

°CLOA and Sport England top tips on engaging with commissioners of health and wellbeing services

The Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (°CLOA) represents senior strategic leaders managing public sector cultural, tourism and sport services. It works closely with central government and key national organisations to influence the development of national policies and to lobby for positive change in the cultural and leisure sectors.

Sport England is the Government agency responsible for increasing the number of people doing sport and physical activity - no matter what their background, ability or age - and is responsible for managing and distributing public investment and acts as a statutory distributor of funds raised by the National Lottery.

°CLOA and Sport England have been working on a joint project to support local authority sport and leisure professionals to engage more effectively with commissioners and commissioning. The aim of this support is to equip practitioners with a sophisticated understanding of local need, help build relationships with commissioners and respond with a service offer or targeted intervention that delivers priority outcomes.

Whilst the project was not aimed exclusively at engaging with the health sector, a significant number of the organisations that were supported focused on this area and many of the learnings will be helpful for sport and recreation organisations to consider.

“We want everyone in England regardless of age, background or level of ability to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. Some will be young, fit and talented, but most will not. We need a sport sector that welcomes everyone – meets their needs, treats them as individuals and values them as customers.”

- Sport England

[6] Top tips to engage with the health system

Top tips:

- 1 **Make sure you have a clear understanding of commissioning.** It's not the same as procurement or contracting. It's the strategic process of identifying needs and allocating available resources to best meet these needs, through the most effective and efficient supplier of services in a way that achieves the required outcomes.
- 2 **Do your homework!** Find out who is responsible for commissioning the different services, what priority outcomes they are seeking to deliver and read up on the relevant statistics/key strategies that are important to them. Learn their language.
- 3 **Think about which commissioning outcomes your work has the most synergy with and where you could best demonstrate impact.**
- 4 **Arrange to speak with commissioners and gain insight** into their needs and understand their commissioning processes. This is likely to mean speaking to public health commissioners within the local authority and also the Clinical Commissioning Group. Don't be disheartened if this takes a while to organise, commissioners are very busy people.
- 5 Once you get around the table with commissioners use it as an opportunity to **listen and learn about the local commissioning landscape** – resist the temptation to 'pitch' for work. Aim to be seen as a strategic player not just as a provider.
- 6 **Map your offer against the needs expressed by commissioners.** Reflect on how the activities and interventions that you currently offer might be better targeted or reshaped to meet the commissioners' needs. Also consider what new activities and interventions you might develop without incurring mission drift.
- 7 **Gather evidence** that will help you make the case for the sport/physical activity that you offer. This needs to be robust. Think about how best to present your offer to commissioners in a compelling way that draws on insight and evidence. You may find it useful to develop an Outcomes Framework that links to local health and wellbeing priorities.
- 8 **Don't forget to work with the elected members** responsible for sport and physical activity and health and social care. They are critical to the influencing process.
- 9 **Identify ways to further build relationships with commissioners and showcase the impact of your work.** Think about presenting your offer as part of the 'transformation agenda' – solutions that improve outcomes with increasingly limited funds.
- 10 **Don't rush to be commissioned** – it's a long-term investment in relationships rather than a way of generating additional £££, so make sure you have the capacity to invest time without seeing an immediate return.

Helpful links

Local Government Association, Sport England, Arts Council England and °CLOA jointly produced guidance on *Engaging in commissioning: A practical resource pack for the culture and sport sector*: www.local.gov.uk/culture-tourism-and-sport/-/journal_content/56/10180/3665542/ARTICLE

and a web resource on developing an Outcomes Framework for Culture and Sport: www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/culture-tourism-and-sport/-/journal_content/56/10180/3638512/ARTICLE

Strategic Commissioning, Sport and Physical Activity - a paper summarising the process, project impact and learning from Phase 1 of the Sport England/°CLOA project, which ran between March 2014 - October 2014 *Strategic Commissioning, Sport and Physical Activity*. www.cloa.org.uk/images/stories/Project_Summary_FINAL.pdf

An animated film that brings to life this work, showing exactly what steps a professional can take to meet the needs of commissioners: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzxaYDWpmjQ

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A series of short videos telling the story from the people involved: <https://www.sportengland.org/our-work/partnering-local-government/case-studies/ccloa-strategic-commissioning-sport-and-physical-activity/commissioning-experts/>

The °CLOA website has a series of case studies that highlight how culture and sport can help to tackle unhealthy lifestyles, address the social determinants of health, offer cost effective approaches, bring creative solutions and engage communities, families and individuals in managing their wellbeing. www.cloa.org.uk/current-issues/key-issues/144-health-a-well-being

Also see Sport England's website for a range of support and resources to help you with the evidence that taking part in sport improves health and wellbeing, including the MOVES tool which will help you demonstrate the economic benefits of improved health through participating in sport and physical activity. www.sportengland.org/our-work/health/