



General Principles and Checklist for Decommissioning

The following is a set of principles on which to base any decision to decommission. Many decisions will be significantly influenced by financial constraints but the interests of service users, staff and partners must be taken into account and prioritised during any decommissioning process.

- ▶ **Transparency and fairness** – there should be transparency in the decision-making process, with fairness in the approach to all stakeholders. It should be absolutely clear why a decision has been taken to decommission a particular service, and this needs to be understood and shared by all stakeholders. Equally, there should be fairness in the way stakeholders are treated, whether this is between different providers or different service users.
- ▶ **Users** – safeguarding the welfare of service users must be a key priority throughout any decommissioning process. Decommissioning a service should not remove essential or important provision from any existing user. The interests of service users should be protected throughout the decommissioning process, to ensure that ongoing support and care needs are addressed appropriately.
- ▶ **Staff** – providers have a responsibility to ensure that the decommissioning process is transparent and that the welfare of staff involved in providing the service is protected through proper consultation between the service provider and the commission authority.
- ▶ **Value for money** – the purpose of decommissioning services will be to ensure that health and social care and other services most effectively meet the needs of vulnerable people, are of the best quality and offer value for money.
- ▶ **Risk management** – there should be clarity about the risks involved in the process and the approach being taken to manage these risks.
- ▶ **Partnership** – relevant agencies/services to work with all stakeholders to achieve a smooth transition, with particular regard for service users and staff.
- ▶ **Communication** – a sound communications strategy will help to ensure that the process of decommissioning is ultimately successful through the full engagement of users, staff, elected members, providers and the media where appropriate

General Principles and Checklist for Decommissioning (continued)

Decommissioning Checklist

A	Prepare	Yes	No
1	Is there a decommissioning policy and/or guidelines for decommissioning in your organisation?		
2	Is this policy/guideline recent, and does it have both corporate and political support?		
3	Does it include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ decision-making processes? ▶ risk assessment and management? ▶ appropriate project management? ▶ communication plans? ▶ adequate resources? 		
4	Do service contracts allow for potential decommissioning situations?		
5	Is there regular engagement with providers, which includes the discussion of the decommissioning policy?		
6	Is there ongoing performance management of contracts with proactive approaches to reviewing and improving services?		
7	Are there well-publicised communication mechanisms and consultation structures in place? Are these accessible for all stakeholder groups?		
8	Is there an approved approach to risk assessment and management, and to carrying out impact assessments?		

B	Decide	Yes	No
1	Is it clear what the issues are with the service that is being reviewed?		
2	Is there a good understanding of the needs and aspirations of current and potential service users?		
3	Has there been a thorough consideration of all of the options for the service? Have all of the potential service models been researched and considered? Is it clear how this service fits with local and national policy drivers?		
4	Is it clear what resources are available to meet this need, and whether any resources released through decommissioning can be recycled into any reconfigured services?		
5	Have all of the key stakeholders been identified and is it clear what their role will be in the decision process? When will they be involved, and how will they be involved?		
6	Has the contract for the service been reviewed, and does it create any particular issues for potential decommissioning?		

General Principles and Checklist for Decommissioning (continued)

C	“Do”	Yes	No
1	Is there a project plan which clearly describes the scope of the project? Would it be more deliverable if it were broken down into smaller projects?		
2	Has a lead officer or project manager been identified who has access to support as needed?		
3	Does the project plan include clear milestones which fit with stakeholder decision-making structures, and does it allow time for effective communication? Is there scope for some flexibility within it?		
4	Is it clear what the legal requirements for the process are, and how they will impact on timescales in particular?		
5	Is there a clear communication plan which includes all stakeholders? Are messages tailored for particular audiences?		
6	Is there ownership of the project plan, both corporately and politically?		
7	Does the project plan allow for an impact assessment and a risk assessment (if not already completed)?		
8	Are there clear transitional arrangements for service users which have been agreed with the provider, and which minimise impact on service users? Do these include proposed timescales, ongoing communication arrangements and an agreed approach to the sharing of information?		

D	Review	Yes	No
1	Is there an agreed approach to the evaluation of the decommissioning process?		
2	Does this evaluation process include other stakeholders?		
3	Is there a mechanism for sharing any learning from this evaluation process?		

Adapted from: *Institute of Public Care – Oxford Brookes University (2010: 4, 18, 19)*
People’s Needs Defining Change – Health Services Change Guide