



Essex Partnership University
NHS Foundation Trust

EPUT

COMMERCIAL STRATEGY 2023-2026

A COLLABORATIVE COMMERCIAL APPROACH



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Commercialisation in the context of the NHS

Most commercial strategies are rooted in competition, setting out how organisations plan to increase market size and share, at the expense of their competitors. The way healthcare is commissioned and provided is changing, with collaboration increasingly taking the place of competition and individual interests giving way to ever greater integration. The Trust will maximise opportunities for commercialisation through innovation, partnership working and collaboration.

Providing the leading mental health and community care of the future will mean working closely with system partners, with other providers, with communities and, crucially, with patients and their families. This is core to the Trust's Strategic Plan. Our commercial strategy therefore sets out how we will develop our commercial acumen and deploy entrepreneurial thinking to deliver our four strategic objectives:



OUR VISION

To be the leading health and wellbeing service in the provision of mental health and community care.

Having engaged with care unit and business unit leaders across the Trust, five themes have been identified that set out how the benefits of a commercial approach can be leveraged across the organisation and wider system to create value for patients, staff and partners.

This strategy sets out how EPUT will adopt a collaborative commercial approach.

OUR VALUES



Measuring progress in delivering the collaborative commercial strategy

Specific

An implementation plan with clearly defined actions has been developed to ensure we are able to measure the outcomes in delivering our strategy over the next three years until 2026.

Measurable

Achievable

Measuring the impact of what we do will require the creation of a local SMART impact dashboard that will monitor our delivery of the actions agreed and the benefits realised as we progress. Metrics will be established across each of the five strategic themes.

Relevant

Time-bound

Each metric will set a baseline measure of where we are starting from and evidence the progression over time associated with key actions.

Key milestones for delivery:

Year 1

Communicating our strategy, and building awareness and engagement. Planning the impact of emerging legislation relating to procurement and ensuring staff are trained and changes are effectively planned. Embed changes to our organisational governance to reflect this.

Year 2

Rolling out programmes of training, gaining accreditation, measuring the impact of Year 1 commercial activities, further developing collaborative commercial opportunities and the social value derived.

Year 3

Evidencing the development in the commercial acumen of the Trust, the development of enhanced and innovative systems and processes and a commercially skilled workforce.



Strategic themes

1 Strategic alignment

2 Service design

3 Commercial innovation

4 Procurement and contract management

5 Culture, skills and engagement

1. Strategic alignment

The purpose of our commercial strategy is to support our Strategic Plan and our vision, 'To be the leading health and wellbeing service in the provision of mental health and community care.'

The Trust's Strategic Plan sets out four strategic objectives that must be the essential focus of our efforts in order to achieve this vision. Our commercial activities must contribute to this by creating a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation that protects and enhances the quality of services and the safety of care. In turn, this will protect and enhance the organisation's reputation and build confidence among stakeholders and partners that EPUT is a provider that is trusted to provide the safest possible care. By making patient safety, quality of care, effective partnership working and community wellbeing the essential ingredients of the EPUT brand, commissioners and partners will want to invest in the services the Trust provides, creating a virtuous circle.

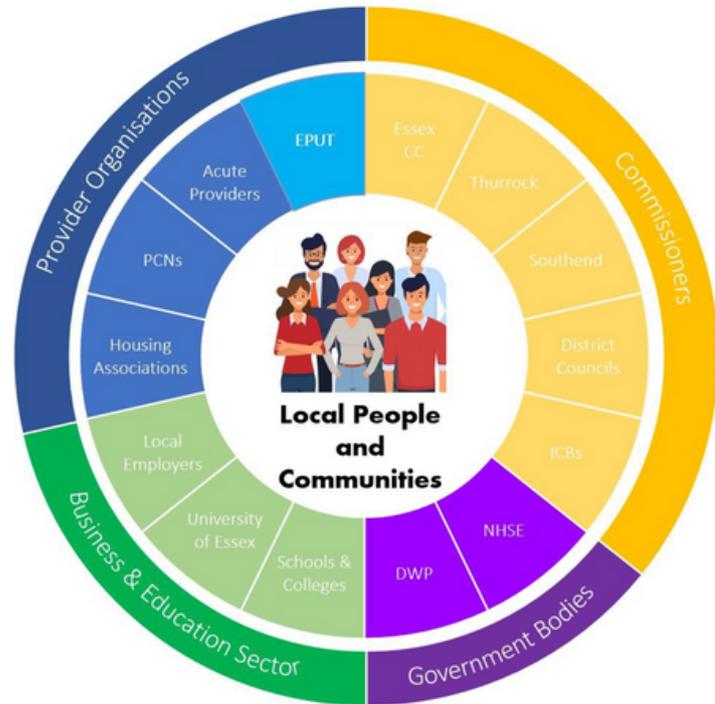
To that end, this strategy combines both elements of collaboration and commercialisation. Our focus is not rooted in how we can gain competitive advantage over others. We believe instead that collaborative advantage will better serve the Trust, our partners and, crucially, our patients in our new operating context, which is one of system integration and joining up services around patients and communities. We have already seen evidence of the benefits of this through provider collaboratives. This strategy builds on this ethos to set out a collaborative and entrepreneurial way of delivering and transforming services.



A collaborative commercial strategy

Traditional commercial strategies place an organisation at the centre of a competitive landscape, with customers to be acquired, competitors to be defeated and profits to be maximised. Our collaborative commercial strategy recognises the need to work in partnership to leverage opportunities within the Trust and the wider systems within which we work:

- Patients, families and local communities are at the centre of the healthcare system. We will work closely with partners to make access to services as seamless as possible, no matter who provides them, and design services that fit around people's lives.
- We'll think and act preventatively, bringing more services closer to communities and providing more community based support – better for health outcomes and better for the public purse.
- We'll turn our competitors into partners, working with other providers in the NHS, private and voluntary sectors to provide the best quality services, centred around people who use them.
- We'll seek to maximise outcomes, investing in services that will provide the best quality of life for patients and communities, embedding social value within our commercial ventures.



Target operating model

The Trust has adopted a new operating model based around care units, led by multi-disciplinary teams and supported by business units that provide corporate infrastructure and support services.



The care units have developed their own strategic plans which set out how they will deliver their local priorities within the framework of the Trust's Strategic Plan.

The care units will likewise implement the themes of this commercial strategy by developing their own commercial plans, supported by the capacity and capabilities within the corporate business units.

2. Service design

Designing innovative services, with, and for patients and communities, will create services so good that commissioners and partners have the confidence to invest in them.

We have started to make great strides forward in this. We've recruited more people with lived experience than ever before to help us design services with those that use them in mind. We're involving service users in the design of our wards and to promote wellbeing, inclusivity and creativity. Some of these projects have even won awards.



We'll also increase the capacity, accessibility and reach of our services by radically embracing the opportunities of digital, data and technology. This priority already forms part of the Trust's Strategic Plan and we'll make sure we maximise the opportunities of data and technology to design better, more inclusive services at lower cost.

We'll embed a culture of innovation, co-production and continuous learning in all of our services. This will mean not relying on what we've done in the past but taking the design of some services back to the drawing board and asking patients, families, communities and staff how we would design services to achieve outcomes in the 21st century.

We'll support this by training staff in service design methodologies, working with communities and partners.

Our award-winning refurbishment of Basildon Mental Health Unit engaged staff and service users in the design process to improve patient safety and create an environment of wellbeing and creativity. The project won the Best Patient Safety Initiative category in the Building Better Healthcare Awards and was shortlisted for Best Interior Design and Best External Environment.

**“Our relationship with EPUT as a strategic partner has enabled us to ensure that patient voice is integral to all the decision-making”
-Healthwatch Essex**

A huge effort to recruit Lived Experience Ambassadors means that more people with lived experience than ever before are helping us to design and improve our services. This is a key selling point for the Trust and the way in which we will build a trusted brand. Ensuring that our services provide safe, good quality care and that they are shaped by people who use them will provide better outcomes for patients, build trust among stakeholders and lead to financial and organisational sustainability.

We'll build on these achievements going forward to ensure that user-centred design is a key feature of all of our services.

This will be a key component of the EPUT brand and an essential part of what we are known for – providing the safest possible care with patient-led innovation at the heart of services.



“This is the best ward I have been to; it is like a hotel. I would be happy to pay for my stay here. The ward environment is therapeutic.”

3. Commercial innovation

Commercial innovation and partnerships will help to enhance the brand of the Trust and its financial and reputational sustainability. The commercial and innovation strategies will align to achieve this vision.

Embracing innovation is not new to EPUT. The Trust has an established track record of engaging in innovative practices, including partnerships with education and the private sector. This includes our collaboration with Oxehealth, the work of EPUT Lab and our award-winning Clinical Associates in Psychology apprenticeship scheme (see below). The Trust is not always strong at reaping the benefits of innovation. We often lead on creating value for others but don't always secure value for our own organisation. This is the key aspect of what it means to commercialise innovation in a healthcare context – not for our own sake or for pure financial gain, but in order to create return on investment that can support sustainable future services for our patients and service users.

The creation of value is a defining characteristic of innovation.

We need to make investment in the commercial acumen of our staff in order to maximise the benefits of opportunities. This is particularly important when the Trust has invested the time and expertise of our staff in partnership initiatives, making sure that we get a fair share of the value this creates and that our patients benefit from it. This will be underpinned by a new commercial innovation framework which will help us to concentrate our time and resources on the areas that best complement the Trust's strategic objectives at a time of limited resources.

EPUT has collaborated with Oxehealth to implement a safety monitoring system on our wards. The Oxevision system allows us to take remote measurements of patient vital signs, to supplement in-person observations. 91% of staff agree that it has improved patient safety on the wards.

We have created a suite of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) using a digital solution called SOPHIA. These SOPs have been created in a 'white label' way, which means that they have a neutral brand and could be shared with any healthcare provider involved in providing similar services. As well as helping to improve the quality and consistency of the patient experience, this has the potential to generate a financial return, enhance our reputation in the sector as a healthcare innovator, or both.

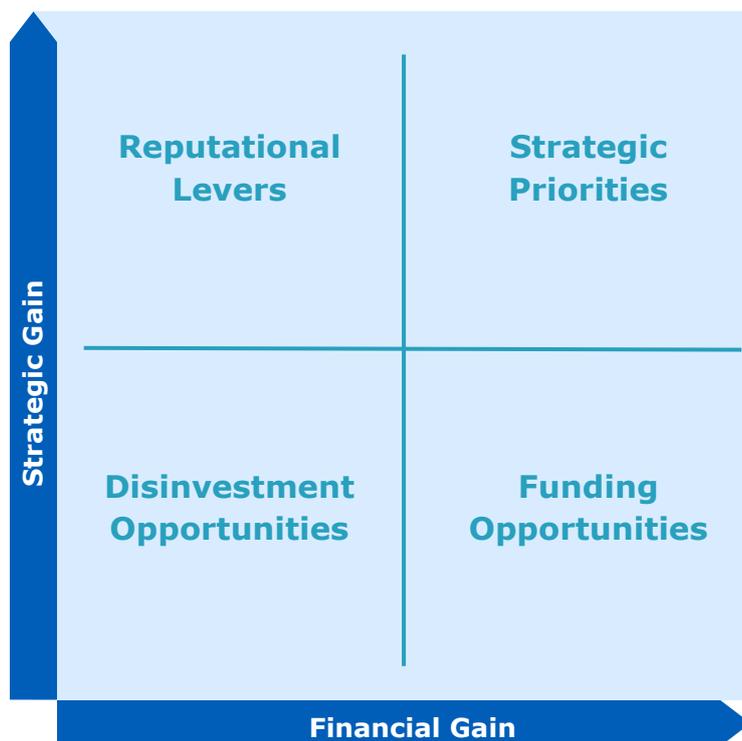
The Trust's innovative Apprenticeship Scheme for Clinical Associates in Psychology won the HSJ Award for Workforce Initiative of the Year 2022. This sets EPUT up to be a respected leader in workforce development nationally. Capitalising on the reputational capital this creates will enhance the quality and visibility of the Trust's profile regionally, nationally and even internationally.



The Trust has many priorities competing for the organisation's focus and resources. The Trust Strategic Plan sets out four strategic objectives that must be the essential focus of organisational efforts in order to succeed. Any commercial activities must contribute to delivering the Strategic Plan. We will therefore introduce a new **commercial innovation framework** which will help us to prioritise those opportunities that not only generate financial benefits but create positive strategic positioning for the Trust. This is the essence of what it means to be commercial in our new model.

The framework will classify opportunities as one of four types:

- Strategic Priorities – which generate both financial and strategic RoI
- Reputational Levers – which will create brand value for the organisation
- Funding Opportunities – additional funding to support vital services
- Disinvestment Opportunities – where savings can be made by stopping an activity.



4. Procurement and contract management

Effective procurement and contract management is integral to good commercial practice on the supply side. Managing our supplier base effectively is critical in evidencing our approach to achieving value for money.

This has been an area of historic under-investment for the Trust and our organisational maturity is relatively low, as indicated by a recent external review in partnership with PWC. With more than £120m of the Trust's budget spent in our supply chain, we recognise this as an area of significant opportunity to create value for the Trust and with system partners.

As all parts of the public sector look to address the dual challenge of rising demand and constrained funding, we will look for opportunities to work with system partners to reduce costs while maintaining quality through collaborative procurement. The opportunities will be at a local level with Integrated Care Boards, other providers and local authorities, at a regional level with other Trusts and the East of England Procurement hub, or nationally through NHS Supply Chain and the Central Commercial Function of NHS England.

A new approach to procurement will help us to stratify our expenditure and determine the right sourcing approach for each category of supplies, works and services. This will embed a robust approach to procurement in line with new legislation.

We'll also invest in our technology, skills and capabilities to enable better commercial management of our third party contracts and investments.

Work is underway to author a suite of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for clinical activities, to reduce unwarranted variation and reduce clinical risk and serious incidents. We'll transfer this principle to creating gold-standard SOPs for procurement and contract management activities, in order to reduce commercial risk and create value for the organisation in line with legislative requirements.

Our current way of working can be reactive and we recognise that there are significant opportunities from adopting a more strategic, commercial and proactive approach to procurement. By adopting a 'category management' model for procurement, we will maximise the value of our spending power and make it easier to identify opportunities for collaborative procurement with other Trusts and local authorities.

This approach will be consistent with the NHS Supply Chain 'category tower' model, and the Central Commercial Function Commercial Strategy, helping us to develop strategies for what to procure at local, regional and helping us to develop strategies for what to procure at local, regional and national levels.

We also recognise that, no matter how effective our procurement is, a great deal of value can be lost throughout the lifetime of a contract if it is not managed effectively. That's why we propose to invest in our contract management capabilities, developing a new framework with clear roles and responsibilities and joined-up working between clinical and corporate staff to form multi-disciplinary contract teams.

We'll support staff to perform this role effectively and improve the Trust's access to actionable management information by investing in technology, introducing a new procurement and contracts system.



5. Culture skills and engagement

Creating the right culture is key to ensuring the successful delivery of our collaborative commercial strategy. All of our staff have chosen careers in healthcare in order to improve people's lives. It may not be obvious to everyone how this fits with a commercial agenda – and yet finding new ways of funding services is vital to ensuring their quality and sustainability. We need to effectively communicate how these goals complement each other in order to secure buy-in.

The kind of culture we want to create needs to be carefully communicated to make sure that staff and partners understand the nature of our strategy – working with people to achieve financial sustainability and sustainable services, rather than a traditional, competitive approach.

To guide us on this journey, we have developed a commercial culture roadmap that sets out not only what actions we will take to embed a commercial mindset but how this forms positive connections in people's minds between commercial activities and our ability to provide great quality care.

This will be rolled out alongside our other culture, skills and engagement priorities in the Trust, including embedding a digital-first ethos to transformation and an inclusive approach to service design and delivery that leaves nobody behind.



Governance and oversight

We will use the existing governance structure as far as possible to ensure the delivery of the enabling commercial strategy. However a Commercial Management team will be established to ensure the actions identified are actioned and assurance provided to the Oversight Committees as to the impact of the new strategy.

