

## Workshop 3a

# What makes a great contractor/client relationship

### Speakers:

Lee Woods & Jenny Neville (Pennington Choices)

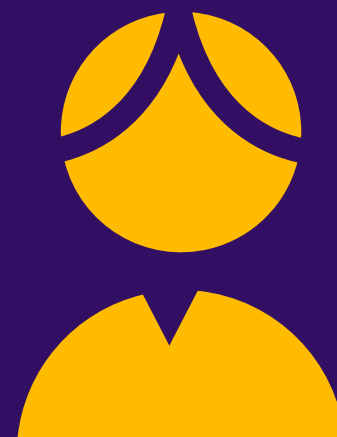
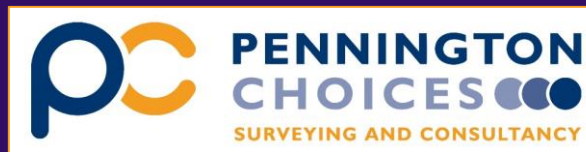
**Chaired by:** Ross Green (Kier Group)

**Room:** Arden room



National Housing  
Maintenance Forum

**NHMF**  
Maintenance  
Conference  
**2019**



# Case Studies

- **Turning a failing partnership around**
- Getting the client brief wrong
- **Don't over complicate your contract**
- Keep collaborating

# Partnership Quotes



**‘If you want a good partner, be a good partner.’**

‘It takes two to make a marriage a success and only one to make it a failure.’

**‘Determined people working together can do anything.’**

‘Coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success.’

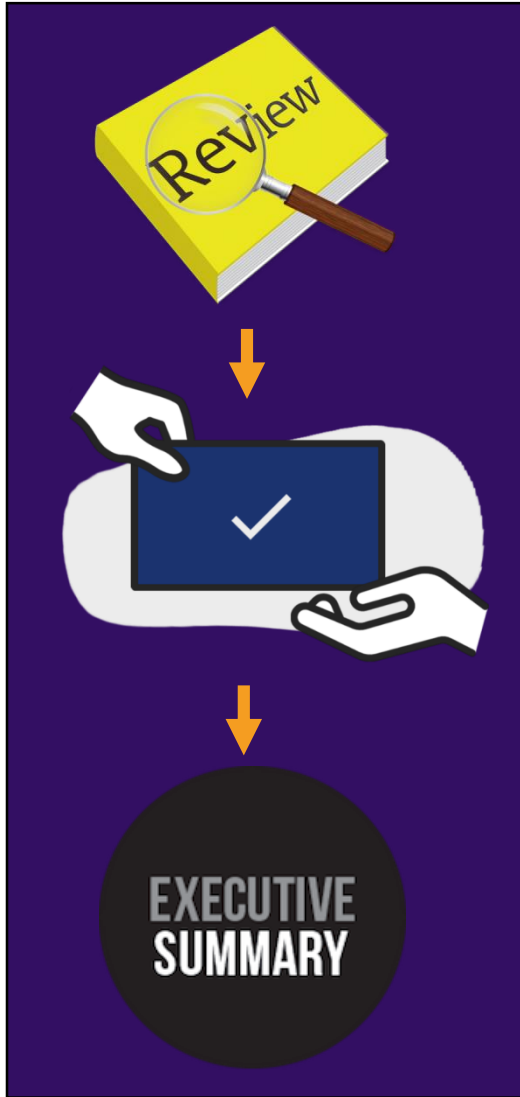
# Contract Documents

- The contract document – any deal breakers?
- Clients term brief/specification
- The quality bid submission
- The agreed pricing schedule
- Key performance indicators
  - Payment incentives/deductions
- GDPR data sharing protocol
- Insurances, warranties
- Others...

**This is not an exhaustive list, there may be other documents.**



# The Client Brief



- Client and contractor should have their own internal sessions reviewing the brief and pricing schedule in detail prior to the first mobilisation meeting.
- Check lead in period from 'award' to 'contract start date' to ensure enough time has been allowed to make a solid start.
- Operations Director and lead 'Contract Manager' need to know the detail.
- Produce an executive summary of contract/client brief to share with the delivery teams.

# The Client Brief

- The operational teams need to know what the client/contractor is expecting.
- It's an opportunity to identify any 'big ticket' items or areas of uncertainty that need to be raised ahead of mobilisation - ensure you have clarity before you start!
- It's the first planning session which should be used to prepare the mobilisation plan, which can then be shared and agreed with the client/contractor during mobilisation.
- It demonstrates understanding of the brief and helps you plan effectively – great first impression for the client/contractor.



# Contract Administration/Management



- Agree lead 'Contract Manager' for both parties.
- They will be the lead person for administering and managing the contract.
- They will be the main point of contact for the client/contractor.



- Agree senior 'Sponsor' on both parties.
- They will support the mobilisation and ensure the contract is sufficiently resourced to deliver the client brief.
- The Contract Managers will agree other contract team members.

# People

- Ensure the right people are in place – single ‘fully integrated’ teams.
- Produce a resource plan for the contract.
- Check you have the correct skilled staff in the team.
  - Management (Client) and Delivery (Contractor).
- Briefings with key staff – both parties.
- Ensure roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear – client and contractor side (as part of mobilisation).





# Mobilisation

- This is a critical stage – it's all in the planning and preparation.
- Internal sessions – pre-mobilisation.
- Mobilisation meetings – may be several.
- The mobilisation plan, this will include: Recruitment, Resourcing, Key Contacts, Agreeing end-to-end working processes, IT and data exchange, Branding, Communication, Briefings, Training, etc.



- Pilots
- 'Go-live'
- Expect issues in the early weeks and months – deal with them proactively.

# Pilots

## PILOT TESTING

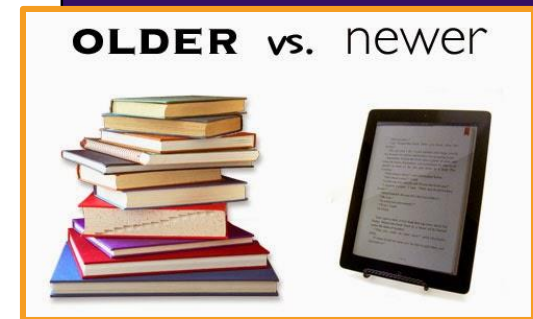
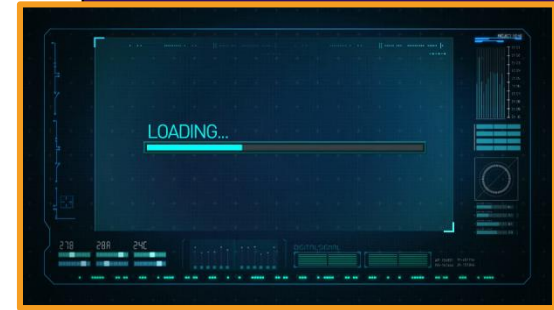
Getting It Right  
(Before) the First Time

- Used to road test the end-to-end service delivery process (from placing the order to paying the invoice).
- Used on all contracts and time defined' projects – agree a small number of jobs to pilot.
- Help identify issues early on, so they can be worked through and fixed.
- Test the client side and contractor side processes.
- Help both parties understand who need to take account for fixing what.
- Provide clarity early on and save lots of time further down the line.



# IT, software and data transfer

- Understand what is set out in the brief.
- Check what systems will be used if it isn't clear, or clarify where it is stated.
- Client/Contractor interface
- Set up and test during 'pilot' wherever possible, do not wait until later into the contract.
- There may be a number of iterations until the interface is right.
- Check for any proposed changes to technology during the life of the contract.



# Communication



- Critical to contract success
- Regular progress meetings
- Regular client communication and feedback.
- Be proactive
- Provide a running commentary on issues, even if there are no changes since the last communication.
- Time speak
- Progress reporting
- Complaints – get ahead of the issues, be proactive.
- Never ignore issues or leave them unresolved.
- Escalate issues as required – full disclosure!

# Scope/type of works

- Be clear on the scope and types of works.
- PO, WO or job numbers on all orders.
- UPRNs, address lists, etc.
- Agree a template if the client does not have one, so you capture all the relevant information up front.
- Processes for emergency, void, planned and other works – agree what these are in the mobilisation process.
- Contractors should send instructions back to clients where they don't contain all of the necessary agreed information.
- Agree prices for additional requests outside the scope of the contract in advance!

**KEEP IT  
CLEAR**



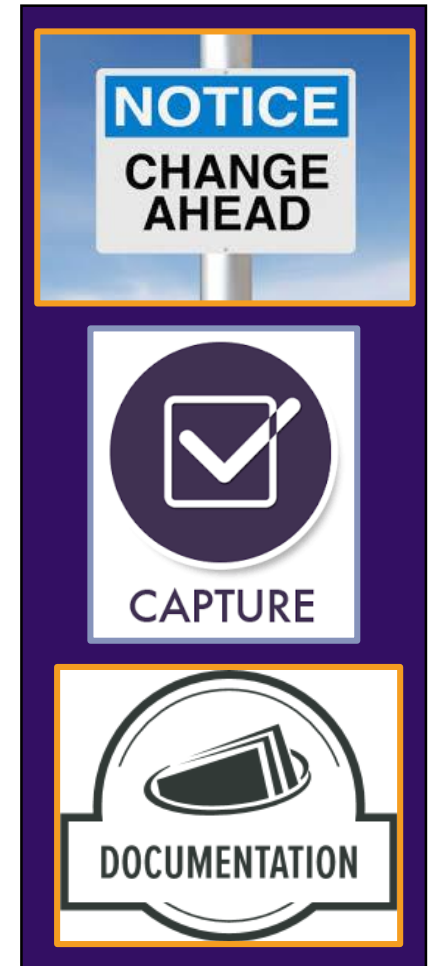
# Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)



- **Keep them simple**
- **Link them to outcome based measures, not input measures!**

# Changes and variations

- Changes and variations will happen – stop and check before you agree.
- Is it minor or major?
- What are the implications? Service delivery, financial? Stop and check before you agree.
- If it is a change/variation from the original agreed scope, the contractor should be clear and explain extra incurred costs and negotiate timelines for delivery.
- Often done ‘after the event’ – be wary of this.
- Capture and document all agreed changes/variations – do not act on verbal agreement, follow a clear approvals process.
- If it is a fundamental change to the contract, this needs to be handled effectively by the Contract Managers and Sponsors – change control protocols.



# Invoicing and Payments



- PO, WO or job numbers for all works ordered – you need to be able to tie things back at the end. Return jobs to clients which don't have one
- Agree the payments process 'upfront' and test it as part of the 'pilot' phase
- Check the contract is clear about what the remedies are for overdue payments or non payment; suspension of services, payment deductions
- Understand debtors policy and use it as required – clear escalation process in it
- Chase things early, resolve disputes early, negotiate if necessary to resolve a dispute – do not let disputes 'drift'





**“People do business with people.”**