

Step 1: Outline Business Case

Tool 2: Questions and perspectives for commissioners

This tool is for use in conjunction with Step 1 of the Commissioning Toolkit document

- The complexity of transforming pathology services to the potentially significant scale required in the future means that the commissioner will need to lead rather than support the process to ensure timely results.
- Options appraisal should be developed with clear, transparent financial and non-financial criteria in a manner which involves stakeholders to gain buy-in to the preferred option.
- Consideration of length of commissioned arrangements is complex, balancing requirements for investment with a need for open competition, especially where a system-wide tender is the preferred option.
- Will Trusts and community users be obliged to stay with a nominated provider for a specified period after which the market becomes more open and dynamic?
- How fundamental must the commissioning approach be to ensure the achievement of optimal cost and performance efficiencies in the region?
- A determination of the commissioners' stance to manage the market change and supporting Trusts in changing arrangements is required based on regional characteristics.
- How much will the new provision be opened up to competition from the independent sector providers and joint NHS and independent sector arrangements.
- What are the guiding principles of proposed new commercial and financial arrangements between involved parties?
- How will the savings that result from a more efficient provision of pathology services be shared to support sustainable outcomes for both commissioners and providers?
- Where there is more than one commissioner, what will prevent commissioners within the region going to a cheaper pathology provider in or out of the region? Who has the authority to enforce the new contract and what would the enforcement mechanisms be?