

## Consultancy approvals – assessment criteria

<b>Criteria we are assessing</b>	<b>The questions we ask</b>	<b>What the business case needs to demonstrate</b>
Problem definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the problem?</li> <li>• What does a successful solution look like?</li> <li>• What has already been done?</li> </ul>	A good understanding of the underlying problem and what a successful solution would look like.
The need for consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What support options are available within the NHS to resolve the problem?</li> <li>• Why is consultancy the appropriate solution for the problem?</li> </ul>	Evidence that the trust/commissioner has considered the support available within the NHS, including evidence of any requests made for intra-NHS support (e.g. Intensive Support), to resolve the problem and a clear rationale for management consultancy being the appropriate solution.
Timing of business case submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the consultancy application been submitted prior to a contractual commitment and before work commences?</li> </ul>	The business case has been received from the trust/commissioner prior to a contractual commitment and before work commences, with sufficient time to enable NHS England/ NHS Improvement to undertake a robust assessment of the proposal.
The scope of consultancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the defined deliverables and outcomes you want from a supplier?</li> <li>• How have you made use of existing standard specifications such as for financial improvement?</li> </ul>	The support from consultancy is defined clearly with measurable outcomes to assess delivery and focused on those things that only an external supplier can provide.
The capacity to implement the results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the trust's leadership capacity and capability to oversee and implement the results?</li> <li>• How will internal capability and capacity be built up to deliver once management consultants have left?</li> </ul>	The trust has the capacity and capability and has made appropriate arrangements to actively implement the outputs and realise the benefits of consultancy support, and to sustain delivery of these improvements without external support. This includes the identification of

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		a senior responsible officer for the project and a clear governance process to oversee delivery of the work, and robust arrangements for skills/ knowledge transfer from the external supplier.
The sourcing of value-for-money consultancy support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a robust and transparent procurement process been used?</li> <li>• Are suppliers sharing risks appropriately eg with a contingent fee?</li> </ul>	The procurement process is compliant with PCR 2015 and the trust/CCG's SFIs and the costs demonstrate good value for money in view of the anticipated return on investment and/or when benchmarked against other suppliers or similar programmes of work. The NHS is using its strong position as a large organisation to secure value for money.
The affordability of consultancy support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the planned expenditure on consultancy in this financial year in your operational plans?</li> <li>• What is the full list of consultancy projects and costs to support the trust in this financial year?</li> </ul>	The costs of consultancy are affordable within operational plans.
The use of the findings/results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what way will the results and learning be shared more widely in the NHS?</li> </ul>	The trust/commissioner has made appropriate arrangements to share the outputs of the work both internally and externally to ensure that the NHS can benefit from the learning, without the need to duplicate consultancy projects.

The template for consultancy business cases asks a number of questions to ensure a full response is available with specific and quantified information in relation to the above criteria when approval decisions are being made.