



PRESS RELEASE

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Partners in Commissioning – unique consortium launched to support commissioners achieve world-class services for their population

PCTs can now draw on the expertise of a new consortium led by CHKS Ltd, the UK's leading independent provider in healthcare intelligence and quality improvement services, to strengthen commissioning. Partners in Commissioning is a unique partnership set up to respond to the Department of Health's Framework for procuring External Support for Commissioners (FESC).

The framework will provide Primary Care Trusts with easy access to a framework of expert suppliers who can support them in undertaking their commissioning functions. Partners in Commissioning brings together expertise from CHKS, Acton Shapiro, the Association of Public Health Observatories, the Sollis Partnership and the York Health Economics Consortium.

As a newly appointed supplier to the FESC, Partners in Commissioning will help PCTs to:

- strengthen commissioning
- monitor current and planned levels of activity and expenditure
- provide and support IT solutions to meet PCTs' needs in respect of the above
- assess and plan the need for and delivery of services
- collect and analyse GP feedback and patient information

Consortium members will continue to operate their individual businesses as usual but working in partnership will bring a number of further benefits. The partnership will support and promote public/patient engagement while helping to create and nurture partnerships across local health and social care economies.

Its blend of analytical skills (including epidemiological, information and economics) together with public health specialists, training and other consultants (with expertise in patient surveys and public engagement) makes it ideally placed to have a positive effect on further strengthening commissioning services.

Graham Harries, Chief Executive, CHKS Ltd said: “This partnership represents a significant boost to commissioning health services. Our combined skills and experience will help PCTs further enhance commissioning and ensure that the right services are provided in appropriate settings and to agreed standards that the public rightly expects. It also gives CHKS and our partners the opportunity to bring their unrivalled expertise to new areas such as social care and ambulance services.”

Dr Bobbie Jacobson, Vice Chair of the Association of Public Health Observatories (APHO) and London Health Observatory (LHO) Director said: “We are delighted to be part of the Partners in Commissioning consortium. LHO’s strength is in its ability to provide timely and high quality intelligence alongside its national expertise on health inequalities, ethnicity and tobacco. We look forward to working in partnership with PCT colleagues across the country in the commissioning process.”

Notes to editors:

1. CHKS Ltd is the leading independent provider of healthcare information and quality improvement services to the NHS and independent healthcare sector. With over 15 years’ experience and working internationally with 450 clients, CHKS has a portfolio of information products, internationally-recognised accreditation programmes and consultancy services which provide clinicians and managers with the information needed to drive improvements in patient care, financial efficiency, clinical effectiveness and quality.
2. The London Health Observatory (LHO) is part of the Association of Public Health Observatories (APHO), a federation of UK and Ireland Observatories, covering England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The PHOs work extensively in the commissioning area and have continuing contact with PCTs across England. As well as providing a bespoke Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) enquiry service which

mainly supports commissioning by PCTs, the PHOs each have a national lead role – London's being in health inequalities, ethnicity health and tobacco.

3. York Health Economics Consortium (YHEC) is a company wholly owned by the University of York. YHEC was established in 1986 to extend the range of the University's services to the health care sector. YHEC's purpose is to provide consultancy and research in health economics to the NHS and to the pharmaceutical and health care industries, which combines rigorous research standards with efficient project delivery.
 - Activities in support of Primary Care Trusts have included:
 - Activity analysis, e.g. variation in referral patterns, casemix analysis for Payment by Results (PbR).
 - Resource allocation, e.g. use of formulae and other methods of distributing resources and each area's 'fair share'.
 - Benchmarking and decision support, e.g. providing summary guidance on best practice and literature reviews on priority topics for PCG/Ts.
 - Analysis of NHS financial flows, e.g. Payment by Results
4. The Sollis Partnership Ltd was formed in 1994 to provide and support technical solutions to meet PCTs' budgeting and monitoring needs. The Sollis product family is designed specifically to meet the wide and varied information needs of NHS trusts. All of the following products are being deployed by existing customers to deliver on their current Practice Based Commissioning (PBC) information needs:
 - CLARITY.CMS - PbR/PBC Contract Management / Monitoring
 - CLARITY.PBC – PBC Information Dissemination
 - SPHYPERCUBE - Web enabled business intelligence. Bespoke (ad-hoc) analysis & reporting.
5. Acton Shapiro is a specialist independent company providing consultancy and research in the fields of health and social care. The company has extensive experience in public, patient/service user and carer involvement and consultation a) using a range of methods including individual face to face and telephone interviews, focus groups, workshops, questionnaires, and more innovative approaches to engaging harder to reach groups; b) using the findings from such work to inform the planning and commissioning of services in a practical and meaningful manner. Its core areas of work are:
 - Primary care, particularly organisational and premises development
 - Involvement of patients, carers, service users and the public
 - Needs assessment, service planning and evaluation

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