

**From:** Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health  
Dr. Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

**To:** Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee  
20 September 2022

**Subject:** **Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service Contract**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway:** This is the first committee to consider this report

**Future Pathway:** N/A

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:**

This report seeks endorsement to extend the Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service contract, which is due to end on 31 December 2022. The core outcome from a formal contract review undertaken by Public Health Commissioners is the recommendation to extend the contract by 15 months (until 31 March 2024). The original contract has provisions for the extension and the proposed extension is compliant with Public Contract Regulations 2015.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on the proposed decision to:

- I. **APPROVE** the extension of the contracted Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service (contract number SS17033) with We Are With You for a period of fifteen months, from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2024; and
- II. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report seeks endorsement to extend the Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service contract, which is due to end on 31 December 2022.
- 1.2 Originally a contract extension option of up to 24 months was built into the contract and agreed through formal KCC Governance procedures. Enacting the extension is in line with the recommendations from Professor Dame Carol Black's Review of Drugs<sup>1</sup>, which identifies the need to maximise the stability and consistency of services to benefit both the service users and the workforce.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health & Social Care (2021) Dame Carol Black's Independent Review of Drugs <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-drugs-phase-two-report/review-of-drugs-part-two-prevention-treatment-and-recovery>

1.3 The local authority's Public Health grant requires the Authority to "have regard to the need to improve the take up of, and outcomes from, its drug and alcohol misuse treatment services", and Professor Dame Carol Black's Review of Drugs recommends investment in young people's services.

## 2. Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service

2.1 The Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service contract, as delivered by Addaction, which later rebranded as We Are With You (With You), commenced on 1 January 2018, to provide an integrated substance misuse service for young people in Kent. The service is for those aged 11-18 with the flexibility to provide interventions for those aged 18-24 who have an identified need for the young person's provision (rather than simply accessing the adult provision). The service incorporates evidence-based specialist community treatment, early interventions and workforce development.

2.2 With the contract end approaching, Public Health Commissioners have undertaken a formal contract review, which concluded with the core recommendation to extend the contract.

2.3 The service contributes to the 'Priority 1: Levelling up Kent' of Framing Kent's Future the Council's Strategy for 2022-26 via harm-reduction and structured treatment of early onset substance misuse issues, which secures long term health outcomes for the young people in Kent.

2.4 We Are With You has been delivering the Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service in a manner that aligns with the Government's new ten-year drugs plan, which advocates for the provision of good quality education, targeted support to prevent substance misuse, and for early interventions to avoid any escalation of risk and harm when such problems first arise.

2.5 The contract lifespan includes the challenging years of the COVID-19 pandemic, through which the service has demonstrated resilience, responsiveness, and ongoing development to meet the needs of young people and their families.

2.6 Comparisons with national data<sup>2</sup> suggest that the Kent service delivers similar or better overall outcomes to national rates.

2.6.1 Admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions (under 18s)  
Kent 24.7 vs. England 29.3 per 100,000 (2018/19-20/21).

2.6.2 Hospital admission due to substance misuse (15-24-years) Kent  
76.77 vs. England 85.97 per 100,000 (2018/19-20/21)

2.7 National evidence<sup>3</sup> indicates a substantial return on investment: the specialist interventions are shown to be a cost-effective way to secure long term outcomes, providing five or even eightfold return on investment with their impact

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<sup>2</sup> Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Public Health Data at <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-alcohol-profiles> and [https://analytics.phe.gov.uk/apps/spend-and-outcomes-tool/#!/outcomes\\_benchmark](https://analytics.phe.gov.uk/apps/spend-and-outcomes-tool/#!/outcomes_benchmark)

<sup>3</sup> Department for Education (2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/specialist-drug-and-alcohol-services-for-young-people-a-cost-benefit-analysis>

in young people's lives and reduced demand for various public services. There is a clear and compelling case for continuing KCC's investment in the Young Person's Drug and Alcohol Service.

- 2.8 Sufficient capacity and quality in treatment services depend on a suitably trained workforce. While it has been observed that recruitment to vacant roles in the social care and health services market is challenging at present, importance of retention is increasingly important. Extension of the contract will promote consistency and stability for both service users and staff.
- 2.9 Decommissioning the service was concluded as a non-viable option that would contradict Public Health grant's conditions and the clear and compelling case made in the review for continuing KCC's investment in the Young Person's Drug and Alcohol Service, for which national evidence indicates a substantial return on investment.
- 2.10 The review factored in that Government's planned transformation of public procurement is likely to bring changes to the procurement requirements in the near future and allowing time to observe implementation of the changes will be beneficial.
- 2.11 The Adults Drug and Alcohol Service contracts in Kent are all due to end on 31 March 2024. This will provide Public Health Commissioners an opportunity to conduct planning and re-commissioning processes in an efficient way, in alignment with the commitments under 'Priority 4: New Models of Care' of the Framing Kent's Future strategy .
- 2.12 The review concluded with the recommendation to extend the contract by 15 months (until 31 March 2024).

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Commissioners estimate that the 15 months extension (from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2024) will require commitment of £985,083.30, of which £869,299.55 will come from the Public Health grant. The remaining £115,783.75 is anticipated to come from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, which is in line with the annual funding they have previously contributed since the contract started.

### **4. Legal implications**

- 4.1 As the original contract has provisions to extend for up to two years and to terminate at any time by giving three months' written notice, the proposed extension is in accordance with Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, which set out the legal basis for Local Authority modifying contracts without a new procurement procedure.
- 4.2 The local authority's Public Health grant requires the Authority to "have regard to the need to improve the take up of, and outcomes from, its drug and alcohol misuse treatment services".

## 5. Equalities implications

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken by commissioners when the service was commissioned in 2017 and recently for the extension (attached as Appendix 1). The proposal to extend the contract would require 'No change' in the current service delivery as no potential for discrimination was identified.
- 5.2 An EqIA will be drafted as part of the future recommissioning process once the contract comes to an end following the extension in March 2024.

## 6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The local authority's Public Health grant require the Authority to "have regard to the need to improve the take up of, and outcomes from, its drug and alcohol misuse treatment services".
- 6.2 Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service contract is due to end on 31 December 2022.
- 6.3 Given the good performance of the current contract and the identified opportunity to recommission all KCC commissioned drug and alcohol contracts together, the formal contract review undertaken by Public Health Commissioning concluded with the recommendation to extend the contract by 15 months, until 31 March 2024.
- 6.4 Estimated cost for the extension is £985,083.30 with £869,299.55 coming from the Public Health grant and the remaining amount anticipated to come from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 6.5 The original contract has provisions for the extension, and the proposed extension is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

## 7. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health on the proposed decision to:

- I. **APPROVE** the extension of the contracted Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service (contract number SS17033) with We Are With You for a period of fifteen months, from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2024; and
- II. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision.

## 8. Background Documents

- 8.1 [Framing Kent's Future - Our Council Strategy 2022-2026](#)
- 8.2 HM Government (2021) [From Harm to Hope - A Ten Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save Lives](#)

## 9. Contact details

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