

The recent restructuring of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) has provided an opportunity to review best practice and the most effective support provision for improved efficiency.

By implementing the most cost effective commissioning support activities, CCGs and their associated Commissioning Support Groups (CSGs) can maximise their investment in frontline healthcare services for improved health outcomes.

For some support activities, CCGs are able to appoint their own internal staff, while for other specialist activities they can choose to use NHS commissioning support units (CSUs) or seek external commissioning support from the independent or voluntary sectors for example. Outsourcing essential services such as IT support, ensures vital service continuity, cost savings and ultimately, better outcomes for patients.

The availability of external support expands the provision of a full range of specialist services from NHS focused suppliers. External IT specialist commissioning support partners can provide the required knowledge and support which allows clinicians to focus on improving healthcare provision.

The introduction of the joint commissioning of GP services from the 1st April 2015 means that CCG's now have further commissioning responsibility to include GP services. With this increased responsibility comes a greater necessity for a robust infrastructure with effective IT support in order to effectively manage the full range of clinical services required.

Targeted commissioning support

The new commissioning framework has opened up access to a wider choice of support services, greater innovation and improved ROI for the NHS.

Specialist providers are able to offer strong working partnerships with a shared goal of creating the most effective and efficient commissioning support models.

Asckey Data Services Ltd are Healthcare IT specialists offering dependable commissioning support services including: **application development, business intelligence and application hosting (including specialist NHS N3 hosting)** to Commissioning Support Units as well as private sector application developers looking for a reliable 3rd party partner. Asckey are aware of the financial demands of today's NHS and as such are focused on delivering high quality, innovative services for improved productivity.

N3 hosting

With full HSCIC and IGSoC accreditation, Asckey offer fully managed, 3rd party N3 hosting services. Remote application hosting provides data safety assurance, fast and efficient system maintenance and support. In addition, Asckey's N3 hosting services are GPsoc compliant offering GP practices access to a greater choice of quality applications.

With a wide range of technical expertise, Asckey are able to meet specific client requirements, including the provision of reliable third party N3 hosting for applications that handle Patient Identifiable Data (PID).

Full redundancy capability ensures essential service continuity and with data centres in Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Asckey are able to offer full data control and reliability. Robust disaster recovery process offer high levels of data assurance to protect organisations against service failure and data loss.

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Bespoke application development

Asckey's Health Sector industry specialist system development team has a combined total of over 60 years experience developing bespoke applications for the NHS. Recent development projects have been successfully completed for the Department of Health, the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) and numerous NHS Trusts and Health Boards.

The inclusion of mobile and web technologies in recent development projects has greatly enhanced system performance, providing clients with the most up-to-date technology to help improve efficiency and future-proof business processes. The inclusion of integrated Business Intelligence tools provide meaningful data collection and analysis solutions.

Business intelligence

Business Intelligence (BI) tools and systems play a key role in the strategic planning process of any organisation. These systems enable the gathering, storage, access and analyses of essential data to aid the management decision-making process.

Business Intelligence can transform management processes, collating key data into valuable management information. Consistent data quality is vital in order to ensure that desired outcomes are achieved. All users need to understand the importance of data accuracy and the ways in which Business Intelligence can make an important contribution to daily work scheduling, critical budgeting decisions and forecasting.

BI software such as Asckey's Dynamic AI are user friendly and enable access to a number of data analytics features including statistics, data mining and predictive analytics to reveal patterns and turn information into insights.

Towards commissioning excellence

The NHS England document "Towards commissioning excellence - a strategy for commissioning support services", 2013 stated: *"If commissioning is to deliver better quality and outcomes for patients and better value for taxpayers, it must be taken to a new level – clinically-led, professional and streamlined, underpinned by great commissioning support services. Our goal therefore is to ensure that all commissioners can access excellent and affordable commissioning support, be it sourced in-house, shared, or outsourced"*.

The report continues *"...there has been a consistent expectation that most would outsource many of their support functions which can be delivered more effectively at scale, with CCGs themselves concentrating on managing clinical change and driving quality improvement."*

Outsourcing essential service support functions to proven industry experts can help deliver essential support functions via established, targeted service experts. The complex area of IT and data management can present specific challenges in relation to skills and resourcing that can soon escalate and become unwieldy. Outsourcing both physical and cloud based system support offers a reliable, secure and cost effective solution.

Sources:

- 'NHS Commissioning Board Key Facts document' issued (March 2013)
- 'Your choice of Commissioning support services guide (a step by step guide for CCGs who want to change their commissioning support service during 2013/14'
- NHS England document - *Towards commissioning excellence - A strategy for commissioning support services, 2013*

Contact Asckey Data Services Ltd today on 0845 270 7747 to find out how our Commissioning Support Services can provide you with targeted NHS specialist IT support.