Integrated Community Based Care Procurement: An APA-Formatted Case Study

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Abstract

This case study analyses the Integrated Community Based Care (ICBC) procurement undertaken by SCW CSU on behalf of Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB). The £1.6 billion procurement represents one of the UK's largest community-based healthcare procurements, delivered through a multi-year, multi-stakeholder collaborative approach. The study highlights the procurement team's use of outcome-based specifications, innovative process design, extensive market engagement, and strong cross-organisational collaboration. Findings demonstrate how strategic procurement can drive transformation in integrated care systems, improve outcomes, and embed long-term capability across commissioning teams.

Introduction

Integrated community-based care is fundamental to ensuring that health and care services are coordinated across all life stages. As multiple fragmented service lines approached expiry, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) sought to transform its commissioning model. To achieve this, BSW ICB engaged the South, Central and West Commissioning Support Unit (SCW CSU) to design and deliver the Integrated Community Based Care (ICBC) procurement. Given the organisational transition occurring within the ICB and the scale of the requirement, the procurement represented a

significant strategic undertaking requiring robust governance, innovation, and extensive stakeholder engagement.

Background

The existing model for community-based care across BSW had been characterised by 137 service lines, each commissioned individually. This fragmentation created variation, inefficiency, and challenges in achieving consistent quality and equitable access. The ICBC procurement sought to consolidate these service lines into three integrated specifications aligned with the BSW Outcome Framework. The programme was informed by lived experience feedback, input from commissioners and providers, and the broader strategic ambition to deliver seamless community health and care services. Pre-market engagement played a foundational role, involving 69 providers across three major market events and more than 2,300 stakeholders via workshops, surveys, and targeted discussions.

Methods

The SCW procurement team adopted an innovative Negotiated Healthcare Procurement process, blending requirements from Schedule 3 of the Public Contract Regulations (2015) with elements of the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation. The approach prioritised outcome-based specifications, flexibility, and co-design. Key methodological components included:

• Replacement of 137 fragmented service lines with three integrated outcome-based specifications.
• Division of services into 'Core' and 'Reserved' categories to allow for future adaptation.
• Extensive multi-disciplinary working groups involving commissioners, clinical staff, providers, and local authorities.
• A bespoke scoring methodology triangulating narrative responses with financial models.
• Training of evaluators in negotiation, BATNA assessment, body language interpretation, and evaluation moderation.
• Strong governance, including ethical wall agreements and continuous realignment meetings.

Results

The procurement was delivered on schedule despite changes in personnel, scope evolution, and tight timelines. Key outcomes included:

- The contract, executed within seven days of standstill, has secured a provider committed to system leadership and collaborative partnerships
- The ICBC procurement is already delivering transformative benefits for BSW ICB and the wider health and care system.

- Early benefits include workforce efficiencies and reduced overheads with social value initiatives and support for SMEs, driving local economic growth.
- The service will enhance patient outcomes through its integrated design and digital transformation.

Additionally, the procurement was not challenged, demonstrating robust probity and stakeholder confidence. Ministerial scrutiny identified the process as a national exemplar.

Discussion

The ICBC procurement demonstrates the potential of strategic procurement in driving system-wide transformation. By adopting an outcome-based, flexible, and collaborative approach, enabling BSW ICB to move beyond traditional commissioning models. The procurement achieved not only contractual and operational improvements but also long-term capability building across teams. The emphasis on market engagement, training, and multi-disciplinary design contributed to a sustainable culture of learning and innovation. While the procurement succeeded in overcoming challenges such as staffing changes and shifting requirements, future opportunities exist in strengthening digital performance monitoring, enhancing stakeholder co-design mechanisms, and further embedding outcome-based evaluation frameworks.

Conclusion

The Integrated Community Based Care (ICBC) procurement stands as a significant example of procurement excellence in the NHS. By prioritising collaboration, innovation, and outcome-driven planning, SCW CSU delivered a highly complex procurement that is already yielding measurable improvements for BSW ICB. The programme's transformative impact, combined with its replicability, positions it as a model for future large-scale integrated care procurements across the NHS.

References

South, Central and West Commissioning Support Unit. (2025). Procurement Excellence Award Submission: Integrated Community Based Care – Delivering Procurement Excellence for BSW ICB. Unpublished internal document.