

17 March 2016

NHS England Standard Contract Shorter Form Consultation: Newcastle CVS response

I am writing from the perspective of voluntary organisations and as the Chief Executive of an organisation that holds a contract with a CCG, in response to the consultation on NHS contracts.

My comments are as follows :

1. This is public money and the NHS is correct to want to ensure accountability and transparency as well as due process, safety and quality in the delivery of the work, so it is helpful to move towards 'lighter touch' documentation. However this exercise is a lost opportunity as it is still an over complicated process, seen through the NHS lens; it would have been helpful to look at similar documentation from local authorities.
2. There needs to be greater differentiation between grants and contracts as often the CCG does not seem to know the difference. Eg we have a contract for a piece of work for £5000
3. There is still insufficient recognition that the vast majority of services provided to the NHS by the voluntary and community sector are non-clinical and the clinical aspects of the contract (the majority) need to either be removed for this type of social contract, or have a 'not appropriate' option.
4. Voluntary organisations that provide services have to have standard policies in place relating to Equality and Diversity, complaints, Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Whistle Blowing, confidentiality etc; so maybe the NHS could produce standard policies that could be used as a template. These could include headings to be incorporated.
5. There is the issue of proportionality - should the process for a £5000 grant have the same demands as a £500,000 contract?
6. There is still too much latitude given to a CCG over whether it wants to use the shorter contract or the one that is over 200 pages long. It would have been helpful to have clearer guidance on this eg a financial level below which the shorter contract must be used.



7. 70 pages is hardly 'light touch', at least not for the world outside the NHS.

8. The main focus should be on the contract particulars and outcomes rather than reams of (mainly) irrelevant text.

9. The consultation process itself was not helpful. Far too many documents in the website and the key ones unclear. Also why wasn't the consultation sent out by the CCGs directly to all organisations with whom they have a contract. It was certainly not promoted by Newcastle Gateshead CCG.

Yours sincerely

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