Country SA PHN
Commissioning Framework

Our Objectives

Country SA PHN is the Primary Health Network covering the country regions of South Australia.

Country SA PHN:

- Works to increase health equity amongst our communities.
- Works to increase efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care services.
- Works with communities to enable access to the right care in the right place at the right time.

One key way we achieve these objectives is to commission primary health care services to meet the prioritised health needs of the people in country South Australia.

Purpose

This Commissioning Framework sets out Country SA PHN's strategic, transparent and evidence-informed approach to commissioning primary health care services to address identified community need, improve health access and equity and achieve measurable health outcomes that represent value for money.

Our Commitment

Throughout our commissioning process, Country SA PHN is committed to:

- Best-practice commissioning principles, including transparency, probity, equity, value for money and continuous improvement.
- Commissioning outcomes-focused, high-quality, locally relevant and person-centred services to address the health needs of country South Australians.
- Actively steward and shape the local service market by encouraging innovation, supporting sustainable service models and, where appropriate, new market entrants.
- Monitoring, managing and evaluating contracted services to drive performance, accountability, improved access and health outcomes.
- Working in partnership with communities, service providers and stakeholders through co-design and collaboration to support local primary health care needs.

We meet our commissioning objectives by ensuring:

- Contracted services are evidence-informed and aligned to best practice.
- Services are commissioned in response to identified priority areas of community need.
- Service distribution is equitable and supports access, particularly for priority populations.
- Robust governance, contract management and evaluation processes exist to ensure accountability and performance.
- Conflicts of interest are identified, declared and appropriately managed throughout commissioning and procurement.
- Compliance with the PHN Performance Framework and relevant Commonwealth requirements.

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Commissioning Cycle

Country SA PHN has adopted the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's framework for commissioning.[1]

Commissioning is a continual and iterative cycle involving the development and implementation of services based on needs assessment, planning, co-design, procurement, monitoring and evaluation. Commissioning encompasses this full range of activities, not simply the procurement of services.

The commissioning cycle is focused on delivering effective, efficient, and quality care for communities in an environment of continuous improvement, innovation, and transformation of the health and community care systems.

Country SA PHN's approach to commissioning is responsive to changing health and wellbeing needs of the communities we service.

1 Planning in a Commissioning Environment - A Guide, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, viewed January 2026

Throughout our commissioning cycle we engage in:

Strategic Planning

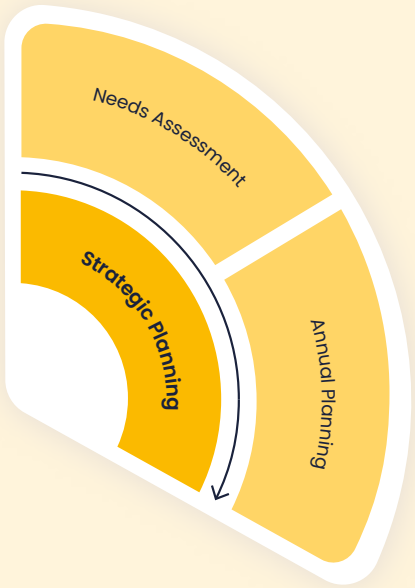
Build a comprehensive understanding of community health needs, service gaps and system pressures to inform commissioning priorities, service design and resource allocation aimed at improving equity and outcomes.

Needs Assessment

Needs assessments inform commissioning priorities by identifying population groups, geographic areas and service gaps where funding will deliver the greatest impact.

Annual Planning

Translate identified needs and priorities into planned commissioning activity, including service models, effective resource allocation, timeframes and performance expectations.



Procuring Services

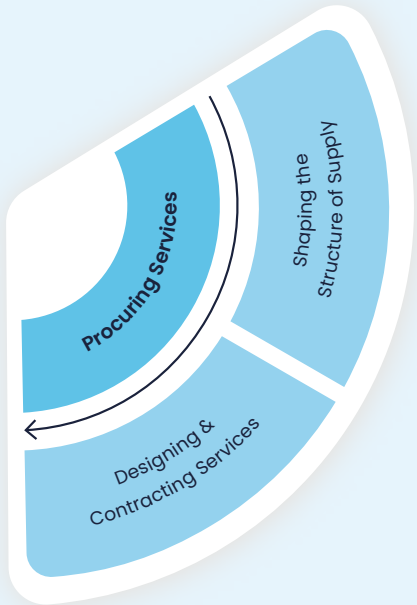
Procure and contract service providers through fair, transparent and competitive processes that align with strategic priorities and deliver value for money.

Shaping the Structure of Supply

Actively shape the local service market by determining the most appropriate approach to market to ensure services are sustainable, accessible and capable of delivering required outcomes.

Designing & Contracting Services

Co-design service models with providers, communities and stakeholders to improve equity and outcomes and develop outcome-based contracts with clear performance measures, reporting requirements and accountability mechanisms.



Monitoring and Evaluation

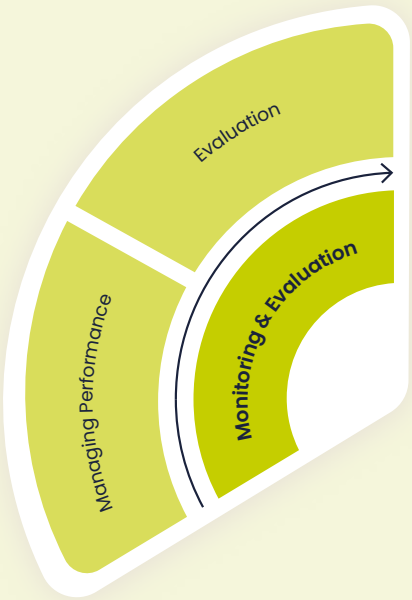
Actively manage and monitor commissioned services to ensure performance, accountability and continuous improvement and to inform future commissioning decisions. This approach will be at the discretion of Country SA PHN but ideally, returning to the market is likely to occur between 3 – 5 years from the award of service contract and/or establishment of that contracted service.

Managing Performance

Monitor service delivery outputs, outcomes and consumer experience through agreed Key Performance Indicators, Patient Reported Experience Measures and Patient Reported Outcome Measures. Performance data is used to support continuous improvement, address underperformance and inform future commissioning decisions.

Evaluation

Undertake evaluations to assess effectiveness, efficiency, value for money, impact, and to inform service redesign, decommissioning or future planning.



Commissioning Governance

Country SA PHN's governance arrangements ensure commissioning decisions are transparent, evidence-based, clinically informed and support responsible stewardship of public funding.

Our Independent Commissioning Committee provides independent expert advice and approves procurement of service delivery activity.

Our Clinical Council brings together key stakeholders with clinical expertise to support decision making, investments and innovations that are clinically safe, person centred, cost effective, locally relevant and aligned to care expectations and experiences.

Our Community Advisory Committees bring together a range of professional, governance and lived experience skills that contribute to planning and delivery of services that are locally relevant and complementary to existing local care.

The Country SA PHN Board, Executive Team, Independent Commissioning Committee, Clinical Council and Community Advisory Committees work, where relevant, to provide governance, oversight, management and guidance on all commissioning activities.