

## 1. What is the purpose of these briefing papers?

This briefing paper is the fifth in a series. The first four are now available online:

1. [Motivational Interviewing](#) (pdf)
2. [Gay men – risky sex and drug use](#) (pdf)
3. [Mutual aid](#) (pdf)
4. [Workforce development tools](#) (pdf)

Each paper focuses on a single topic and provides: a short overview of the topic, produced with input from an expert; links to the best evidence-based research and findings from the [Skills Hub](#), the [Drug and Alcohol Evidence Matrices](#); and a wider resources section which contains less formal materials such as toolkits, news articles and videos.

## 2. What is substance misuse commissioning?

The role of commissioner is complex and requires excellent analytical skills. The following briefing looks at commissioning from a number of different angles and for a variety of different services.

The [Government's Commissioning Academy](#) describes commissioning thus;

‘Commissioners are at the forefront of public service transformation. Significant efficiencies and improvements have already been delivered, but there is still a pressing challenge to achieve more for less.

To deliver the next phase of efficiencies, executives will need to lead diverse teams to design service delivery, to influence external parties and shape and manage markets. They need practical skill and judgement, access to the latest thinking and confidence and courage to deliver radical changes.

Commissioning is essentially the effective design and delivery of policy or services.

The best commissioners have the confidence to challenge the status quo, take on radical change, collaborate effectively with external stakeholders, gain a deep understanding of the need and target resources effectively to meet those needs’.

For more information on the Commissioning Academy see the General Resources section of this document.

### 3. How can the Skills Hub and the Drug and Alcohol Matrices help me?

**Skills Hub:** [Turning Evidence into Practice: helping clients to access and engage with mutual aid](#) [NTA, 2013]

The first in a series of briefings to support commissioners and providers who want to improve the recovery orientation of their services, as recommended by '[Medications in recovery: re-orientating drug dependence treatment](#)', the final report of the John Strang-chaired Recovery Orientated Drug Treatment expert group.

**Skills Hub:** [Delivering quality care for drug and alcohol users: the roles and competencies of doctors - A guide for commissioners, providers and clinicians](#) [RCP and RCGP, 2012]

This report aims to ensure all doctors have the right level of competency for the roles and responsibilities they undertake. The report will help commissioners, providers, regulators, policy makers, doctors and those seeking recovery from drug and alcohol problems. It includes:

- The recovery context
- The distinctive roles carried out by doctors working with drug and alcohol users
- The distinction between specialist, intermediate and generalist competencies
- Further information on training, qualification and supervision arrangements
- A number of broad principles for commissioning drug and alcohol services.

**Skills Hub:** [Commissioning treatment for dependence on prescription and over-the-counter medicines: a guide for NHS and local authority commissioners](#) [PHE, 2013]

This brief guide, published by Public Health England for NHS and local authority commissioners, covers what medications people are likely to have problems with, who might be using them and how to identify local need. It is intended as a guide for commissioners but may also be useful for service managers in understanding the background to this issue, which is receiving increasing attention. It includes a section on the specific considerations for prison and secure environments.

**Skills Hub:** [Commissioning for multiple disadvantages](#) [AVA: Stella Project, 2013]

This commissioning guidance published by the Stella Project, looks at the specific needs of young women who experience a collection of significant needs across multiple domains. It contains useful recommendations on service design and provision to develop safe and effective services for this group of young women.

**Matrices:** [Services for the identification and treatment of hazardous drinking, harmful drinking and alcohol dependence in children, young people and adults](#) [NICE, 2011]

This guidance from the UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) aims to support commissioners in England in their attempts to provide services for the identification and care of hazardous, harmful and dependent drinkers which implement other relevant NICE guidance on alcohol, and to commission high quality services that meet the quality standard on alcohol dependence and harmful alcohol use. Essentially it extracts the messages for commissioners from related NICE and other official guidance and distils these into a single document to guide the organisation and procurement of

treatment and brief intervention services in an area which embody those messages. In doing so it offers reasons for organisations responsible for spending health service resources to devote these to services for drinkers.

**Matrices:** [Alcohol-use disorders: Preventing harmful drinking](#) [NICE, 2010]

The UK Department of Health asked NICE to produce public health guidance on the prevention and early identification of alcohol-use disorders among adults and adolescents. The guidance is for government, industry and commerce, the NHS and all those whose actions affect the population's attitude to – and use of – alcohol. This includes commissioners, managers and practitioners working in local authorities, education and the wider public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

**Matrices:** [Commissioning for recovery. Drug treatment, reintegration and recovery in the community and prisons: a guide for drug partnerships](#) [NTA, 2010]

This guidance is intended for local multi-agency partnerships responsible for planning services in their areas and for the spending of funds earmarked nationally for tackling drug problems, and also for authorities responsible for addiction services in prisons. It aims to give practical advice on how local commissioners may seek to continually develop effective, evidence-based treatment options with a focus on enabling service users to reintegrate into society and recover as soon as is practicable in the context of a recovery-based drug treatment system.

**Matrix Bites:** [Column E: Treatment systems](#) [Findings]

The Drug and Alcohol Matrices and the Matrix Bites course features a full column on treatment systems; focussing on how to foster an appropriate mix and quality of services to meet the needs of clients. These are divided into cells for different types of intervention, including [reducing harm](#), [generic and cross-cutting issues](#), [medical treatment](#), [psychosocial therapies](#) and [safeguarding the community](#). Each cell covers a variety of important research studies, reviews and guidance, as well as the Matrix Bites discussion.

## 4. Which wider resources can help me?

### Drug and alcohol

#### [Alcohol and drugs: JSNA support pack](#) [Public Health England]

These documents are divided into 'adult alcohol and drugs' and 'young people' sections and are of great relevance to those involved in commissioning. The main good-practice documents contain commissioning principles in the form of prompts and some background information on drugs, alcohol and recovery. The supporting documents contain data sets which will also be useful. These resources are updated annually and include information on current trends and public health.

#### [Quality standards for drug use disorders](#) [NICE]

This quality standard from NICE outlines best practice regarding treating problematic drug use. "It provides specific, concise quality statements, measures and audience descriptors to provide the public, health and social care professionals, commissioners and service providers with definitions of high-quality care. This quality standard covers the treatment of adults (18 years or over) who misuse opioids, cannabis, stimulants or other drugs in all settings in which care is received, in particular inpatient and specialist residential and community-based treatment settings."

#### [Overarching commissioning guidance](#) [Public Health England]

This webpage contains sections on 'evidence and guidance' and 'other supporting information'. Linked from these sections are all the PHE resources on commissioning covering topics including some of the ones described in more detail below. This is a useful portal for accessing relevant resources for commissioning drug and alcohol treatment services.

#### [The role of addiction specialist doctors in recovery orientated treatment systems](#)

[Public Health England]

This resource examines the role of doctors specializing in addiction in recovery orientated treatment systems. It argues that such doctors increase awareness and can support providers and commissioners in delivering recovery-focused systems. Addiction specialist doctors are argued to be vital for a balanced, informed system, and have particular value in diagnosing and treating patients with complex needs; they can also reduce risk as their expertise allows them to choose appropriate interventions and monitor the safety of a medication-based approach. Specialist doctors are also important for families as they can liaise with them to support delivery of recovery outcomes for clients. They can also provide expert advice on substance misuse disorders to courts and professionals involved in safeguarding. They can give professional peer support and supervision for trainee doctors and provide leadership and advice to commissioners (particularly during Local Strategic Needs Assessments), substance misuse services and policy makers.

#### [Signs for improvement – commissioning interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm](#)

(pdf) [Department of Health]

This guidance directs commissioners to the resources and good practice guidelines they need to effectively commission services which reduce alcohol-related harm. It aims to improve commissioning at all stages of the commissioning cycle. The document breaks down the process into three sections:

1. Strategic planning
2. Specifying service outcomes and procuring services
3. Managing demand and performance

Within each of these sections, the guide identifies the most important tools and reference materials, and gives a checklist of key actions to take.

[Medications in recovery: best practice in reviewing treatment – supplementary advice from the Recovery Orientated Drug Treatment Expert Group](#) (pdf) [Public Health England]

This advice document builds on the earlier '[Medications in Recovery](#)' report, also from the John Strang-chaired expert group. From the supplementary advice, the key recommendation for commissioners is to ensure their services:

- have the resources (sufficient staff, with appropriate competences and the time) to conduct ongoing, specific and strategic reviews as specified
- monitor a range of recovery outcomes to understand and demonstrate the benefits being derived from treatment
- have access to a diverse range of interventions, intensities and settings (including residential) to optimise treatment and care

[Clinical governance in drug treatment: A good practice guide for providers and commissioners](#) (pdf) [NTA]

This 2009 document sets out to 'support the effective implementation of clinical governance for all drug treatment providers, across all tiers, whether delivering health or social care, and whether public or independent (private or voluntary sector)'. It asks the questions 'what is clinical governance?' and 'what are the components of clinical governance?' and explores what the key roles and responsibilities are around the topic, including for commissioners.

[Guidance on commissioning young people's specialist substance misuse treatment services](#) (pdf) [NTA]

Produced in 2008, this guidance document is aimed at commissioners responsible for the planning and delivery of specialist services for under 18 year olds, and covers topics including the integrated commissioning, organisational competence, performance management and service specifications.

[Public Health Report on Commissioning of HCV services in London for People who Inject Drugs](#) [London Joint Working Group on Substance Misuse + Hepatitis C]

Assessing the level of hepatitis C infection in London and the rest of the UK, this report makes detailed recommendations on how to combat the virus for each of the different audiences making up the new commissioning arrangements in the UK. These include Health and Wellbeing Boards, Directors of Public Health, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Public Health England and the NHS Commissioning Board.

[Commissioning fact-sheet for clinical commissioning groups](#) (pdf) [NHS Commissioning Board]

This 2012 fact-sheet “sets out the services to be commissioned by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) from April 2013. It also sets out the complementary services to be commissioned by the NHS Commissioning Board (NHS CB), local authorities and Public Health England (PHE).”

[Best practice guidance for commissioners and providers of pharmaceutical services for drug users](#) (pdf) [NTA]

This 2006 NTA guidance provides commissioners with the information and advice they need to effectively commission pharmaceutical services (such as needle exchanges or services which support supervised consumption of substitute prescribed medicines) for drug users. It also explores the various roles that pharmacists play in delivering pharmaceutical services and the varying levels of expertise pharmacists can achieve in these roles.

[Routes to Recovery: Psychosocial Interventions for Drug Misuse \(A framework and toolkit for implementing NICE-recommended treatment interventions\)](#) (pdf) [NTA]

This 2010 resource is aimed at practitioners, service-managers and commissioners and aims to provide a comprehensive picture of how to successfully introduce and maintain a system of psychosocial interventions for the treatment of substance use or the dual diagnosis of substance use and mental health issues. The model adopted uses evidence-based and NICE approved interventions such as motivational interviewing, contingency management and behavioural couples therapy.

[Khat advice for local commissioners](#) (pdf) [NTA]

This brief guide provides advice for local health and care commissioners on the forthcoming control of khat under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) and implications for strategic and service responses to local populations that use the drug.

[Improving access to mutual aid: a brief guide for commissioners](#) (pdf) [NTA]

This document outlines the appropriate role commissioners can play in supporting the further development of mutual aid, its relationship to treatment services, and the practical steps commissioners can take.

## **General resources**

[Mutuals advice service for commissioners](#) [Cabinet Office]

This Cabinet Office website provides a wide range of tools for commissioners. It hosts an information bank, links to useful resources, tools and case studies and a gateway to a peer network. The site pledges to support ‘commissioners through every step of the journey - from pre-feasibility to spin out and beyond’ and notes that it has been designed with commissioners for commissioners.

[The Commissioning Academy](#) [Cabinet Office]

The Commissioning Academy is run by the Cabinet Office and aims to improve the skills of public sector leaders, see this [page](#) on how to join the next cohort, which will involve up to 30 people from across the public sector and will feature six sessions of expert speakers, case study discussion, and peer-led learning.

[Successful Commissioning Guide: How to secure value for money through better financial relationships with third sector organisations](#) [National Audit Office]

This website exists specifically for those commissioners looking to commission services from the third sector. It also contains some information for those in the third sector looking to find out more about commissioning. For both these audiences the site explains what should be expected in financial terms from any relationship between the two sectors, as well as other topics including:

- the main issues for effective financial relationships with third sector organisations;
- existing guidance in an accessible and practical way;
- dispelling some of the “myths” that exist around commissioning
- improving practices to achieve greater value for money.