

POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING TRAINING OR HEALTH SERVICES: A brief checklist for schools

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We always recommend using Local Authority or CCG commissioned services and resources where possible, however we know this isn't always the case. If you do choose to buy-in external support, we don't want you to sign a contract and be disappointed!

We can't recommend an approach or specific provider, however using the below considerations can help you make the right choices when looking to buy-in providers of training and health services. We have also included some links to national resources should you want further information on commissioning services and knowing the evidence base.

1.0 Why?

Has an assessment of need been carried out?
What are you wanting to achieve from the purchase?
Has the capacity to deliver the purchase (where appropriate) been considered? Who will deliver the service?
Has the need been evidenced? <i>i.e. Health related behaviour survey results</i>
Are there more effective/efficient ways to achieve the required outcomes?
How do you plan to monitor whether you have been successful in meeting the required outcomes through the purchased service?

2.0 What else is out there?

Has a thorough search been conducted on providers of similar services?
Environmental footprint – could local providers be used?
Remember it isn't just about cost – quality is equally important!
If there is lots of choice, does a particular provider/supplier have added value for money or a unique selling point?
Request sample learning materials

3.0 Quality Assurance:

What are the service standards – what can you expect from the provider?
If it is a health service, what clinical standards are in place – are these in line with national legislation and guidance?
Is the provider affiliated with a regulatory body (if applicable)?
Can reasonable equality/accessibility requirements be adjusted to when appropriate?
Has the provider got transparent and accessible feedback/complaint processes?
Are there any accessible testimonials/reviews/customer feedback to indicate the reliability of the provider?
When was the product/service last updated or validated?

4.0 Purchasing training for staff/pupils:

What is the expertise/competency base of the training provider – are skills and qualifications up to date/relevant?
Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the training been reviewed by a subject expert? • When was it last updated? • Is it suitable for the targeted audience?
Is it clear what will happen once the service has been delivered? <i>i.e. are members of staff free to use the materials as they see fit? Is further support / supervision available or necessary?</i>

5.0 Purchasing services for pupils:

What is the provider's experience of working with a) primary school aged children b) secondary school aged children?
What is the provider's experience of working with students demonstrating the area of need that is causing concern? <i>i.e. subject matter/working in specialist settings etc.</i>
Can the provider demonstrate that it is able to implement the intervention or approach with fidelity <i>i.e. Is the intervention going to be implemented in a way that is consistent with the approach that was used when the evidence-base was established?</i>
Is the workforce of the provider clinically qualified/suitably trained (if applicable)?
Is there the assurance that the provider workforce has applicable checks e.g. DBS?
Are appropriate safeguarding/information governance policies in place that are in line with national guidance/protocols?
What is the evidence base of the service/intervention – is it known to work?
What measures are used to assess need, evaluate impact and inform future delivery?

Unsure?

- Contact the [Healthy Schools service](#) who can support you in the decision making process!

USEFUL FURTHER READING – COMMISSIONING/PURCHASING SERVICES:

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/whole-school-approach/school-and-local-commissioning/about-school-and-local-commissioning/>

<https://youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Commissioning-Futures-full-report-final.pdf>

<https://quietplace.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/p35-Guidance-on-commissioning-targeted-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing-services-in-schools1.pdf>

USFUL FURTHER READING – UNDERSTANDING THE EVIDENCE BASE:

<https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/the-eif-guidebook-a-vital-step-towards-delivering-evidence-based-early-intervention>

<https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/improving-social-and-emotional-learning-in-primary-schools-guidance-report> <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/what-we-do/evidence-and-research>