

# VCSE Skills and Information Workshops – Victims’ Services

## VCSE Commissioning Checklist

This resource complements a series of Skills and Information workshops that Pulse Regeneration has been contracted to deliver by the Ministry of Justice to providers in the VCSE sector that deliver victims’ support services.

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# VCSE Commissioning Checklist

## Local Commissioning Of Victims' Services

From October 2014 the majority of emotional and practical support services for victims of crime will be commissioned locally by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). The Ministry of Justice "Victims' Services Commissioning Framework" (Published May 2013) is designed to help commissioners of victims' services understand the evolving commissioning landscape, to promote a shared commissioning language, and to support delivery of the best possible outcomes for victims of crime. The framework provides advice but does not act as mandatory guidance.

## Checklist

The checklist outlines broad areas where VCSE providers that deliver victims' support services may need to take action, to ensure they are well placed to participate in local commissioning of victims' services. It has been purposefully developed to be an eclectic and succinct list, including a mix of activities to progress, suggestions for strategic development, as well as areas for organisational reflection. The checklist does not seek to be an exhaustive list as specific actions will vary depending on the provider's own abilities and aspirations, and the complexities of the local commissioning situation.

The checklist is ordered around the following broad areas:

1. Understand The Commissioning Environment
2. Understand Procurement
3. Identify Commissioners
4. Inform Commissioner's Needs Assessment
5. Working with Commissioners
6. Work Towards Tender Readiness
7. Identify Opportunities to Tender
8. Complete Tender Response
9. Transition to Delivery

Each area is considered in the following pages. It is suggested this document is printed out and completed by hand to provide an ongoing point of reference.

## 1. Understand The Commissioning Environment

	Done	Actions/ Notes
Download the VCSE Workshops resources to build understanding of the changing environment, and the shift towards VCSEs delivering more public services		
Read the advice within the 'Ministry of Justice Victims' Services Commissioning Framework' – Published May 2013, to understand commissioner perspectives and processes		
Acknowledge that commissioning is moving from outputs toward outcomes, and consider how this impacts on your VCSE's services and impact measurement		
Recognise that the Commissioning Framework focuses on supporting victims to 'Cope' and 'Recover', and consider how this impacts on your VCSE's approach to delivery		

## 2. Understand Procurement

	Done	Actions/ Notes
Recognise the stages within the cycle for victims commissioning, being Understand, Plan, Do, and Review, and consider how these may affect your VCSE's ability to engage		
Understand the purpose and content of a PQQ, and identify any barriers that may exist to your VCSE completing one		
Understand the purpose and content of an ITT, and identify any barriers that may exist to your VCSE completing one		
Learn from good practice by identifying any known organisations that have successfully engaged in the procurement process, and review their approaches and thinking		

### 3. Identify Commissioners

	Done	Actions/ Notes
Create a Target Commissioner List outlining who you will target, with headings such as 'commissioning body', 'key information', 'contact person', or 'when to contact'.		
Identify individual PCC targets, and add these to your Target Commissioner List acknowledging who the most relevant point of contact may be		
Identify wider public sector opportunities, such as local authorities, and add to your Target Commissioner List		
Consider additional targets, such as within existing supply chains for contract delivery or through the private sector, and add to your Target Commissioner List		

### 4. Inform Commissioner's Needs Assessment

	Done	Actions/ Notes
Identify which commissioners are able to work with you, as part of the commissioning cycle, to understand local need and help co-design future commissioned services		
Consider how you can justify you should be engaged with, and how you can evidence you hold a good understanding of the current and likely future needs of the local population		
Through the engagement seek to inform commissioner's understanding of the needs of users and of the types of services that might best meet those needs		
Through the engagement inform your own knowledge of policy intentions and upcoming opportunities to take part in commissioning processes that may lead to financing		

## 5. Working with Commissioners

	Done	Actions/ Notes
Recognise the need to 'sell' your organisation and that this requires you to understand what a commissioner is seeking to 'buy', and consider how your VCSE can align the two		
Consider what makes you stand out from other potential suppliers, and define your unique selling point (USP) from a commissioner's point of view		
Consider whether your VCSE may have all the skills/ capacity necessary to meet a commissioner's needs, and whether you may need to collaborate with other organisations		
Identify a list of organisations that you feel would be of benefit to collaborate with, considering what they introduce and what they may want in return		

## 6. Work Towards Tender Readiness

	Done	Actions/ Notes
Read the 'Guide to Typical PQQ Sections' and consider any requirements that your VCSE may be unable to respond to, and identify how you would overcome this		
Read the 'Guide to Typical ITT Documents' and consider the breadth of information required, and consider who in your VCSE may be best placed to lead on key areas of text		
Secure examples of previous/ similar PQQs and ITTs for services relevant to your organisation, where possible, and consider how you may structure a response		
Develop a folder of background information, policies, templates etc, that you may need to draw on when responding to future tender opportunities when they are identified		

## 7. Identify Opportunities to Tender

	Done	Actions/ Notes
Use existing networks to promote awareness of your intentions to deliver contracts, and work with other organisations to identify suitable opportunities you may not be aware of		
Increase awareness of the marketplace, by using your Target Commissioner List as a starting point to open dialogue with the aim of identifying upcoming opportunities		
Identify wider methods of awareness raising such as formally registering with tender alert portals or e-procurement platforms, such as <a href="http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk">www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk</a>		
Acknowledge that you may need to 'think outside the box' when identifying tenders, and you may need to read the full specification rather than just the contract title		

## 8. Complete Tender Response

	Done	Actions/ Notes
Prepare for the tender writing process by initially developing a tender plan or create a bid writing team that identified what needs to be done, by whom and when		
Check that you have all of the issued tender documents, that you can open these, and identify if there are any Q&A updates available that you may need to regularly check		
Once the bid is drafted, seek to get a colleague to review your responses to identify any areas for improvement or where text may be enhanced		
Read the 'Top Tips to Tender Writing' and consider any areas of the bid that may require revision, and that you are on track for submission by the stated deadline		

## 9. Transition to Delivery

	Done	Actions/ Notes
If unsuccessful, ask for feedback and use this to inform your bid development when responding to future opportunities		
On contract award consider any likely contract terms that you are unable to negotiate, such as payment terms, and identify any that your VCSE may be flexible on		
As successful contract management is vital, identify who in your VCSE may be best as client manager who would be responsible for managing the relationship with the buyer		
Consider the outcomes you will be held to, and identify a suitable system that captures the necessary data and that will ensure strong performance management		