

Writing a business case

A 'how to guide' for
Heads/Directors/Leaders/Mangers of
Midwifery

Birthrate Plus® Associates

1.0 Introduction

Congratulations on the completion of your Birthrate Plus® assessment. If the results of the assessment indicate that you need additional staff to maintain safe staffing levels, you may need to develop a business case.

This 'how to guide' and template (appendix 1) is designed to assist you to complete your business case and is based on the guidance outlined in the "5-case model" (HM Treasury 2013):

- **Strategic Case:** the issues with the current position and reasons for changing
- **Economic Case:** an investment appraisal of the options for achieving the required changes assessed for financial and non-financial benefits
- **Financial Case:** affordability of the investment and ongoing costs that arise
- **Commercial Case:** the procurement approach
- **Management Case:** the capacity to deliver the project

Developing a business case is an iterative process that can be resource intensive, so *think* before you begin and consider the items at table 1. In most cases the process of developing a business case requires, approval and organisational agreement at three different stages: Strategic Outline Case (SOC), Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC). Approval to proceed from one stage to the next is usually required by the relevant committee within your organisation, frequently referred to as the 'investment committee' or equivalent.

1.2 Stage 1 SOC

This stage involves establishing the case for change and the strategic context. A 'long list' (see 2.4) of potential options for the way forward should be clearly stated and the preferred way forward identified. Options at this stage of the business case should be assessed to establish whether the option can be rejected, is the preferred choice, or whether it should be added to the short list for further assessment. The 'short list' should be evaluated within the OBC.

1.3 Stage 2 OBC

The main purpose of the OBC is to: revisit the case for change and the preferred way forward identified in the SOC, establish the option which optimises value for money, assess affordability and demonstrate that the proposed scheme is

deliverable, outline funding arrangements and procurement plans. At this stage the options are assessed against the critical success factors (see item 2.2) identified at the SOC stage.

1.4 Stage 3 FBC

The key focus of the FBC is to re-examine the main findings of the OBC and refresh where applicable. The procurement outcome should be reflected and evidence that the case is unambiguously affordable should be apparent at this stage.

Table 1 Pragmatic tips for consideration

Consideration - Do you need a business case?

Can you use existing resource in a different way to achieve the desired results? If NO, *STHEN*

Whats the current situation? Where do we want to be? How do you propose getting there?

Think about the audience when completing the case and use the appropriate language

The case should be brief with key unambiguous points clearly made

Use evidence and not conjecture

Do not showd wave

Your ambition and objectives should have synergy with the organisation and policy where possible

Describe the benefits of investment in relation to clinical outcome and user/ staff experience.

2.0 Content of the business case

2.1 Executive Summary

This section is a synopsis of the main points of the business case. Whilst it is presented at the start of the case, it should be written last. The executive summary should outline the business need, the case for change, options and associated risks, the economic case and the preferred option. Frequently described as the 'shop window' for the business case, the executive summary should be carefully crafted accordingly, leaving the reader with an appetite for further reading.

2.2 Strategic Case

This section must include the strategic context including for example, local and national drivers, professional standards, regulatory requirements, policy and mandate. There should be synergy between the objectives of the business case and the ambitions and priorities of the organisation. Synergy with national policy supported by empirical evidence is essential. Critical success factors are defined key areas of activity that must be related to the objectives of the business case. They must be performed well for the objectives of the business case to be achieved. Critical success factors should be clearly defined, agreed with stakeholders and usually included in this section of the business case.

2.3 The Case for Change

This section should define the remainder of the business case and gives you an opportunity to describe the organisation and your service. The case for change should reflect robust assessment of the existing issues/business needs and the possible scope of the expected spend in relation to the foreseen benefits and potential risks. The case should present the current and perceived future problems/service gaps. The rationale for change should be evidence based and reflect a user/patient focus, linked to clinical outcome; user and staff experience; cost effectiveness and efficiencies and clearly describe organisational benefit.

When building the case for change and defining the critical success factors it is important to work in collaboration with your team, utilising their expertise and leadership. Key team members should include: the Senior Responsible Officer, the general management team, Programme Director, Project Manager, clinical colleagues, Finance Adviser, Board Member, user representatives, external stakeholders and commissioners.



Remember that you are developing the business case to justify your request for securing expenditure, therefore concise objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time constrained (SMART) are required

2.4 Economic Case

The economic case must demonstrate that the spending proposal demonstrates value for money and should aim to achieve this by critically, classifying and appraising a range of realistic and achievable options, in a 'long list'. Further critique reduces this to a "short list" in preparation for detailed cost benefit analysis. The 'long list' and 'short listed' options including the preferred options outlined in the SOC and OBC should also be costed and an economic appraisal of costs, benefits and risk assessment should be stated. This section of the business case must be developed in collaboration with the finance team and preferably led by the finance advisor.

2.5 Options

Options should be plausible and worthy of consideration. Each option should be risk assessed and the risk rating displayed with each option. When considering options, explore with colleagues safe options that create benefit to the woman, baby and the organisation.

Options can be displayed in tabular form under the following headings

- Economic appraisals (Is the option affordable, efficient, effective, sustainable)
- Benefits appraisal (Consider safety, user experience, staff experience)
- Risk appraisal (what is the risk? Can the risk be mitigated)
- Overall ranking (this will inform the reader of plausible options)

It is advisable to work in partnership with the finance advisor so that each option is appropriately costed and displayed. The key findings from the options should be clearly and factually displayed.

Your professional input is key in presenting and exploring the potential options and scope.



Think Do the options proposed provide a solution to the problem outlined in the case for change? Is there resource available to implement the option? What funding is required? Why do you think the funding request should be supported? Is the net benefit demonstrable? Can the objectives of the business case be delivered in partnership with others? What will the costs be in the short, medium and long term?

2.6 Procurement Strategy

At the FBC stage the commercial case should demonstrate the “preferred option” and clearly describe the planning and management of the procurement. The lead for completing this section is usually a general manager or equivalent, however your expert professional knowledge and guidance is important. Where there are personnel (TUPE) implications, the human resources lead/manager/business partner, should provide the appropriate contribution.

2.7 Overall Conclusions

In this section it is important to summarise the ranking of the options appraisal and outline the logical conclusions drawn. For example if the ‘do nothing’ option was ranked the lowest in the appraisals that were undertaken, it is not an option that can be considered. The option that ranks the highest overall should be highlighted in this section. The latter is likely to be the preferred option that meets all of the investment objectives outlined in the OBC.

2.8 Financial Expenditure

A summary of the financial appraisal should be included in this section and ideally should be completed by the finance advisor.

2.9 Benefits Realisation and Risk Management

It is important that the process for reviewing the risks is clearly outlined and should involve the risk lead/manager. Management arrangements for ensuring that the anticipated benefit materialises and the predicted rate of return remains on target should be described in this section. The governance arrangements for this process should also be briefly outlined.

2.10 Post Project Evaluation Arrangements

The evaluation process to ascertain whether the anticipated benefits have been delivered should be described in this section. Consideration should also be given to process, impact and outcome evaluation.

Appendix 1 Example Business Template

PROVIDER LOGO

Project Title:

Commissioning midwifery and support staff for safe staffing in maternity services

Outline Business Case

VERSION 1.0

Issue Date: 1st January 2016

Division/Department:

Executive SRO:

Owner:

Purpose of this Document

*“This SOC states the case for change and the safe staffing requirements for maternity services at **NAME OF PROVIDER**, based on the results of the Birthrate Plus® workforce planning assessment (ref) and safe staffing in maternity services guidance (ref). An options appraisal is outlined that provides the organisation with a range of risk assessed approaches. The preferred option optimises value for money, underpinned by the provision of safe staffing and demonstrates that the proposed scheme is deliverable with the investment outlined in this business case*

Version History

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Change	Owner's Name
0.1			
0.11			
0.12			
0.13			
0.14			
0.15			
0.16			
0.17			
0.18			
0.19			

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

This SOC describes the proposal to safely staff maternity services with midwifery and support staff¹. This case is requesting investment of £.....for(state the number of whole time equivalent (WTE) staff, state the number of midwives and other support staff as WTE's).

- *State the objectives of the business case*
- *Outline the options and the preferred option*
- *State why the investment is necessary and outline the benefits*
- *Include benefits criteria that relate to:*

User experience

Operational safety / Patient safety

Clinical benefit (e.g. clinical outcomes)

Statutory / regulatory compliance (where appropriate)

Return on Investment (payback period)

¹ Support staff is a generic term for a Healthcare Assistant/Maternity Support Worker

2.0 Strategic case

Outline the strategic case and showcase the synergy between the objectives of the case and the ambitions of your organisation, the wider NHS and policy objectives.

Refer to relevant: local and national guidance, policy, NICE, NHSLA, Kings Fund, RCM, RCOG, CQC, NHS Improvement, National Audit office, NHS England and appropriate others.

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The Case for Change

Please see item 2.3 of the 'how to guide'. In addition, and where appropriate refer to data that supports the case for change including: Friends and Family Test, Care Quality Commission and Local and National Survey data. Use comparative trust data where appropriate; serious incidents and complaints data that relate to staffing. Include the benefits of change and the benefit(s) of compliance with national guidance.

3.1 Investment objectives and benefits criteria

Investment Objective	Benefits Criteria
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of clinical care• Strategic Fit• Staff training• Research and development• Flexibility
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of clinical care• Strategic Fit• User experience• Flexibility
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexibility• Strategic fit• Quality of clinical care• Staff training• Research and development
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexibility• Patient experience and environment• Quality of clinical care

4.0 Economic case
(See 'how to guide')

5.0 Options

(See 'how to guide')

5.1 The Long List – Inclusions, Exclusions and Possible Options

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages Risks 7 Mitigation	Short List
1) Do Nothing			✓
2) Do minimum option			X
3) 3 rd option			X
4) 4 th Option			✓

5.2 The Short List

The following short list of options emerged: (tabulate the short listed options)

6.0 Key findings from the economic appraisals

(This is usually tabulated and should include the full costs for each option prepared by finance)

6.1 Option appraisal conclusions

7.0 Procurement Strategy

8.0 Financial Case

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References

HM Treasury 2013 Public sector business cases using the five case model

Green book supplementary guidance on delivering public value from spending proposals. On line

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>. Accessed 1st February 2016.

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