

Greater London Authority Mental Health
Specialist and Supported Housing Research
Joint Commissioning Principles

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1 Joint Commissioning – what, why, how

Commissioning is the process through which public bodies (LA's and NHS in this case) assess the current and future needs of their local populations, make decisions about which needs will be met and which ones will not be a priority, identify the most effective approaches to address these needs, and then invest in the associated services through contracting with appropriate providers.

As needs, the market and financial positions continue to evolve, commissioning is becoming more and more about relationships and change; working together and differently to provide quality care, deliver outcomes and make the best use of available resources.

1.1 What is joint commissioning

Joint commissioning is one level of collaborative commissioning, where objectives, plans, decisions and actions are arrived at in partnership by separate agencies. In health and social care this could mean working sub-regionally to meet the needs for a specific population, or segment of a population where there are shared or common challenges and opportunities across public bodies/local authorities/NHS.

1.2 Why

Joint commissioning is not a simple answer it takes time to get it right. It requires planning and resources but can have a significant impact on outcomes, market development and resource utilisation.

1.3 So how is it achieved

Joint commissioning requires strong foundations built on a series of core principles to be effective. This is not a quick fix, it requires a collective and strategic, long-term vision and commitment at a senior organisational level.

IBA see the key components for joint commissioning as being: -

- **Strategic leadership** – there has to be a strong leadership component to drive this approach forward at a suitable strategic level.
- **A strong evidence base** – robust data is required to have a shared and agreed understanding of need
- **Shared vision** – informed by a shared understanding of the evidence base
- **Shared outcomes** – co-produced shared strategic outcomes
- **Good governance** – aligning where possible across authorities, MOU etc.
- **Strong, trusting relationships** – it is essential to be able to build and maintain relationships
- **Budgets** – aligned (not necessarily shared) with a clear and agreed scope
- **Resources, skills and time** – required across the cycle

2 It can be done!

There is innovative and successful joint and collaborative commissioning already happening in the children's sector, across London. There is no reason why this cannot be replicated in the Adult's space for Londoners requiring Mental Health SSH.

2.1 What

The **London Innovation and Improvement Alliance and the Pan-London Placement Commissioning Programme** (<https://www.liia.london/priority-areas/resources-commissioning/>). With similar challenges to the adults' market for mental health e.g. growing demand, complexity, shrinking supply and increasing provider fees, London Boroughs are already successfully working together to take forward projects that improve supply, quality and value for money which includes opening new, high quality London provision for London's children.

2.2 How

- Strategic leadership (Led by the Director of Social Care in Barnet)
- Resources (a central resource and each LA chipped in resource alongside their own capacity housing/commissioning)
- Robust governance structure
- Joint understanding of need, gaps and challenges
- Collective strategic vision, time and long-term commitment
- Access to capital funding opportunities.

2.3 Outcome

Outcomes include the development of Secure Children's Homes for London including the development of secure and step-down accommodation for some of London's most complex children. <https://www.liia.london/plv-and-londons-secure-childrens-home/> .

Further reading:

<https://www.liia.london/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Collaborative-Commissioning-Creative-Support-FINAL-1.pdf>

Strategic collaborative planning and commissioning – A Guide; Local Government Association and Integration and Better Care Fund. Available from Institute of Public Care publications 2023

Regional Care co-operatives launched (go live 2025) - based on a recommendation from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care – in its Stable Homes, Built on Love strategy published last year. One of the objectives being to develop new regional provision to increase capacity where gaps have identified including relating to children currently placed out of area <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regional-care-co-operatives-pathfinder-areas/regional-care-cooperatives-rccs-pathfinder-regions>.