

12 steps to embedding social value priorities in health and care commissioning

This 12 step approach to embedding social value in health and care commissioning is informed by the learning from Social Enterprise UK's (SEUK) three-year [Health and Social Value Programme](#) which worked in 12 areas with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local authorities and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector supporting the implementation of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. It sets out a tried and tested framework for commissioning authorities, VCSE and service users to agree, and implement social value priorities in health and care commissioning.

Developing social value priorities



1 Form a social value working group

Make sure you get the right people in the room:

- For the Health and Social Value Programme this included cross-sector representatives from CCGs, Health and Wellbeing Boards, VCSE, local authorities, universities, Police and Crime Commissioners and local businesses. You will need people with decision making powers to be on board, as well as the people who can inform the process from the different perspectives, the providers, commissioners, procurers and ultimately the service user and citizen.
- We have found that you need strong leadership both strategically and from those who own the processes to drive this forward.
- Something that the 12 areas involved really appreciated was having an independent facilitator, to drive forward work, manage conflict and offer an objective perspective.



2 Learn about social value together

People will come with varying levels of understanding, knowledge and experience of social value:

- Begin with the basics 'what is social value?' so everyone is starting from the same level.
- Consider what social value means to the local area and how you can generate more of it at all stages of your commissioning and procurement processes.
- Consider what the barriers to achieving this are and how you might address them.
- Bring inspiration to motivate and drive the work, it may be helpful to review what other areas have considered and the approaches they have taken for example Halton, Brighton & Hove, Haringey and Salford.

KEY READING:

[The Social Value Guide, Implementing the Public Service \(Social Value\) Act 2012, SEUK](#)

[Working with the Public Sector – Busting the myths, SEUK](#)

[Communities Count, Unlocking Social Value, SEUK](#)

[Procuring for Good, SEUK](#)

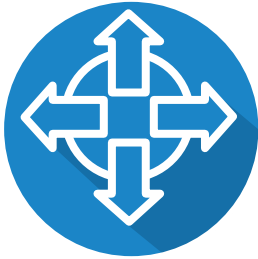
[Securing Healthy Returns, Sustainable Development Unit](#)



3 Review existing local priorities

How can social value support their delivery?

Useful places to start are existing local strategies and plans, such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Areas involved in the Health and Social Value Programme have taken different approaches; Haringey was driven by a focus on mental health and preventative approaches for wellbeing, and made this central to its social value checklist, while Calderdale wanted to prioritise spending locally.



4 Align social value priorities with local objectives and consult with stakeholders

Halton found it helpful to look at the Marmot priorities for addressing health inequalities and align them with Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy. See how the areas have done this by looking at their social value priorities.

Year One
(2013-2014)

[Salford](#) | [Halton](#) | [Milton Keynes](#) | [Calderdale](#)

Year Two
(2014-2015)

[Leeds](#) | [Reading](#) | [North Tyneside](#) | [Haringey](#)

Year Three
(2015-2016)

[Brighton & Hove](#) | [Lambeth](#) | [Oldham](#) | [Shropshire](#)



5 Agree and draft social value priorities

This can take a number of forms. Some areas have used a framework or charter which establishes social value priorities and how they will be used in the commissioning process, others have gone further and developed a pledge which all organisations and businesses commissioning and delivering public services sign up to.

This will need to be agreed and adopted by all stakeholders.

TOP TIPS

- It's helpful to nominate a social value champion or group of people, to lead and encourage others to embed and deliver on social value priorities.
- Don't be afraid of seeking external support or advice. The 12 areas the Health and Social Value Programme has worked with have all been through this and would be happy to share their learning and experience with others. There might be one that is local to you. There are also a number of individual experts and organisations which could provide some information and advice, such as SEUK & IVAR.
- This process can take time, especially when you are establishing relationships between individuals and organisations that may not have worked together before. You will need to build trust and develop ways of working together.
- From our experience it is helpful to identify a 'quick win', an upcoming contract or a past contract that can be used to test the chosen approach to embedding social value and explore the potential commissioning for social value can have.

Measuring Social Value

This is something you need to consider throughout the process of developing and embedding a social value policy. After all you can't measure your social value without a policy in place and you will need to be able to verify tender assessments. Moreover, it is important to know that you are getting the social value you have contracted a provider to deliver and that you are able to demonstrate what social value is being achieved across the commissioning authority.

The 12 areas have found that this is something that is easily over complicated and feedback has been to try and keep it as simple as possible.

There is an emerging consensus to an approach. A number of areas involved in this programme started developing standard measurement frameworks for social value across their commissioning authorities but found that this was too restrictive. Instead they have developed flexible frameworks which enable them to apply different approaches to each contract.

TOP TIPS

- Think about measurement at all stages of the commissioning and procurement process.
- Involve the service providers in developing the measurement framework for the contract. For example Shropshire included the development of a measurement framework in their service specification for one contract which meant the provider was responsible for devising an appropriate approach to measurement.
- Be aware of what is proportional and realistic to expect a provider to report on, depending on the amount of money and risk involved. Consider what other reporting they are already doing and whether it is suitable to use data they are already collecting.

KEY READING

[The Seven Principles of Measurement, Social Value UK](#)

[Proportionality Guidance, PwC](#)

[Communities Count, Unlocking Social Value, SEUK](#)

How to implement social value priorities

Specifying social value in a contract

There are two ways that social value can be recognised in a contract specification, these are mutually inclusive and as such can be used in the same specification:

- A separate social value clause/question awarding points or given a weighting - this is usually between 5%-20% of the total tender but some commissioning authorities have awarded up to and over 30%.
- Embed social value throughout the service specification and its delivery becomes core to the service or product you are buying rather than an additional element.



6 Identify an upcoming service to be commissioned with at least six months lead time, which would be relevant and appropriate to include social value



7 Consult with service providers and service users about the outcomes you want to achieve and the best way to deliver these, and using the agreed social value priorities discuss the type of social value that might be possible to procure through the tender

TOP TIP

If you are finding it difficult to include the social value you want, consider changing the subject of the contract. Any social value requirements need to reflect the subject of the contract, and the policy of the commissioning authority. If a commissioner is seeking to build a new school to regenerate an area, they might be better redefining the contract as a regeneration project to ensure that the social value is core to the contract.



8 Agree service specification and the social value requirements

- Being specific about your requirements makes it easier to compare and assess tenders.
- Consider how in contract management the social value deliverables will be reported on and measured.
- Agree an appropriate weighting for social value, typically this is between 5% and 30% (there is nothing to prevent you from going above 30% if relevant). Anything below 5% is likely to be seen as window dressing by providers and service users.



9 Communicate with the market

...to make sure they understand social value and the approach that you are taking. Including your social value policy/framework in the Pre-Qualifying Questionnaire (PQQ) information is useful, as is holding open sessions to engage with potential providers and explain about your social value priorities. You will be able to see if you've got this right when assessing the bids.



10 Assess tenders:
Make sure you are clear about how the social value responses will be compared and verified. Research conducted by Salford has found that the higher a bid scored on social value the better it scored overall



11 Award contract:
Be clear about how the social value element will be monitored and whether failure to deliver on it should be included in the contract's break clause



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Manage the contract

Have a process for how social value deliverables are reported on and measured. This is often done through the commissioner of a service. Alternatively the social value lead could be responsible for collating social value impact from across contracts.

KEY LEARNING

- Consider ways to reduce barriers for smaller VCSE and SME businesses to engage with the commissioning process, this might be supporting the development of consortia or a local quality mark that once achieved means they automatically get an invitation to tender (ITT) and do not have to submit a PQQ each time. This has worked well in Halton to support both VCSE and SMEs to engage with the commissioning process.
- Is there a process to track and report on the social value of your commissioning authority overall? SEUK's [Procuring for Good](#) report found that very few local authorities are tracking or collating their social value impact across the commissioning authority. There is a clear case for a group or individual to oversee this and for it to be built into annual reviews and reporting to cabinet members and key stakeholders.

Further support

SEUK & IVAR have worked with over 500 senior leaders from CCGs, local authorities and VCSE organisations, we are experts in social value and developing effective partnerships to deliver change with lasting impact. We can support you to develop and implement a social value policy.

Our team can provide tailored, practical support to you including:

- Training sessions and days
- Action-learning sets
- Long-term implementation programmes
- Impact measurement and communications advice

Contact: charlie.wigglesworth@socialenterprise.org.uk

www.socialenterprise.org.uk

020 3589 4950

@SocialEnt_UK

The Fire Station, 139 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2HZ.

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