
Commissioning Play Services Toolkit

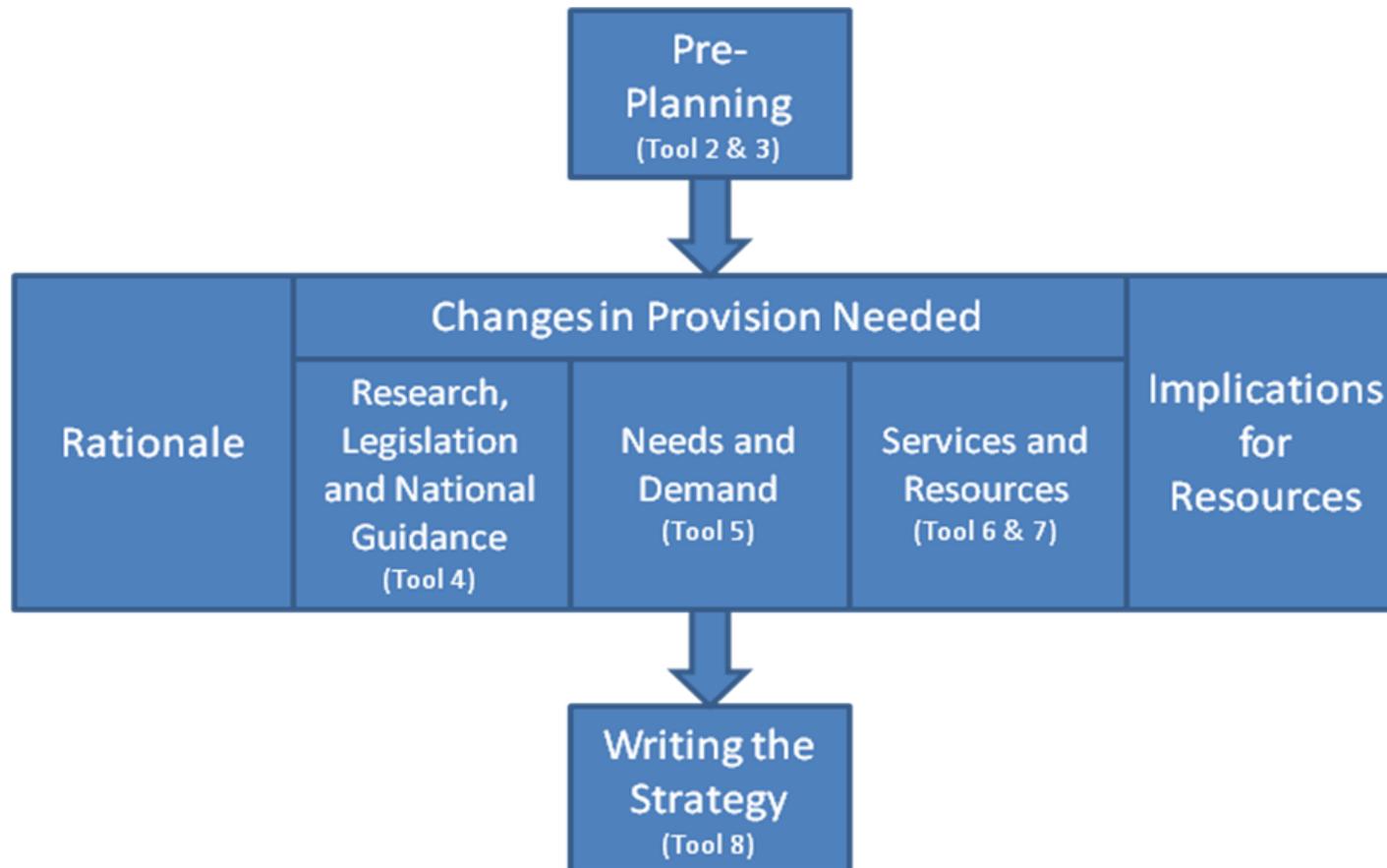
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Tool 1: A Summary of the Key Elements in a Commissioning Strategy

It is important to remember that, in the midst of often complicated data collection and review activities, the basic task of a commissioning strategy is to produce a clear, well argued and comprehensive plan for service design and development. The key elements of a producing a strategy can be summarised as:



Tool 2: Commissioning Strategy Scoping Tool

Adapted from a tool first developed by The Institute of Public Care (2009)

Question	Notes, suggestions
1. Scoping questions	
1.1. Whose strategy is it, and what type of document will it be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by local authority, commissioning partners, Children’s Trust? • Is this a brief outline of strategic intent or an in-depth strategy (including strategic intentions, procurement plans)? • What is the relationship to the Children and Young People’s Plan and other over-arching strategic plans for the local authority area?
1.2. What should be the remit of and boundaries for the strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP < 20 • Geographical boundaries • Reference needs across all of the CYP population (broken down by age groups, ‘universal needs’ ‘disabilities’ ‘children and young people living in vulnerable communities or families’?) • Reference ‘play spaces’ or play in its widest sense including what it means to children of different ages. • Reference all relevant ECM outcomes (including healthy weight) • Reference the relationship between top tier and district councils in two- tier authorities for the purposes of commissioning • Note: Helpful definitions of ‘play’ and key aspects relevant to different age groups are available in ‘Embedding The Play Strategy’ (2009)

Question	Notes, suggestions
<p>1.3. What hypotheses will you need to test in particular as part of the development of this strategy?</p> <p>N.B. In this context, a hypothesis is an assumption or a theory or a 'guess' that is worth testing during the course of developing the strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example: • Children with disabilities experience considerable difficulties accessing and enjoying play in some local areas • Children living in poorer areas are provided with inferior adventure play spaces compared with those living in more affluent neighbourhoods • Children in need (including children looked after) are at risk of missing out on play opportunities • There is insufficient choice of play opportunities locally, in particular for girls • A small number of children don't access the adventurous play opportunities that exists in their neighbourhood because of parental concerns (about letting their children out to play) or because they have established sedentary lifestyles • Increased opportunities and encouragement to access a range of physically challenging play is likely to impact on the (healthy) weight of our child population.
<p>1.4. What should be the timeframe for the strategy? What is the rationale for this timeframe?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example: • 2 years • 3 years • 5 years
<p>1.5. By when does the strategy need to be completed?</p>	

Question	Notes, suggestions
2. What do we know already and what kinds of activities are still required to develop the strategy?	
2.1. Are there any agreed or published outcomes, values and priorities for the local area that are relevant to the development of this strategy? What national drivers or initiatives need to be taken into account?	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Area Agreement Priorities • Children and Young People’s Plan priority outcomes or targets • Sustainable Community Strategy • Open Space Strategy • Local Development Framework
2.2. What do we know about what works and what children and young people say they prefer in the design and delivery of play provision across all aspects of need (age groups, gender, disability / non-disabled, ethnicity)?	<p>At December 09, a key document is ‘Embedding the Play Strategy’ which summarises national policy and findings from research and in which key messages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable children and young people to enjoy stimulating, safe and accessible play and recreational spaces in their local community • Emphasis on healthy active outdoor play opportunities for all • Embed and sustain improvements resulting from the national Play Strategy • Play is central to delivering improvements in all of the 5 ECM Outcome areas • Note: A very useful website for research summaries and key national documents is Play England – www.playengland.org.uk)
2.3. What do we know already about relevant local needs and demand for services? What other information will we need to produce a robust needs analysis?	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overarching trends and data from JSNA, CYP Plan, CAA etc • Information about the characteristics of the population as well as ‘need’ or ‘demand in the strictest sense – include data relevant to child health, poverty by geographical area • Information about need gleaned specifically in relation to play (e.g. from audits and surveys conducted on a whole population level or for aspects of it, e.g. TellUs survey, after school club surveys, school surveys

Question	Notes, suggestions
<p>2.4. What information do we have currently about the views of stakeholders including children, young people and families? What other information from stakeholders would be helpful to enable us to build an effective strategy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Indicators (e.g. NI 199) • Other satisfaction surveys • More in-depth information about satisfaction and views regarding future service design from particular cohorts (e.g. particular age groups, geographical areas, ‘need groups’ e.g. looked after children, children with disabilities, children living in vulnerable communities or families)
<p>2.5. What information do we have currently about overall budgets and patterns of service provision, service cost, and service quality/impact? This should include impact on a range of ECM outcomes.</p> <p>What other information about budgets and service provision would be helpful to enable us to build an effective strategy?</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital funding and assets, ring fenced budgets, and mainstream budgets relevant to this area (e.g. leisure, transport, parks and leisure, corporate, regeneration), and other probable or possible funding streams such as lottery. Include ‘spread’ of spend on different types of provision. Identify any conditions linked to funding and budgets. Include ‘spend’ per child. • For patterns of service provision – a variety of service mapping tools may be helpful here. The key is to map provision not only by ‘type’ but also by area and target group(s), supervised or not, designated and non-designated. ‘Embedding The Play Strategy’ (2009) suggests key elements of a resource audit and suggests GIS (Geographical Information Systems) as an appropriate tool for geographical mapping. • Service accessibility, quality and impact measures are notoriously difficult to identify and obtain. Commissioners need to work with providers to agree this ‘up front’ so that quality and impact can be ascertained (in addition to satisfaction). Local authorities have a responsibility for setting local standards for the quality and accessibility of provision and evaluating impact. Regular audits and site visits are likely to be required in addition to desk based research. • National indicator data is likely to act as a good starting point for information about impact (e.g. NI199, but also a range of others such as NI1-6(Stronger Communities), NI17,22,23 (Safer Communities), and NI 50-58 (Be Healthy))

Question	Notes, suggestions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFSTED inspections may also provide a starting point for indications of impact on children and young people's lives <p>Note: Embedding The Play Strategy (2009) includes the full range of indicators relevant here and Play England has developed a toolkit for evaluating the play offer (2009)</p>
3. Who needs to be involved in the development of this strategy?	
3.1. Who are the relevant stakeholders who we might need to think about involving in the development of the commissioning strategy?	<p>For example, these might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, young people and families (including sub-groups within the overall population) • Key partners in the Children's Trust • Play Partnership members • Full range of providers including 3rd Sector (members of Play Associations?) • Housing Associations • Parks and Open Spaces Officers • Planners • Councillors including the 'Play Champion' • Senior decision makers in Transport and Housing Regeneration + Economic Development Senior Officers • Workforce development • Procurement officers • Note: It is often helpful to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise early on in the strategy planning process, looking not only at 'who' but also at their strategic importance and influence (individuals or a group involved in scoping the strategy should be asked to plot where stakeholders are on 2 axes 'importance' and 'influence'.

Question	Notes, suggestions
3.2. Who will lead the development of the strategy? E.g. organisation, individual, steering group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Embedding the Play Strategy' suggests that the Director of Children's Services should take the lead for overseeing the development of the top-tier strategy and identify an appropriately senior and qualified officer to drive its development and implementation. • The Play Partnership or an element thereof could act as a steering group for the development of the Strategy.
3.3. Who will gather and analyse the data and develop options and strategy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs analysis • Research and best practice findings • Resource analysis • Stakeholder views 	<p>Different individuals or groups may be required to undertake data collection and analysis / strategy development activities.</p> <p>Note: 'Embedding The Play Strategy' (2009) contains guidance and advice on how to develop effective analyses of need and resources, including extensive advice on effective engagement with children and families.</p>
3.4. Who will steer and advise?	<p>For example, the local Play Partnership</p>
3.5. Who else should be involved and at what stage(s) of the strategy development? What kinds of engagement activities are required and what will be their purpose?	<p>See key stakeholders identified at 3.1. above as a starting point for the engagement aspects of the work.</p>
3.6. Who will support the development and promotion of the strategy?	<p>'Embedding The Play Strategy' (2009) suggests that high level support for a successful cross cutting collaborative approach will be required at least from the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Planning Officer.</p>
3.7. Who will need to agree / sign off the strategy?	

From the above analysis, summarise the major problems and next steps for your development of a local strategy:

<p>Potential Barriers</p>	
<p>Key Decision Makers</p>	
<p>Initial Next Steps</p>	

Tool 3: A Commissioning Strategy Project Plan

A clear project plan can help to ensure that a commissioning strategy is effectively developed and delivered, that all of the information required is collected and analysed in a systematic way, and that all relevant stakeholders have an opportunity to contribute in a timely fashion. Below is an example of a series of project stages and activities which might be involved in the development of a strategy:

Project Stage	Activity	Example outputs
1. Project set-up	Purpose and priorities, people and framework	Shared vision and agreed priorities. A project team and a reference group identified. Agreed framework and process/ methods.
	Project specification, resources and briefing paper	Key issues to be addressed in the strategy. A project plan and necessary resources. A project briefing paper sent to all stakeholders describing the project purpose, boundaries and timescales.
2. Analysis of Need	Research and best practice	Review of relevant literature, research and national guidance on service configuration and outcomes. Document summarising key findings.
	Population analysis	Prevalence rates and risk factors applied to population data to produce an outline population needs analysis. Analysis of local qualitative information including user and staff views.
	Service activity and performance analysis	Analysis of information from service providers, both in-house and external. Information from consultation with service users/carers, service mapping activities or audit work.
	Reference group meetings	Events with providers, service users, carers and the wider public to share initial findings.
3. Current Provision and Resources	Service and market mapping	Breakdown of services available and where they are based. Regional or national benchmarking comparisons. Analysis of potential alternative providers.

Project Stage	Activity	Example outputs
	Commissioning and contract commitments	Breakdown of expenditure across all purchasers of service for the client group. Analysis of the areas of activity upon which resources are currently focused, unit costs, contract risks, market strengths and weaknesses.
	Resource analysis	Budgets available, projected over the next 3 years - what is tied up in contract commitments, for how long. Any other sources of income that might be available during the period.
4. Service Quality	The quality of existing services	Previous consultation or care and contract management information Additional analysis through: illustrative case studies; stakeholder focus groups; interviews; small sample surveys.
5. Strategic Directions and Plans	Draft findings	Analysis of current provision against needs, research, guidance and best practice. 3-5 year strategic directions for service commissioning and possibly 1-year purchasing plans.
	Analysis testing	The conclusions from the analysis tested with stakeholders through questionnaire and written feedback, individual interviews or facilitated seminars.
	Final documents	The commissioning strategy. An implementation timetable.
6. Procurement, Service and Market Management Plans	Implementation arrangements	A procurement plan specifying how the strategy will effect changes in the allocation of resources and in the contracting of services over the next period. A market management plan specifying the approach that will be taken to managing contracts, SLAs and grants A plan specifying the implications of the commissioning strategy for changes to internal CSA and PCT service plans.
7. Monitoring and Review of Commissioning Strategies	Reviews of purchasing plans	Review meetings with commissioning leads to analyse progress against commissioning objectives, consider changes in the environment, and agree any changes to objective or action plans or resources. An agreed format to analyse information from providers and commissioners including outputs and processes, standards, user feedback and service activity performance data. This activity to be integrated into existing planning and performance review arrangements.

Tool 4: A Framework for Analysing Research, Legislation and National guidance

It is important to have an overview of the major policy issues, both locally and nationally, which are likely to influence the direction of services for children and young people. It is particularly important that any 'must dos' from legislation, national guidance or local commitments are clearly stated. A commissioning strategy should also include a brief outline of the main messages from research, national guidance and good practice, and highlight the key drivers for change.

The Resource Bank for Play on the Commissioning Support Programme website is updated regularly and contains policy, guidance and best practice that can help with this section.

The following questions might need to be addressed in this part of the analysis:

1. What is known about 'what works' in commissioning or providing services for the client group from:
 - National guidance and best practice?
 - International research?
 - Local best practice?
2. What strategies, approaches, or specific services have been developed in other parts of England or Wales to meet the needs of the client group?
3. What examples of best practice sites and case studies are available?
4. What are the key national drivers and commissioning priorities affecting services over the next 3-5 years?
5. What are the key local plans and aspirations for services over the next 3-5 years?
6. Can we identify new trends, technologies or treatments likely to impact on patterns of need, demand and costs?
7. What are the outcomes that patients/service users, involved relatives and carers actually want?

Question	Potential Data Sources
1.1. What are the key findings from research relating to ‘what works’ for play services?	See as a starting point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design for Play – A Guide to Creating Successful Play Spaces (2008) • Think Research (2008) • Developing an adventure playground: the essential elements (2009)
1.2. What are the key messages from national guidance about how public services should provide play services?	See as a starting point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding the Play Strategy (2009) • The Children’s Plan (2007) • The Play Strategy 2008 • How Children’s Play Contributes to the National Indicator Set (2009) • NICE Guidance on Promoting Physical Activity for Children (2009)
1.3. What examples of best practice sites and case studies are available?	See as a starting point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective practice in commissioning children’s services (2007) • Making Links: Playful short breaks for disabled children (2009) • Developing a Code of Practice to Work with the Third Sector (Plymouth)
1.4. What are the key published priorities and plans for the local area relevant to play services?	These might include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAA • CYP Plan • Sustainable Community Plan • Parks & Green Spaces Strategy • Housing Association Play Strategy • Local Transport Plan (safe access to play areas, home zones, school travel plans)

Tool 5: A Framework for Analysing Local Needs and Demand

A foundation of every commissioning strategy is an understanding of the current and future needs of the particular population concerned. A robust needs analysis looks at the overall needs of the population, not just existing service users, as well as likely future changes in demand. It provides information to inform service development. For example, needs analysis can:

- help estimate the current and future needs of a population;
- indicate the geographical distribution of need;
- identify those people who are at greatest risk of needing services;
- help identify the gap between met and unmet need.

Evidence from a needs analysis can indicate where resources might best be focused and where services might be located. A comprehensive needs analysis should be based on a balance of national and local data in order to ensure that the analysis:

- looks at the overall needs of the client group, not just existing service users;
- considers future population and prevalence of need, to take account of likely trends and future changes in demand;
- complements census and prevalence information with information about the sub-population which actually uses services;
- ensures patterns of demand are compared over time to consider trends, and benchmarked to see if there are differences between geographical areas;
- ensures statistical data is complemented by more qualitative information about needs from user or population surveys, interviews, focus groups or reviews of existing research to explore how service users might describe their needs.

The following types of data might form the basis of a needs analysis for commissioning services for children and young people:

1. Demographic and socio-economic data such as:
 - Current and projected population data/general population and CYP population broken down by:
 - Age range
 - Gender
 - Ethnicity
 - Local demographic intelligence
2. Prevalence data such as:
 - Physical disability

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health
- Limiting long-term illness
- 3. Service user data such as:
 - Stakeholder views, in particular in relation to unmet need
 - Service take-up data broken down by age, gender, CYP and family needs and characteristics.

Question	Possible information required	Potential Data Sources
<p>2.1 Who needs play services? What is the existing overall population of children and young people locally, and what are its key characteristics compared with other local areas nationally? Are there any trends in the spread of children and young people across wards locally?</p> <p>What is the proportion of children and young people compared with the adult population, and how has this changed over time?</p> <p>What are the current projections for the overall population over the next 10 years and how might they be influenced by demographic changes since the Census?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall population estimates of children and young people. • Breakdown by age and compared to national and regional estimates. • Breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity and ward. • Projected estimates (over next 10 years) by age (compare with trends in adult population). • Local intelligence about how the projected estimates are likely to be influenced by recent demographic changes since the Census, e.g. recent influxes of immigrants including unaccompanied minors. • Information about socio-economic risk factors that may affect the demand for play services locally, including: deprivation; child deprivation; unemployment; incidence of families with 4 or more children; CAMHS prevalence; child and young person offending rates (all by ward if possible). 	<p>ONS – 2001 census data (www.statistics.gov.uk)</p> <p>www.pansi.org.uk</p>
<p>2.2 What do we know already about local needs and the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any current usage data • Information collected for NI199 and indicators 	

Question	Possible information required	Potential Data Sources
demand for play services?	<p>recommended to be collected for local evaluation (participation, access to a variety of facilities and spaces, quality of facilities and spaces, satisfaction)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected by local housing associations for any play areas they hold • Any calls or campaigns from stakeholders about play services • Maintenance information 	
2.3 What do local people think?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder consultation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, young people and families (including sub-groups within the overall population) • Key partners in the Children's Trust • Play Partnership members • Full range of providers, including 3rd Sector, including members of play associations, those involved in play schemes, play rangers, after school clubs, children's centres etc • Housing Associations • Parks and Open Spaces Officers • Planners • Councillors including the 'Play Champion' • Senior decision makers in Transport and Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development • Workforce development • Procurement officers • Residents and community associations 	<p>To help with involving stakeholders: Developing an adventure playground: the essential elements (2009) How to Involve Children and Young People in Designing and Developing Play Spaces (2009) Our Play - Our Choice (2009) The disabled children's charity <u>KIDS</u> can offer advice and support on involving disabled children in every phase of play strategy development. Although national findings, these may help with understanding some of the issues that may arise: Fun and Freedom: What Children Say in Strategy Consultations (2008)</p>

Question	Possible information required	Potential Data Sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="674 252 801 277">• Police<li data-bbox="674 300 1346 325">• Services for disabled children and young people	

Tool 6: A Framework for Analysing Services

To complement needs analysis, attention also needs to focus on understanding what is currently available, and what might be available in the future to meet these needs. It is at this stage where a commissioning strategy really starts to differentiate itself from other strategies, and where detailed, good quality information about service activity and impact is crucial. The analysis needs ultimately to allow commissioners to make key judgements such as:

- Whether services are well aligned with the needs of the population.
- Whether the quality of services is good enough.
- Whether services present good value for money.
- Whether there are significant risks of service failure or deterioration.

Identifying whether and where services exist in relation to local need is a crucial aspect of effective joint commissioning, not least to identify where needs are currently unmet (service gaps). It is likely that these services are provided by a great variety of agencies and projects. The mapping of services should include services provided not only by the NHS and other statutory agencies, such as social services and education, but also those provided by the voluntary and private sector.

Having established a clearly defined idea of the characteristics of the target population and the issues and problems the strategy will address, the next stage is to map existing services against identified need. This will include an assessment of provider capacity to meet needs as well as their capability, judged by quality, cost and impact of their work.

Information about the capacity and capability of providers is important in planning and commissioning, as it may influence decisions about the redirection of service effort, the development of new types of approach to service delivery and/or the encouragement of new providers or provider alliances to deliver particular services. In order to allow judgements to be made about current and future provision, information may be required which will answer the following key questions:

1. What services are currently available?
 - What geographical areas do they serve?
 - How many people access them?
 - What is the geographical distribution of services relative to assessed need?

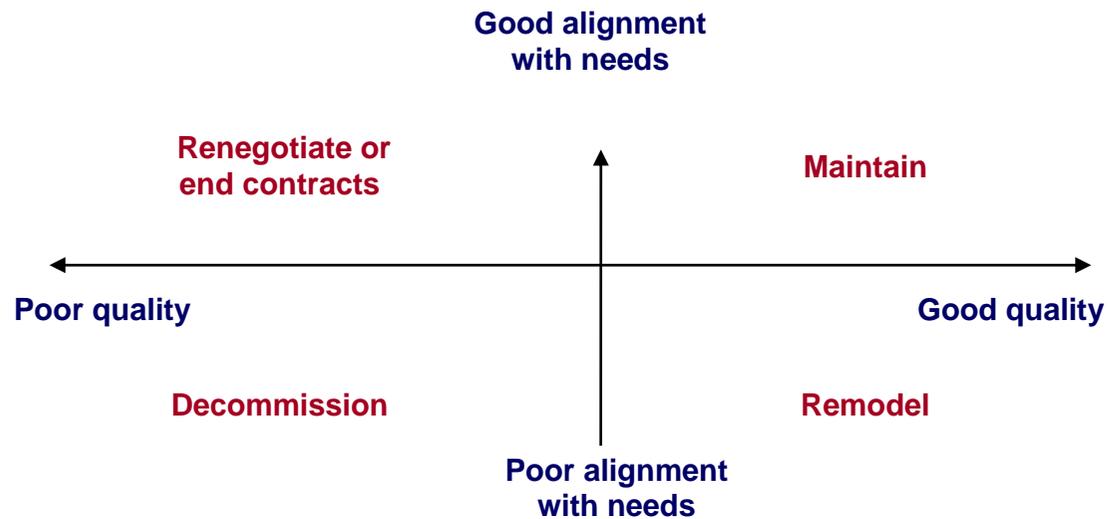
2. At what cost?
 - What are the costs of services provided?
 - What are the overall budgets, actual spend, and predicted spend on services?
 - What funding opportunities are there for this client group that may be explored locally?
3. What outcomes data/quality indicators are available?
 - What has been the impact of existing services on service users?
 - Is there evidence of positive outcomes?
 - What is the child/family perspective about the quality of services including how accessible and acceptable they are, whether they meet needs?
 - What are the perspectives of other stakeholders about the quality of services?
 - What other information is there about the quality of services
 - Is there evidence of participation of service users within the planning and delivery of services?
4. What is the current balance between sectors?
 - What is provided in the public, private and voluntary sectors?
 - What are the sources and levels of funding across areas of provisions?
 - Who are the major suppliers?
5. What is the potential for future provision?
 - What are current providers' future plans?
 - What are they interested in, or could be persuaded, to provide and at what price?
 - What other potential providers are there who could meet local needs and, in particular, fill in gaps in service provision?
 - What services do they provide?
 - What do we know about the quality of those services?

Question	Potential Data Sources	Notes
3.1. What resources are currently spent on play services overall?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team and directorate budgets • School play budgets • Housing association play budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this include some knock on costs such as grounds maintenance (ie grass cutting) or collection of rubbish bins? Do you want to include public play areas not run by the council?
3.2. To what extent are resources pooled currently?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of what proportion of these budgets are aligned or pooled – and using what kinds of arrangements ie with housing associations, private schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are school play areas open outside of the school day. Children’s Centre’s?
3.4. What play services are currently available to disabled children in the area?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled children’s team • Play workers 	
3.5. To what extent do play services of support meet the needs of the children and young people effectively? What are the key gaps or groups within this cohort that aren’t as well served as they might be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information collected for NI199 and recommended to be collected for local evaluation (participation, access to a variety of facilities and spaces, quality of facilities and spaces, satisfaction) • Stakeholder consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For further information about local evaluation see Play England’s Tools for evaluating local play provision (2009)

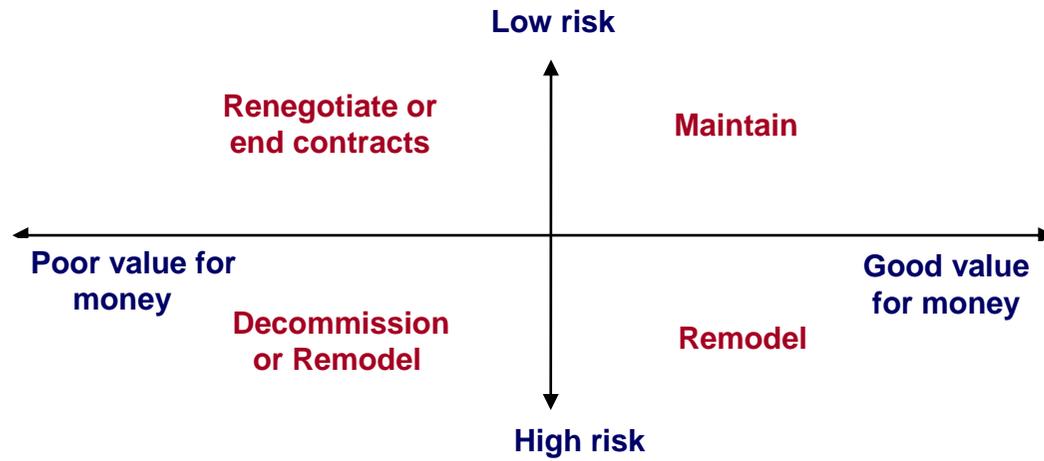
Tool 7: A Spectrum for Analysing Services

You may find it helpful to feed information about your current service provision into a simple Spectrum Analysis which can be used to assess/review existing services or processes. This is a useful tool for summing up the issues in a very simple, visual way and can be very helpful when presenting findings to stakeholders:

Spectrum 1



Spectrum 2



Tool 8: A Commissioning Strategy Template

Once the analysis activities have been completed, they need to be pulled together and analysed, and conclusions need to be reached about service developments and changes needed. The following is an example from the Institute of Public Care of what the contents of a commissioning strategy document might look like:

1. Summary

This can either be produced as a separate, short document, or as an 'executive summary' at the front of the strategy. This section normally gives a summary of the overall strategy and the agreed approach over the given time period, including the investment/disinvestment to be made over that period.

2. Introduction

The introduction states the purpose of the strategy and shared values and vision. It provides a brief picture of the service area under consideration, identifies the priorities and the outcomes that the strategy is trying to achieve. It may also contain a definition of commissioning. There should be a brief description of how the strategy was developed i.e. the process or methodology undertaken, and how it links with other key planning documents such as the Children and Young People's Plan.

3. National and Local Guidance and Research

This section should contain an overview of the care group concerned and major policy issues both locally and nationally. It should include a brief outline of the main messages from research, national guidance and good practice that have informed the strategy. The key drivers for change should be highlighted and it is particularly important that any 'must dos' from legislation, national guidance or local commitments are clearly stated.

The key themes and messages in this section can be used to provide a framework for the local needs assessment in section 4 and the service review in section 5.

4. Needs Assessment

The purpose of the needs assessment is to determine the size and nature of service user needs to be addressed by the strategy, and it should contain:

- Demographic Analysis - showing the size and prevalence of need in relation to the geographical location. This may cut across issues concerning social care, public health, education, housing etc. It may identify known changes amongst relevant populations; new characteristics of the population that may present problems that need addressing by one or more of the commissioning agencies; vulnerable populations that are not in contact with commissioning or provider agencies where it would be beneficial to the agency and/or the service user for services to be provided; populations where the provision of a service is required.

- Findings from local research or consultation with whole populations, patients, tenants, service users/carers.

It is not necessary for a strategy to provide a full need assessment and analysis as this is usually contained in separate document(s). References can be made to supporting information, the strategy, however, should provide at least a resume of needs as part of a rationale as to the care group we should be focussing on. The critical judgement is what needs to be included to help readers understand the strategy and its objectives. It is particularly important to give an overall assessment of needs of the care group concerned and the implication of this data.

5. Service Review

This section has a number of components, which build to present a picture of existing services and their use as well as a wider picture of the market and an assessment of current gaps in service availability or performance.

- **A map of services** - including the full range of services being provided, showing where services are located and the type of organisation providing them. The nature and depth of the map will depend on the rationale you are developing and the issues you need to highlight.
- **Service quantity** – is there known under or over supply of services. This section may include information on referral and assessment mechanisms, take-up of services, occupancy/vacancy levels, effectiveness/outcomes of services and waiting times
- **Service performance** – whether services are meeting needs fully or partially. To be gained from; inspection reports, performance indicators, service user and carer views relating to the relevance and quality of care through the analysis of complaints and information derived from user/carer forums and feedback from the contract monitoring process.
- **Contracting** - the contractual arrangements in place and any strengths/weaknesses in the arrangements.
- **Finance and funding** - a picture of the financial resources available now and potentially over the period of the strategy. Some strategies include a survey of costs and charges and show comparisons with neighbouring or equivalent authorities.
- **The market** - what are the current and future trends in provision? The analysis could also include an assessment of staffing issues and, if appropriate, land or house prices and their impact on the market, as well as an assessment of the robustness and capacity of the independent and voluntary sector. This section may also include known plans of service providers. and the range of consultation that has taken place.

Overall, the section should identify known oversupply, shortfall or pressure points in provision, now or in the future, and areas of poor performance.

6. Gap Analysis and the Design of Future Provision

This section is the hub of the strategy. It spells out the shape of future services and the strategic priorities necessary to achieving them within the timeframe of the strategy and appraises the options available, including risks. Proposals should be seen to emerge from the information and analyses of the preceding sections, therefore, the evidenced route by which shifts in provision will be made must identify the rationale for year-on-year priorities for change. This may include identifying service provision which will continue, any new services from new money, decommissioning services and major or small incremental shifts in provision as well as shifts in the balance of internal and external provision.

The section should include a set of key commissioning objectives and the rationale behind them.

7. Procurement and Market Management Plans

This section is concerned with how the planned service changes will be implemented in practice. It should include a detailed procurement plan which specifies how funds will be distributed in the foreseeable future. It should also include a plan for how the market will be managed, including any planned changes to contracting arrangements.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This section has two purposes. One, to make clear how both the strategy and services/contracts will be monitored in the future to determine whether the strategy is shaping services in the way intended. Two, to guide the development of monitoring of services in the future. In terms of the latter, it may be appropriate to include an assessment of the effectiveness of current monitoring and performance management arrangements, if changes to the systems are necessary. It is important to recognise that monitoring and the collection and analysis of data has a cost consequence for both commissioners and providers and this should be carefully considered in designing new systems.

9. Appendices

These may include

- The full needs and market analysis.
- Results of consultation exercises.
- All key social care and health performance indicators, and other important indicators appropriate to the care group,
- A glossary of terms used in the strategy.
- Key research and guidance documents.
- Action plan