# Tool 4: Checklist for Onboarding New Suppliers

# *See Glossary at the end of this document for definitions.*

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| **Tools in this series:**   * [Tool 1: Evaluation Approach for Complex Procurements](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/publications/tool-1-evaluation-approach-complex-procurements) * [Tool 2: Evaluation Approach for Simple Procurements](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/publications/tool-2-evaluation-approach-simple-procurements) * [Tool 3: Example RFT Template](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/publications/tool-3-example-rft-template) * [Tool 4: Checklist for Onboarding New Suppliers](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/publications/tool-4-checklist-onboarding-new-suppliers) * [Tool 5: Procurement Lifecycle Checklist](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/publications/tool-5-procurement-lifecycle-checklist) * [Tool 6: Supplier’s Report – Template](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/publications/tool-6-suppliers-report-template) * [Tool 7: Framework for Undertaking a Needs Analysis](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/publications/tool-7-framework-undertaking-needs-analysis) |

# Disclaimer

This document was developed by procurement specialists for the National Mental Health Commission (NMHC). The guidance is high level and organisations should adapt this checklist to suit their requirements. Organisations are responsible for ensuring the approach is appropriate for their workforce and engaging any additional expertise as indicated.

This document provides guidance only and should not be considered legal advice. You may wish to obtain independent legal advice if your organisation has concerns about obligations under law.

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# Purpose

This document offers guidance on how to onboard suppliers selected to provide mental health supports.

## Contract negotiation and execution

Onboarding includes negotiating and executing the contract. The following checklist contains things to consider when negotiating and executing the contract.

* Draft a negotiation strategy and approve an appropriate delegate before negotiations begin.
* As negotiations progress, develop an issue register to track what is being negotiated and when issues are resolved.
* Develop a risk register to track outcomes that are agreed and any associated risks and mitigation strategies. Use this information to brief the delegate who approves and signs the contract.
* Complete a full legal and commercial review on the final contract before execution.
* Get legal sign off on the contract before execution.
* Agree the process for signing the contract with the supplier:
  + Who signs the contract first?
  + Does it need to be signed in ‘wet ink’ or can it be signed electronically? NOTE: Seek legal advice if unsure. Certain contracts must be signed via ‘wet ink’.
  + If the contract is to be signed in ‘wet ink’, how many copies must be signed? (Generally, it is 2 copies so both parties have a signed copy.)
  + Who in your organisation will sign the contract (that is, who has the authority) and how much time is needed for each delegate to sign? (For example, it make take 3 days for a contract to be signed once it is submitted to the CEO’s office.)

## Onboarding process

The following checklist provide guidance on things to consider once contract negotiations are complete, and the implementation process starts:

* Develop an onboarding plan that considers:
  + the timeline for onboarding and milestones that must be achieved to meet the required deadlines
  + key stakeholders to include in the onboarding process (for example, other areas within the organisation such as IT, finance, HR, other workers, other supplier personnel)
  + what successful onboarding looks like (for example, what outcomes you are trying to achieve and how you will measure this)
  + the risks associated with onboarding the new supports and how they can be mitigated.
* Establish requirements and expectations. Create clear policies and vendor requirements to ensure both parties understand what is expected and how will you track onboarding progress.
* If the supplier is new to the organisation, set up them up in the relevant systems (for example, finance, CRM). You can capture this information via a form sent out by email or via an online portal. Generally, the information that will need to be collected includes:
  + ABN, business name, contact details
  + supplier’s contact and title (for example, account manager)
  + bank account details.
* Raise a purchase order for the supports to be supplied.

## Contract management

Once the supplier contract has been signed, finalise the contract management plan (CMP). The following checklist outlines things to consider when developing the CMP:

* Confirm how performance of the supplier and the supports will be measured over the life of contract.
* Establish regular reporting as per the contract. If not detailed in the contract, agree on the metrics to be reported, the frequency of the reporting and the format for the report.
* Establish the governance meetings as agreed in the contract.
* Collect evidence of current insurances.
* If required, collect evidence of required qualifications and certifications.

## Planning for engagement and uptake of existing services

The following checklist provides guidance on things to consider when planning for engagement and ensure effective uptake of the services.

* Develop a communications plan outlining who needs to know about the new supports, what they need to know and how you will tell them. Consultation with your organisation’s communications and/or marketing team may be helpful.
* Ensure all communications consider accessibility, language style and tone to convey a clear message and facilitate effective working relationships.
* Book necessary meetings, information sessions or 1-on-1 meetings as required under the communications plan.
* Have necessary supports in place to manage any risks associated with implementing the supports. The table below outlines examples of potential risks.

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| *Risk* | *Mitigation strategy* |
| Participants experience distress because of the product/service being delivered, e.g. the content delivered as part of Mental Health First Aid training may trigger some participants | Ensure participants are aware of the product/service being delivered and highlight the potential triggers so participants are aware beforehand and can choose to opt out of the event.  Support participants if they experience distress, e.g. discuss counselling and/or support services that are available if they need help. |
| Data is released/exposed to external sources | Ensure data is kept only by authorised personnel and stored securely.  Ensure the supplier has appropriate measures to handle sensitive data, e.g. if data is to be stored within a hosting service, ensure the provider complies with relevant security legislation and policy requirements. |
| Organisation cannot respond during crisis, resulting in lack of support for potential participants | Ensure service level agreements (SLAs) are in place and monitored to ensure adequate availability of staff and response times, e.g. a staff member will be guaranteed a response within 30 minutes during business hours or within 60 minutes outside of business hours or will be directed to alternative support services. |
| Loss of reputation to organisation that does not perform well | Obtain references from other organisations or users of the product/service to vouch for the credibility of the product/service provider. |
| Participant does not have support from leadership to undertake the product/service | Secure buy-in from executive leadership and where possible have them show support or visibly engage in support services, e.g. if running a speaker series ensure leaders visibly promote and participate. |

## Additional considerations for successful onboarding

The following checklist provides guidance on some other things to consider when implementing new supports:

* Relationship management – How will you manage the relationship with the supplier over the life of the contract?
* What challenges and risks may arise as the supports are onboarded? What mitigation strategies can you put in place?

The following example demonstrates how an effective onboarding process can successfully identify risk and implement mitigation strategies.

**Stories from the frontline: Use the onboarding process to identify and manage risks**

An organisation selected a supplier to provide digital mental health services. During the onboarding process, it became apparent data collected by the digital service, including workers’ names, will be stored offshore. The organisation attempted to negotiate this with the supplier, but parties could not resolve the issue. Given the high risk that this presented, the organisation decided not to progress negotiations further with this supplier.

This example exemplifies the importance of identifying possible risks and appropriate mitigation strategies for the goods and services to be deployed. By identifying the risks when onboarding a digital service and having mitigation strategies in place, the organisation addressed a serious problem early.

# Glossary of terms

**Contract** – An undertaking by one person to do something or refrain from doing something if another person does something or refrains from doing something or makes a promise in return in a legally binding manner. A contract may be entered into either in writing or orally.

**Contract management** – Managing the contracting cycle from establishing the business need to reviewing performance

**Customer relationship management (CRM)** – The process of managing interactions with existing and prospective customers during the sales process

**Loss of reputation** – The loss to financial capital, social capital and/or market share resulting from damage to an organisation’s reputation

**Service level agreement (SLA)** –Outlines the expected minimum level of service between a service provider and a client. It clarifies the scope of the service, responsibilities of each party and how to escalate among other factors.

**Stakeholder** –An individual or organisation with an interest (however slight) in, or who will be affected in any way by, the decisions and/or actions of a project, product, service or venture