocates resources on behalf of a patient e.g. writing a prescription, referral to a specialist, ordering tests

## HIGH QUALITY GENERAL PRACTICE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL COMMISSIONING

Evidence suggests that strong primary care is the foundation for efficient healthcare systems. Primary care will be the hub for health and social care and play a gatekeeper and navigator role. It

is likely that many services will move out of secondary care into the community in order to save money and provide services closer to home. There will be many initiatives and schemes to encourage primary care to reduce unwarranted clinical variation (e.g. in prescribing or referrals), waste and poor practice

### WHAT IS A CONSORTIUM?

A group of GP practices and sessional GP's in a defined locality which will be responsible for commissioning all services (except for primary care core services, optometry, pharmacy and dentistry) on behalf of its population. The consortium will have a duty to work with the NHS Commissioning Board to support, develop and ensure high quality general practice.

### WHAT ARE PROVIDERS?

An organisation that provides services to patients such as hospitals, primary care, intermediate and social care and the third/ voluntary sector

These can be part of the NHS, private organisations, charities or social enterprises

### WHAT ARE THE KEY IDEAS PROPOSED IN THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE BILL?

Patients at the centre of everything 'no decision about me without me'

Devolving decision to the frontline – local and clinically –led decision making

More focus on measuring outcomes rather than processes. Improved outcomes will define the success or otherwise of GP consortia. Reducing health inequalities and maintaining fair and equitable access to services will be legal requirements as will be meeting financial balance [living within our means]

Improving public health by linking social care with healthcare – integration of health commissioning with local authority/council commissioning. An effective working partnership with our local authority will be vital if we are to meet the future demands of the local population and develop sustainable, high quality services.

### WHAT IS HEALTHWATCH?

This replaces LINK's as the 'consumer champion' for health and social care

There will be HealthWatch England – a national body operating within the Care Quality Commission (CQC) providing leadership to local HealthWatch and advising the NHS commissioning Board

Local HealthWatch will help plan services, inform and support choice for patients and act as a local watchdog.