



# Manchester City Council Children's & Education Services

## Commissioning Behaviours and Principles 2024

'Working together to enable Manchester's children and young people to lead safe, happy, healthy and successful lives'

## Introduction

The Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025, sets out the vision for Manchester to be in the top flight of world-class cities by 2025. Critical to the delivery of the vision is supporting the citizens of Manchester, which includes its children, young people and their families, to achieve their potential and benefit from its improving economic, cultural, and social capital.

The Our Manchester Strategy is supported by the Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2027- working together to build a safe, happy, healthy, independent and successful future for the city's children and young people. This means:

- We will make sure children and young people are kept safe and feel safe in their communities
- We are committed to prevention and early intervention, providing the right service at the right time in the right place
- We will challenge and work together to mitigate the things that can hold children back, like poverty, lack of equity or family circumstances
- Our schools and settings will be supported to be inclusive and will deliver high quality education for every child
- We will enable every child to be confident and to thrive in a city that strives to meet their needs
- We will improve health outcomes for children and young people so that they have the best possible health and wellbeing

The Children and Education Services Commissioning Principles 2024 are aligned to the Children and Young People's Plan, and incorporate many of its key themes. This document provides a clear vision of our commissioning priorities, our approach and behaviours.

Children's Services commissioning expenditure accounts for £50m of the Council's revenue through the commissioning of a broad range of services which contribute to and meet the needs of our children and young people.

Commissioning is more than just buying a service or a product. It is about understanding needs and developing the right services which can effectively support Manchester's children and young people by working in partnership with service users, the community, partner agencies and providers.

## What is Commissioning?

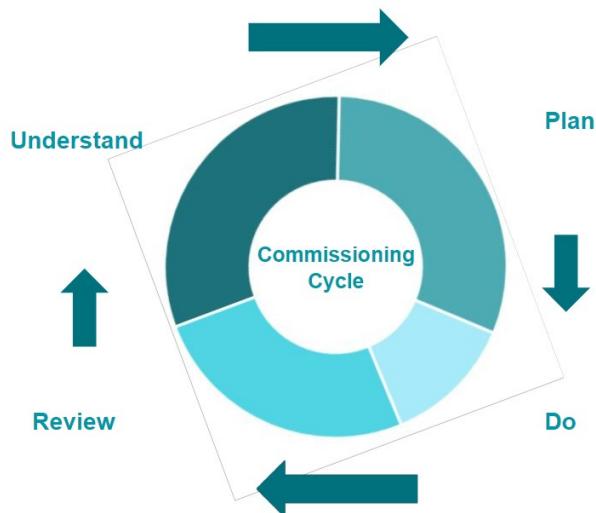
Commissioning is about ensuring that services are developed using a robust understanding of needs and are planned effectively, maximising all available resources. They are delivered using transparent processes and reviewed to ensure continued value for money and outcomes.

Commissioning takes place on a number of levels - strategic, operational and individual. It is

important that Commissioning is completed in partnership with service users, the community, partner agencies and providers.

Whatever type of commissioning is being completed it should always follow the same process cycle of ‘understand – plan – do – review’. Understand is the largest segment of the cycle, involving the analysis of data, building relationships with partners and sharing information.

## The Commissioning Cycle



### Understand

- Understanding the needs, resources, strengths and weaknesses of the current position.
- Identifying the gaps between what is desired, needed and the resources that might be available.
- Building relationships

### Plan

- Scoping the potential capacity, establishing priorities and strategies to address identified gaps.
- Make optimal use of resources
- Shape markets

### Do

- Procuring and developing services, to meet identified outcomes.

## Review

- Monitor and review the performance and impact of services on agreed outcomes, seeking improvement
- Decommissioning services where necessary.

## Informing our priorities 2024 to 2030

There are several data sources which inform commissioning:

- Joint strategic needs assessment
- Population health and census data
- National data sets such as the 903, schools and ASCOF
- Parent forum consultation and engagement
- Ofsted Statistics and inspection outcomes
- Young People Engagement
- Regional placement and cost data
- Service monitoring, performance and evaluation
- Public health outcomes framework

What children, young people and their families tell us:

- They want better access to community clubs, youth provision, leisure activities, spaces to meet together and better access to transport.
- They would like us to listen to them and involve them in services and to engage with them more using digital means.
- They want to tell their story only once and for services to work together to meet their needs

Creating the conditions for excellent commissioning:

- The Directorate has invested in Commissioning Resources to support innovation and creative commissioning
- Ensuring that Council services link and work together to avoid duplication
- Strong Parent and Carer Voice across SEND, Fostering and Early Help
- Maximisation of social value to ensure we reinvest in our communities and services
- Co-production of market development actions plans
- Developing systems to ensure prompt payments

## Our behaviours

Behaviours demonstrate our attitude and approach; they are how we do things, how we treat others, what we say and how we say it, and how we expect to be treated.

The Our Manchester behaviours are:

- We take time to listen and understand

- We work together and trust each other
- We show that we value our differences and treat people fairly
- We ‘own it’ and we are not afraid to try new things
- We are proud and passionate about Manchester

We are passionate about children and young people. This is reflected not only in the way we work with them, but in all aspects of our service planning, commissioning and delivery of services. This is a value-based approach that involves a relentless drive and focus on improving all areas of children’s and young people’s lives, underpinned by a strength based, can-do attitude.

Working with colleagues and partners from other organisations, an across the council directorates, will be key to driving change. This requires a culture of openness, trust and sharing to ensure that best practice, skills and knowledge are shared widely.

In order to put the child at the centre of everything we do, we need to understand the world from their point of view and put ourselves in their shoes. It is only through understanding what matters to them that we can support them to succeed. We need to think and act differently. Thinking creatively will enable us to respond to continuing challenges in new ways.

## **Our Commissioning Principles - at the heart of how we will develop services**

The Commissioning Priorities which are listed below are underpinned by a series of key delivery actions and activities. These will be delivered through individual service plans and strategies which will define and describe how they contribute to Children and Young People's Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan priorities to meet the identified risks and challenges and maximise the opportunities available.

- We will prioritise ethical providers who are as passionate about Our Children as we are
- Recognise and value the voices of children and young people in the development and monitoring of services
- Ensure we use timely data, intelligence and consultation to inform innovative service design
- Co-produce Market development plans with service users and providers
- Develop future proof services
- Ensure we work collaboratively across the Council to ensure maximisation of existing resources
- Social value is embedded within all commissioning to ensure we reinvest in our communities and services
- Own decisions to ensure we are investing in services which positively impact children's lives.
- Learn from and utilise existing good practice

## **Our Commissioning Principles – Outcomes Framework**

It is vital that we can measure our progress and successes and therefore have developed a number of metrics that are sharp and outcomes focussed; which will enable us to ascertain whether we are delivering on our principles and continuing to improve the lives of children's and young people in Manchester. Commissioning behaviours and principles outcomes will be included within the quarterly directorate priorities report and subject to the same scrutiny and challenge.

**We will prioritise ethical providers who are as passionate about Our Children as we are**

- Develop preferred provider contracts, with specifications regarding ethics and expectations regarding service user engagement
- All contracts will incorporate performance indicators to include voice of the child and family
- Strong transparent processes in place that build confident partnerships
- Establish clear strategic commissioning and contract management priorities for the Directorate

**Recognise and value the voices of children and young people in the development and monitoring of services**

- Children and young people voice informed services development and are evident in strategic planning
- Report into the Directorate Evidence base of where children and young people have influence commissioning and practice

**Ensure we use timely data, intelligence and consultation to inform innovative service design**

- Consultation and engagement utilised will be up to date and specific to subject area
- If there is no up to date consultation this will be completed as part of the commissioning cycle
- There is a strong evidence base to inform commissioning

**Co-produce Market development plans with service users and providers**

- Strong complex local network with good relationships between key players
- Provide sufficiency and stability within the market place and support personal choice
- Engage early with partners to allow sufficient time for them to influence service development and set key priorities

## **Develop future proof services**

- Commissioned services will be fit for purpose and have the flexibility to meet future demand
- A clear coordinated offer for Manchester children
- Willingness to think outside existing organisation structures

## **Ensure we work collaboratively across the Council, Partner agencies and Community to ensure maximisation of existing resources**

- Strategic resources pooled around projects to ensure value for money
- Increased use of community provision and assets
- Reduced duplication of resources and services
- Increased number projects and services with shared outcomes and ownership
- Services are strategically relevant, aligned and integrated with a broader range of public sector partners

## **Ensure social value is embedded within all commissioning to ensure we reinvest in our communities and services**

- Social value tracker implemented to understand the
- Social value performance measures will form part of all contracts
- Collection of social value case studies will published
- Achieve and increase value for money for the public purse.

## **Own decisions to ensure we are investing in services which positively impact children's lives.**

- Services which are ineffective, inefficient, inequitable or unsustainable are decommissioned
- There is strong governance, transparent of resourcing, accountability and direction of commissioning activity
- Evidence-based commissioning will play an important role in developing and commissioning specialist
- interventions based on knowledge of what works.

## **Learn from and utilise existing good practice**

- Work with and procure collaboratively with GM where is possible to do so
- Best practice from GM, North West and Nationally is incorporated into service design