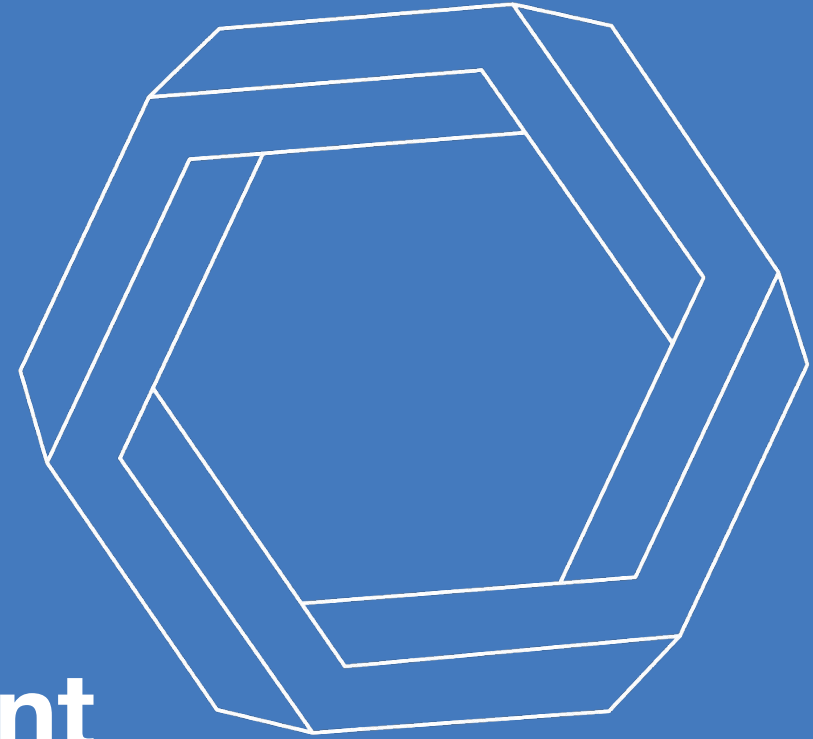




Government  
Commercial  
Function



# Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework

## On-boarding Guidance

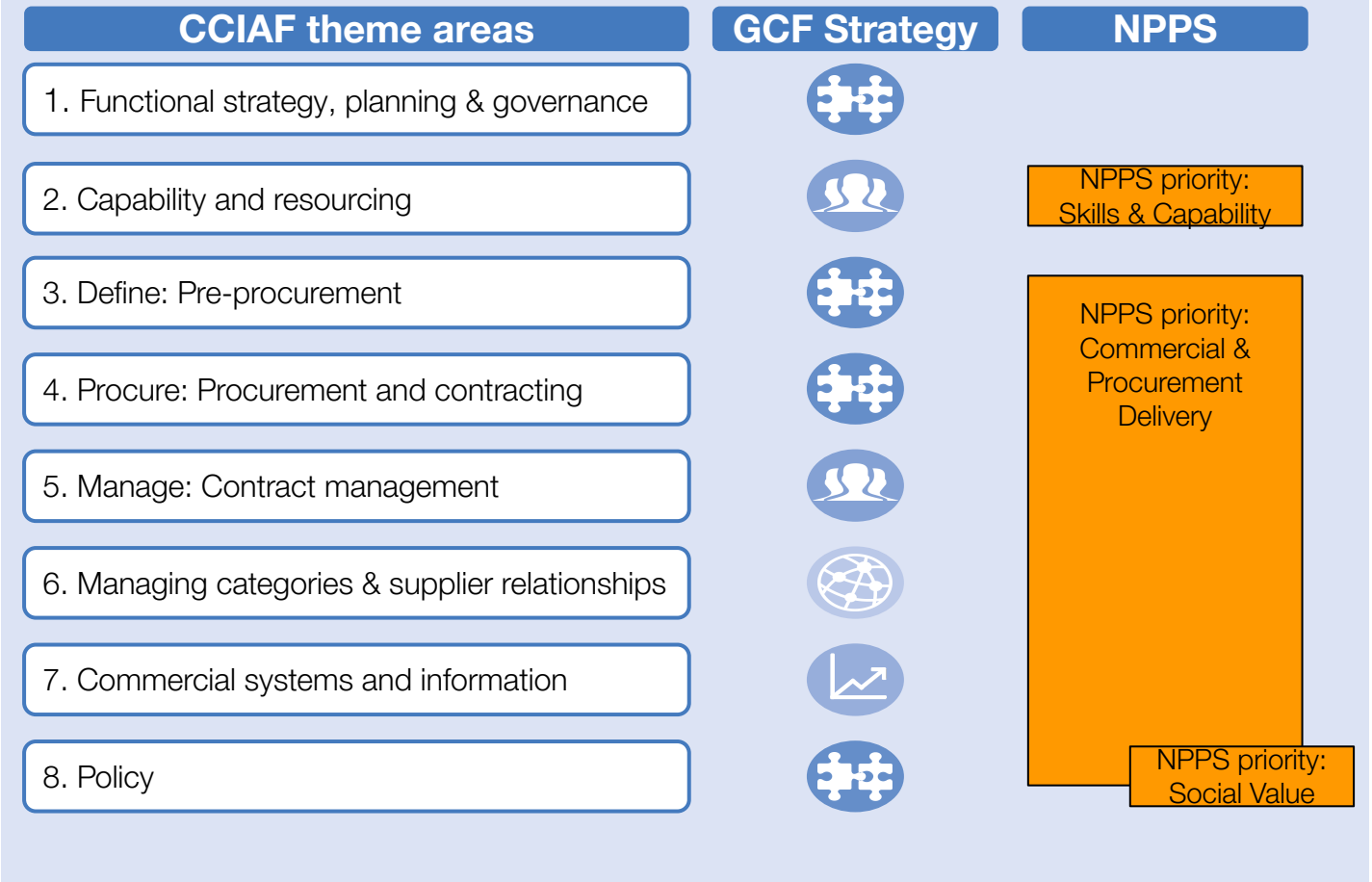
### Strategy Assurance and Standards

Approved by: Sarah Croll  
Issued: September 2023  
Version 2.3

# The GCF Strategy aligned with the the National Procurement Policy Statement; both are measured using the Commercial Standards

- In June 2021 the Cabinet Office published a **National Procurement Policy Statement** (NPPS), introducing a new requirement for all in scope\* public bodies to assess themselves against publically available procurement standards.
- We use the **Functional Standard GovS 008: Commercial** to set and assure standards consistently across the public sector.
- This comparison is done using the **Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF)**, co-designed with NHS England & Improvement and the Local Government sector. CCIAF assesses each organisation's practices against 8 theme areas, which include those set out in the NPPS. CCIAF is also aligned with the GCF Strategy.
- The assessment provides each organisation with a commercial maturity rating (Good, Better and Best).







## Alignment between CCIAF, NPPS and GCF Strategy



\*As of April 23, Contracting authorities with an annual spend of £100m or more are required to undertake CCIAF



|  |           |   |           |
|--|-----------|---|-----------|
| <b>Aiming for “best”</b>   | <b>4</b>  | <b>Assessment Cover Sheet - Spend Under Assessment</b>      | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Background Commercial Continuous Improvement Framework</b>                    | <b>5</b>  | <b>Pre-Mobilisation, Forming a team</b>                     | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Commercial Self-Assessment Framework — the journey so far</b>                 | <b>6</b>  | <b>Phase 1.1: Assessing against the assessment criteria</b> | <b>18</b> |
| <b>Your CCIAF Journey</b>  | <b>7</b>  | <b>Phase 1.2: Completing peer reviews</b>                   | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Assessment criteria</b>   | <b>9</b>  | <b>Phase 1.3: Submitting the self-assessment</b>            | <b>21</b> |
| <b>Scoring Methodology</b>   | <b>10</b> | <b>Phase 2: Continuous Improvement Planning Process</b>     | <b>22</b> |
| <b>Steps to completing the self-assessment</b>                                   | <b>11</b> | <b>Rebaselining</b>   | <b>24</b> |
| <b>Accessing the Platform</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>Commercial Standards Masterclasses</b>                   | <b>25</b> |
| <b>Using the Self Assessment Tool</b>  | <b>13</b> | <b>Continuous Improvement Roundtables</b>                   | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Pre-Mobilisation, Selecting an approach to conducting the self-assessment</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>Key Contacts and next steps</b>                          | <b>27</b> |

-  Increased **capability, capacity** and **uplifting the Commercial Profession**
-  Identification of realistic and achievable **improvement areas**, and **sharing learning**
-  Enhanced peer review offer to **share best practice**, and compare cross public sector performance to inform **targeted investment decision making**
-  Offering an **online CCIAF platform** to our Continuous Improvement community
-  Delivery of best in class **Masterclasses**
-  Position CCIAF as a **preferred standard assessment framework** for use by Central Government organisations and the wider public sector



# Background Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework

**As part of the work supporting government officials working in commercial roles, the GCF manages a set of Commercial Standards.**

- ❖ The Standards define how all Government departments should operate commercially to ensure **strong commercial behaviours** and getting **value for taxpayers money**. Setting and assuring standards is one of the six common functional activities delivered by all Government Functions to **support departments and civil servants** right across Government to be **professional, capable and efficient**.
- ❖ The Strategy, Standards and Assurance team within the GCF have recently updated the Commercial Standards to incorporate input from NHS, Local Government Association and Central Government Organisations. This means the Standards can now be used by any interested colleagues across the public sector.
- ❖ The **Government Functional Standard for Commercial (GovS 008)** which outlines tangible expectations to **drive consistency throughout commercial activities**. This supports commercial colleagues across the public sector to ensure contracts and relationships with suppliers deliver value for money.
- ❖ The **Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF)** supplements the standard to drive continuous improvement in commercial practices across the public sector.



# Commercial Self-Assessment Framework – the journey so far

**2016:** First Commercial Operating Standards for Government (GCOS) launched, 15 organisations assessed their adherence to the Standards and developed improvement plans

**2019:** V2 of the Standards (GCOS) and self-assessment launched

**2021:** Version 1 CCIAF and GovS008

**2022:** Version 2.1 CCIAF and GovS008

The assessment framework completed converging NHS Standards with Government standards and wider public sector considerations

Completed common standard across NHS, Central government, WPS and Local Government.

Oct 22  
New Online Platform Launched

Central Government

**2018:** second round of self-assessments completed showing an uplift in commercial capability.

**2021:** Engagement with the NHS to review and align with one set of standards

**2012:** First published NHS Commercial & Procurement Standards

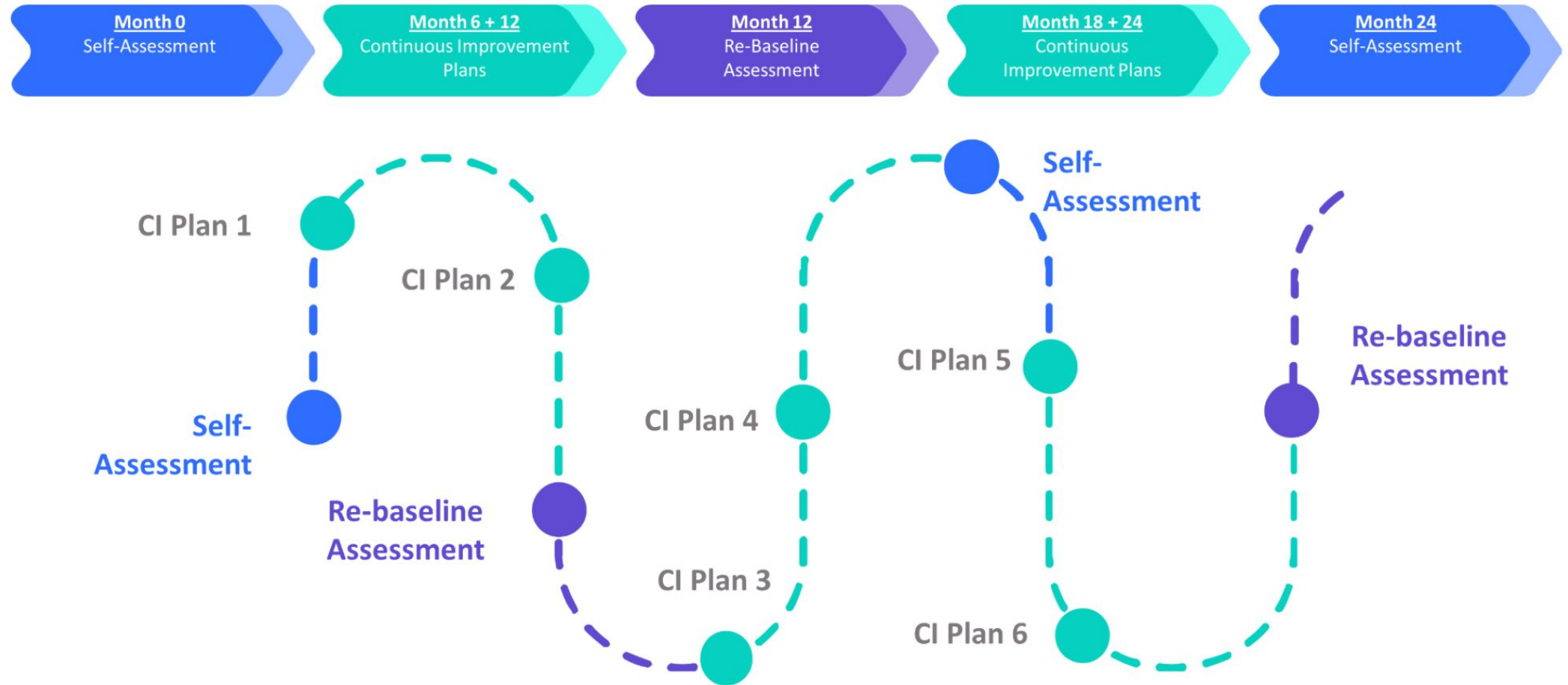
**2020:** Review of the NHS Commercial & Procurement Standards

**2021:** Engagement with Government Central Function to review and align with one set of standards

**2016:** Standards were reviewed and refreshed to drive adherence and accreditation

NHS

# Your CCIAF Journey - Central Government, ALB's, LAs & Wider Public Sector

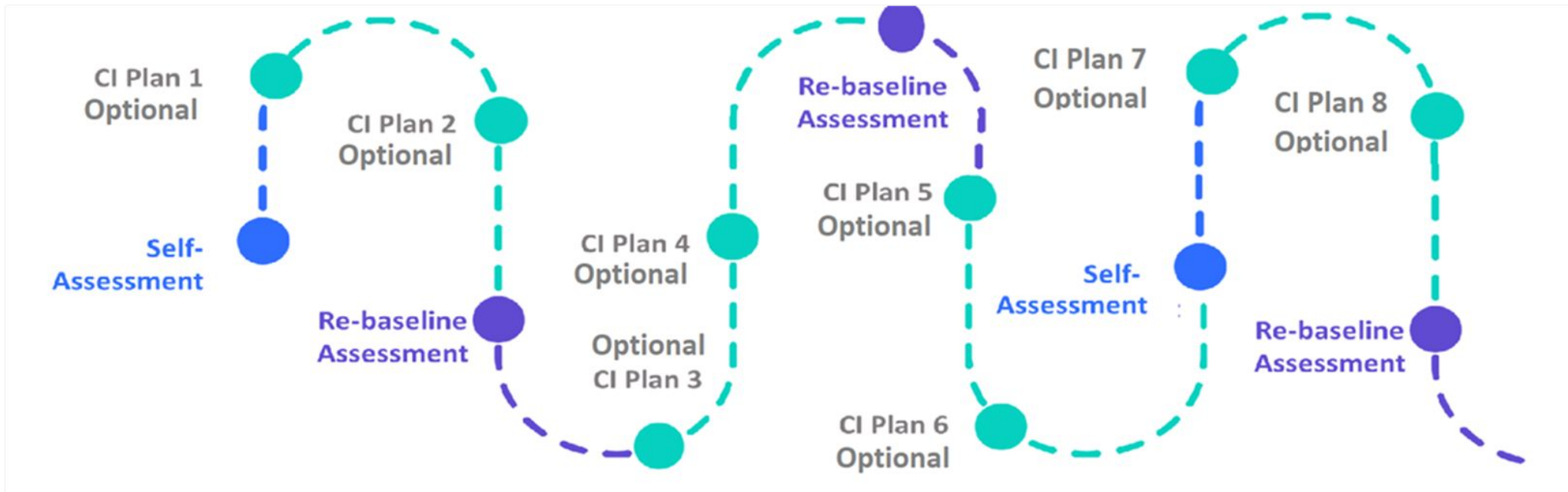


The map above shows the journey your organisation will complete as you progress through the self-assessment process and your commercial improvement journey (CI Plans).

Note: CI Plans are optional for NHS, Local Authorities and Wider Public Sector.



# Your CCIAF Journey - NHS

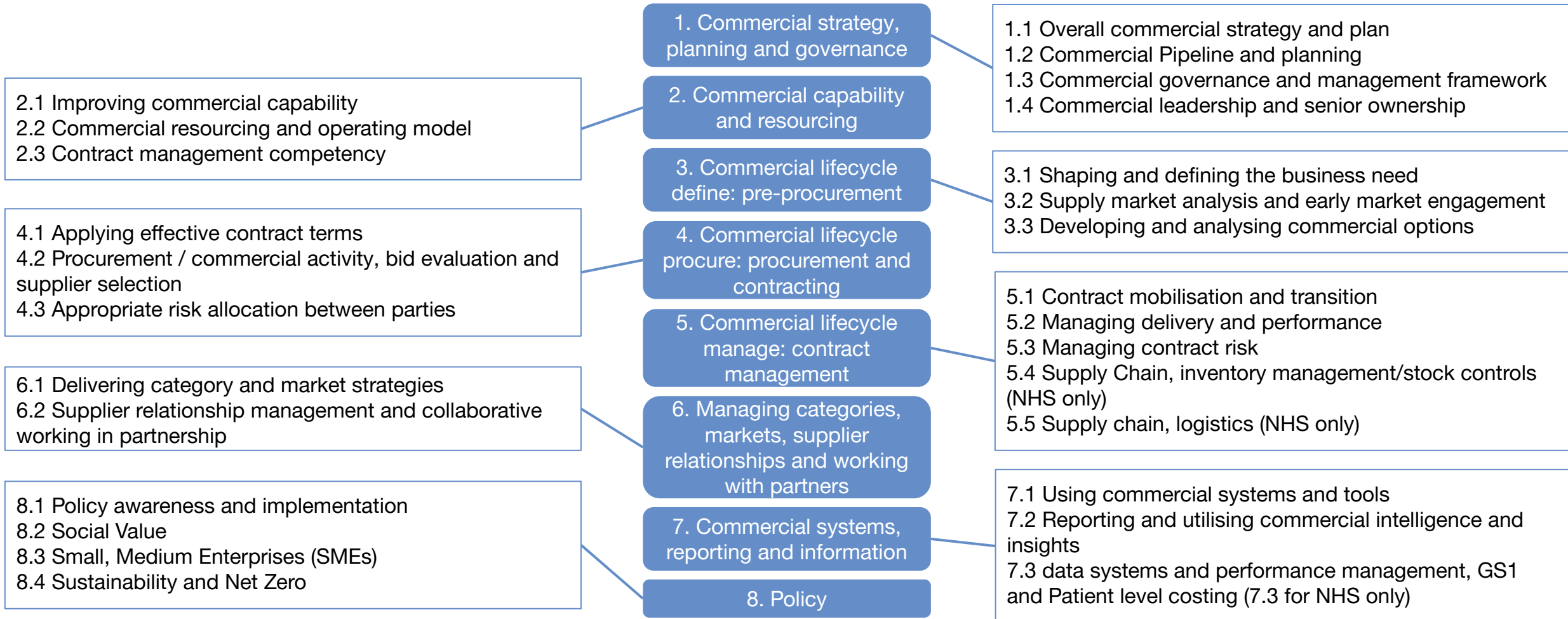


The map above shows the expected journey your organisation will complete as you progress through the self-assessment process and your commercial improvement journey (CI Plans).

Note: CI Plans are optional for NHS, Local Authorities and Wider Public Sector.



Contracting authorities will self-assess against 27 practice areas on a defined four level maturity scale ('Developing', 'Good', 'Better' and 'Best' \*refer to Annex 1)





The scoring methodology works in the same way for each practice area. Differentiated weightings are applied to criteria within the maturity levels with greater emphasis on criteria within the ‘good’ column, as these represent the minimum commercial expectations of an organisation. It is not always necessary to fully meet all criteria within the ‘good’ column to achieve a ‘good’ or ‘better’ rating for that practice area.

**However, where ‘good’ criteria are not fully met, it is strongly recommended that targeted improvement projects are established.** For more information, please contact your sector specific commercial standards administration team.

## Scoring Methodology

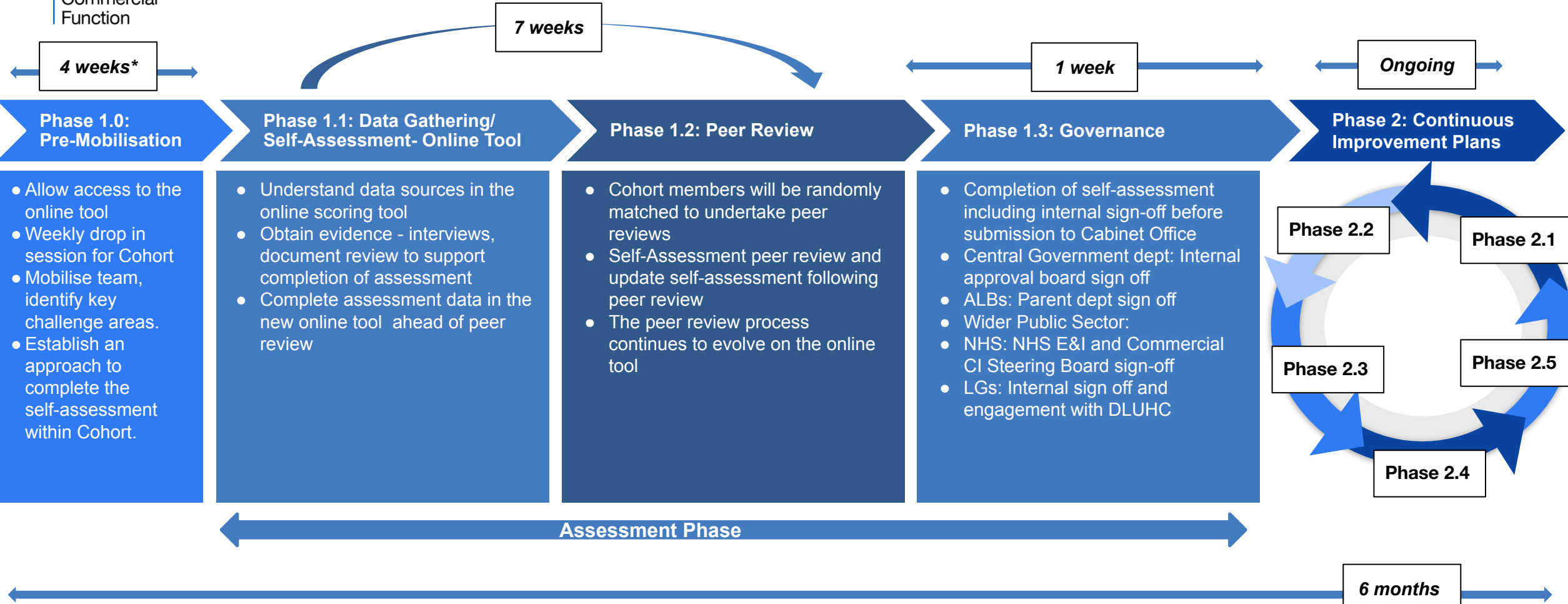
The self-assessment tool aggregates the values entered for each criterion to give an overall percentage score and corresponding maturity rating for that practice area. Percentage bandings for each maturity rating are shown in the table below.

| Maturity Rating | Applicable percentage ranges within the maximum available score |
|-----------------|---|
| In Development  | < 40%   |
| Good            | > 40% and < 70%   |
| Better          | > 70% and < 90%   |
| Best            | > 90%   |

# Steps to completing the self-assessment



Government  
Commercial  
Function



The cycle represents typical components of the new self-assessment process. Whilst contracting authorities may adopt a different approach to managing the assessment cycle all in scope contracting authorities are expected to submit a self-assessment. Phase 2 is mandatory for Central Government and their ALBs and is encouraged for the NHS and Wider Public Sector.

\*Four weeks mobilisation offered to organisations undertaking CCIAF for the first time.



- For organisations accessing the platform for the first time visit the [CCIAF homepage](#) and click on “Register”
- Once registered a confirmation page will appear and you’ll receive a “**verify your email**” email
- If you don't receive a verification email, email us at [cciafsupport@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:cciafsupport@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)
- NHS Organisations that form part of the NHS England Commercial Function, the Head of the Commercial or Procurement function can email [england.ccf.cciaf@nhs.net](mailto:england.ccf.cciaf@nhs.net) to be assigned a Cohort.

## Accessing the Platform

Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF)

### CCIAF Scoring Tool

The Commercial Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework (CCIAF) tool is designed to help drive continuous improvement in commercial practices across the public sector. The tool can be used by any public sector organisation which wants to benchmark its commercial maturity against good practice and other public sector organisations.

This online tools lets you:

- Complete and submit your assessment online
- Get peer reviewed
- Learn and develop best practices
- Share your scores with internal colleagues

**Please note:** New registrations will be sent to the Cabinet Office or to your organisation for verification. This process may take up to 3 working days.

Register

OR

Sign in to CCIAF

# Using the Self-Assessment Online Scoring Tool

- ✓ The Assessment Tool is designed to capture the results of the self-assessment and generate reporting for organisations and across Government
- ✓ The link to the assessment tool is <https://cogcg.my.site.com/cciaf/apex/cciafhome>
- ✓ The tool includes a detailed user guide to support your self-assessment journey.

**Where you are in the process**

Assessment open date: 11/10/2022

Assessment

**Pre peer review checks**

Peer review

Post review checks

Final/parent checks

Final submission closing date:

---

**Assessment Menu**

- [Assessment overview](#)
- Cover sheet**
- [Themes 1 - 8 overview](#)
- > [Theme 1](#)
- > [Theme 2](#)
- > [Theme 3](#)
- > [Theme 4](#)
- > [Theme 5](#)
- > [Theme 6](#)
- > [Theme 7](#)
- > [Theme 8](#)
- [Personal document library](#)
- [Manage users](#)
- [Printable summary](#)

**About the organisation**

**Organisation type:**  
Central Government

**Parent Department:**

**Number of Staff:**  
▶ [Help with Number of Staff](#)  
25

**Organisation Overview:**

---

**Commercial Spend Under Assessment**

Third party spend covered by this assessment  
Total non-pay addressable spend (For NHS)  
£ 10,000,000.00

# Using the self-assessment tool

## Key elements

| Criteria   | Attainment    | Score | Supporting commentary               | Documents uploaded  | ASSESSMENT STATUS     |
|--|---------------|-------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1.1.1 The organisation has documented overall commercial strategy, development plan, source plan and, where applicable, a reprint (these may be combined or separate documents, but should be integrated within an overall strategy) | Fully meeting | 1.0   | YES<br><a href="#">Click to add</a> | Test 1<br><a href="#">File size tiny test</a><br><a href="#">File size large test</a><br><a href="#">37.3Mb</a> | READY FOR PEER REVIEW |

easy to use dropdowns

Easy to upload supporting documentation and narrative

auto-calculated cells show Ratings and Scores

### Practice Area Summary & ambition statement:

| Practice Area                                      | Is your organisation submitting an assessment for this Practice Area? | Rating         | Score      |
|--|---|----------------|------------|
| 1.1 Overall commercial strategy and plan           | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No         | Good           | 64%        |
| 1.2 Commercial pipeline and planning               | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No         | Good           | 55%        |
| 1.3 Commercial governance and management framework | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No         | Good           | 57%        |
| 1.4 Commercial leadership and senior ownership     | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No         | In Development | 40%        |
| <b>Total weighted average score:</b>               |   | <b>Good</b>    | <b>54%</b> |

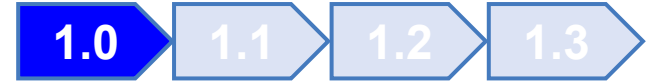
Easy to navigate menu

### Assessment Menu

- Assessment overview
- Cover sheet
- Themes 1 - 8 overview
  - > Theme 1
  - > Theme 2
  - > Theme 3
  - > Theme 4
  - > Theme 5
  - > Theme 6
  - > Theme 7
  - > Theme 8
- Personal document library
- Manage users
- Printable summary



# Pre-Mobilisation, Selecting an approach to conducting the self-assessment

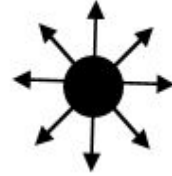


Contracting authorities may adopt different approaches to completing the self-assessment.

Contracting authorities are encouraged to use methods that best meet their needs.

Larger or more complex contracting authorities are encouraged to complete multiple assessments and should agree with sector representatives.

Where appropriate Parent organisations are responsible for consolidating and providing the overall assessment



**Centrally led** assessments tend to be steered by the Senior Leadership Team, providing a ‘top down’ evaluation of performance



**Facilitated** assessments generally involve an impartial third party to complete an assessment on behalf of the organisation, based on engagements and information gathering



**Consultative** assessments take a ‘bottom up’ approach and include wider engagement across the team. Typically a separate lead will be appointed for different aspects of the themes



Approaches to the self-assessment may include elements of **Centrally led**, **Facilitated** and **Consultative**

## Assessment Cover Sheet - Spend under Assessment



The requirement is that all 3rd party spend is included in the cover sheet of the self-assessment submission.



At the outset, considerations should be made for any exclusions to the assessment. Through these considerations, the third party spend under the current assessment should be ascertained.



Exclusions of third party spend or non-addressable spend will need to be defined prior to undertaking the self-assessment, justified and validated by sector appropriate governance procedures, and with demonstration that the appropriate governance procedures are in place.





1.0

1.1

1.2

1.3



Communicate the **purpose and objectives** of the self-assessment to the relevant audience.



**Appoint leads** to occupy the roles of approver (e.g. senior responsible officer) and coordinator (e.g. project manager) including peer reviewer. Please note that self-assessments require an organisation's internal approval before submission.

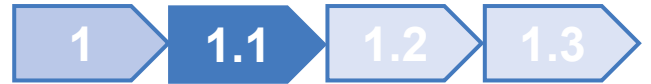


The structure, shape and capability of the team should be **tailored to the approach** for self-assessment.



Consider **cross-functional input** and where diverse contributors will add value to the approach to self-assessment.

## Phase 1.1, Assessing against the assessment criteria



Understand and evaluate against the practice area

Identify evidence to support your assessment

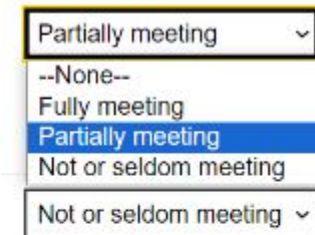
Select an attainment level

Each practice area is made up of a number of statements which are criteria of maturity for that area of practice.

- **Understand** the criteria in the context of your commercial activity
- **Applicability** – consider if this is an assessment criteria that you can reasonably evaluate for your organisation
- **Evaluate** the extent to which your organisation meets the criteria

You should identify evidence to support your assessment against each practice area. This evidence will be accessed by the peer reviewer.

- Capture a clear narrative describing how the criteria is met and the applicable evidence to support.
- Do not submit supporting documents or files as part of the self-assessment. These are to be stored in a central folder which can be later reviewed by the peer reviewer and the central standards administration team.



- **Not, or seldom met:** organisation finds no or isolated evidence of attainment
- **Partially met:** organisation finds significant but inconsistent evidence of attainment
- **Substantially or fully met:** organisation finds the substantial majority of commercial delivery fulfils statement



### Purpose

- Organisations will be notified of their respective peer reviewers within 2-3 weeks after the CCIAF cycle commences (subject to organisations completing all details on their cover sheet).
- The peer reviewers' role will be to ensure consistency of interpretation of the assessment criteria and themes.
- Peer reviews should be completed by an organisation matched by the GCF Team.
- Once the first moderation has been completed, contracting authorities are expected to update the self-assessment to reflect the peer review.

### Principles

- Scrutinise process & evidence
- Welcome challenge
- Share feedback
- Diversity & inclusion
- Share knowledge & information
- Transparency
- Impartiality and objectivity

The peer review process is an opportunity to foster relationships between different GCF teams and to share learning and experience. The type of relationship fostered between the peer reviewer and contracting authority is not prescriptive and decided on between the individual parties involved.



1.0

1.1

1.2

1.3

Peer reviews are the most effective with comparable contracting authorities based on budget, geography or commercial activity

Peer review may be undertaken by any other contracting authority in the Cohort. This will be randomly assigned by the central team using the above criteria as a guide to matching



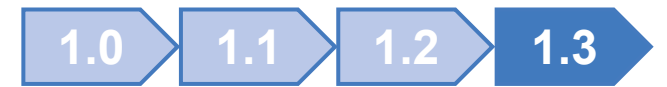
**Single** peer reviews are undertaken with a single person from an external organisation, this may be appropriate for smaller/low-complexity contracting authorities. This can be carried out either in-person or virtually



**Group** peer reviews are undertaken by groups/teams within an external organisation. Self-assessments are moderated by more than 1 person, this may be appropriate for large/high-complexity contracting authorities



**Contracting Authorities** are encouraged to adopt an approach to peer-reviews in the most appropriate way for their organisation and may adopt a variety of different methods outlined above.



All self-assessments should be submitted using the online tool provided



Contracting authorities should ensure their assessment has received the necessary internal approvals and governance prior to submission.



The data will be analysed by a central team and a Playback Report will be generated and returned to the contracting authority in approximately 4-6 weeks which includes benchmarking data.



The data can then be used to support continuous improvement across contracting authorities.



# Phase 2: Continuous Improvement Planning Process

Mandatory for Central Government Organisations and encouraged for NHS and Wider Public Sector

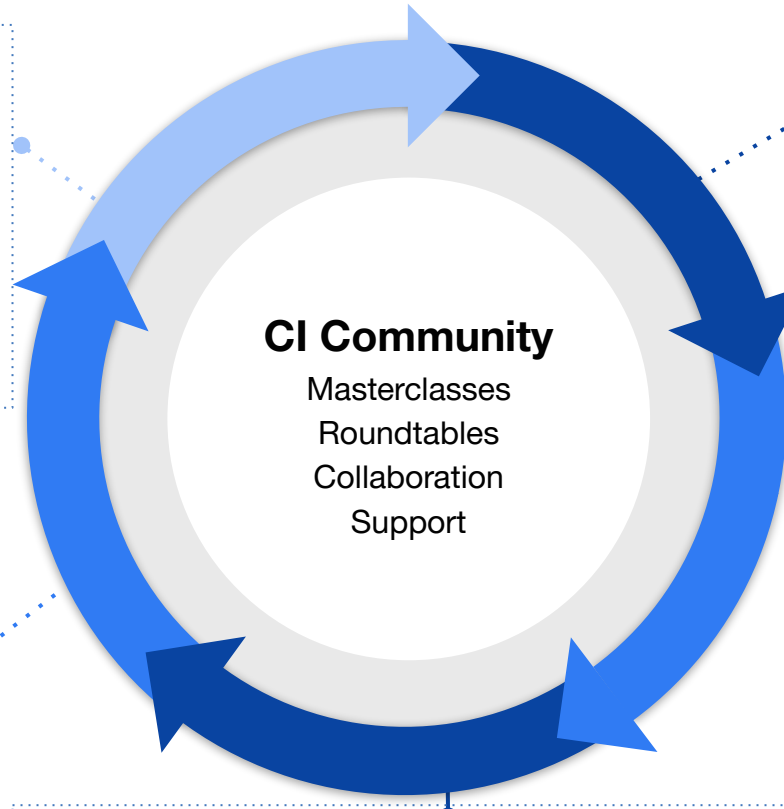
## Phase 2.5: Re-baseline\*

- Annual review of progress against Improvement Plans with Cabinet Office
- Re-baselining of self-assessment to reflect progress against improvement plans
- Revised Continuous Improvement Plans to be submitted to Cabinet Office

## Phase 2.4: Measure, Track & Monitor Progress

- It is expected that Continuous Improvement plans will be a living document and continuously referred to and reviewed
- Six monthly submission to CO are required using the template provided and RAG rated accordingly
- 1:1 meetings are available with Cabinet office upon organisations request
- Collaborative opportunities should be exploited to maximise learning and upskilling

\*NHS re-baseline takes place every three years



## Phase 2.1: Identify

- All Contracting Authorities: Identify Improvement areas linked to self-assessment
- NHS: voluntary CI Plan submissions through NHS E/I
- WPS: Voluntary CI Plan submissions into Cabinet Office via internal governance arrangements

## Phase 2.2: Establish

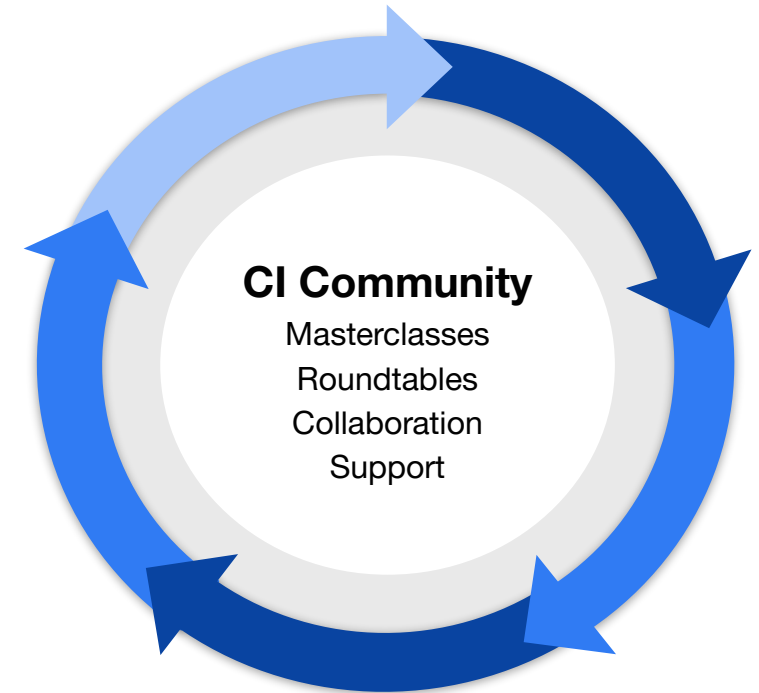
- Define the approach
- Develop and implement an improvement plan based on your organisation's results
- Establish deliverables and milestones
- Form Partnerships and collaborate with other organisation in Cohort

## Phase 2.3: Internal Governance & Submission

- Central Government organisations are expected to produce improvement plans within six months of submitting the self-assessment and report progress periodically
- The Wider Public Sector, ALBs and LGs are encouraged to produce improvement plans and timelines for submission will be agreed locally
- CI Plans submitted to Cabinet Office for review and approval.
- Contracting authorities who demonstrate best-practice are invited to hold Masterclasses

## Benefits of Continuous Improvement Plans

- ✓ Capturing current status and driving continuous improvement.
- ✓ Sharing lessons learned
- ✓ Accessing best practice
- ✓ Peer reviewing commercial practices
- ✓ Best practice and innovations are captured and shared with other public sector commercial organisations
- ✓ Completing periodic assessments of current practices and re-baselining the scores on your recommended commercial improvement plan.





- A Re-baseline Assessment (RBL) is a mini Self-Assessment (SA)
- Where SA1 is carried out at month 0 and SA2 is carried out at month 24, RBL is carried out at month 12; the midpoint between SAs.  
note: for NHS organisations SA2 is carried out in month 36 with RBL carried out on month 12 and month 24.
- It is an opportunity for organisations to update their previous SA criteria attainment levels to reflect any advancements in their Continuous Improvement (CI) efforts; without the need to wait until the next full SA
- The Standards and Continuous Improvement Team will provide you with a new Playback Report after you complete your RBL
- The purpose is to allow Organisations to see their latest Maturity Ratings; enabling your organisation to make an informed decision as to where your next CI efforts should be focussed
- RBL is carried out on the Online Scoring Tool; whereupon your last SA will be cloned and you will then be able to make updates to individual attainment levels, update any documents as well as any supporting commentary
- RBL is not Peer Reviewed and therefore the results should be seen as “provisional” and “for information only”



- The **Masterclass Programme** is run by the Standards and Continuous Improvement Team and aims to improve commercial capability across Central Government and Wider Public Sector
- As part of the Continuous Improvement Cycle, areas of best practice are identified and organisations are invited to host a Masterclass
- Live virtual presentations and discussions are hosted by commercial experts to share best practice, lessons learned and innovation across the commercial function
- These sessions are open to all of Government, NHS and Wider Public Sector commercial professionals. Please contact [commercialstandards@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:commercialstandards@cabinetoffice.gov.uk) for more information.

# Cabinet Office Continuous Improvement Roundtables

The roundtable, led by Commercial Standards with support from subject matter experts (SME's), is an informal open forum to confidentially share issues and concerns and collectively seek advice, experience and direction. Whilst you won't receive a definitive recommendation you will receive valuable insight shared from subject matter experts and departments who have faced the same issues.

- Sessions are **ran monthly**
- Two weeks prior to the session all departments will have the **opportunity to submit a 'problem statement'** to be considered for the roundtable
- To submit a problem statement, please email: **commercialstandards@cabinetoffice.gov.uk**
- Based on most popular themes two problem statements will be selected and distributed to the group one week prior to the session.

Sessions will have the following format but may be subject to change:

- **Intro from SME** 10mins

- **Problem Statement 1:**

Submitting department outlines their issue 12.5mins  
Input invited from SME and contributing departments  
25mins

- **Problem Statement 2:**

Submitting department outlines their issue 12.5mins  
Input invited from SME and contributing departments  
25mins

- **Round up and close** 5mins

- NHS - [england.ccf.cciaf@nhs.net](mailto:england.ccf.cciaf@nhs.net)
- GCF Cabinet Office - [commercialstandards@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:commercialstandards@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)
- Government Commercial College - <https://www.govcommercialcollege.co.uk/>
- Central government organisations should submit improvement plans within 6 months of completing and submitting the assessment framework and submissions should be made using the CCIAF tool.
- Local Authorities and Wider public sector organisations are encouraged to submit the CI plans in line with the planning cycle.



# Annex 1: Characteristics of Good, Better & Best

## Good:

A cross-government commercial and governance management framework is defined and established. Organisations have a clear commercial strategy and plan. Goods, works and services are procured using legally compliant, fair and transparent processes, guarding against corruption and fraud. Activities are aligned with commercial policy and organisational objectives, are in conformance with the commercial functional standard. Organisations have a commercial pipeline and capability to drive consistency in the planning and management of buying goods, works and services. Contracts and relationships with suppliers realise value for money and result in the delivery of high quality public services.

*Note: 'good' includes the requirements ('shall' statements) from the functional standard and the most important advisory elements.*

## Better:

Governance of commercial activities are an integrated part of the organisation's overall governance. The governance and management framework includes the development and monitoring of commercial policies. The commercial strategy maximises synergy and efficiency between different organisations. Lessons learnt and best practices are captured, shared and reviewed with stakeholders at the start and end of each activity. Continuous improvement is embedded in the organisation's practices through updates to its continuous improvement plans, learning and development opportunities.

## Best:

The governance and direction of delivering commercial activities is fully integrated with the governance and direction of the organisation. Commercial strategies incorporate short and long term targets in line with leading industry practice. Commercial policy outcomes are embedded throughout the commercial life-cycle and outcomes reports are available on demand. Technology is used to make commercial reporting and analytics accessible to inform organisational strategy and policy decisions. Learning from experience and organisational improvement is demonstrated through continuous improvement being embedded and evidenced within the organisation.