

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

DECISION NO:

23/00045

For publication Yes

Key decision: YES

Title of Decision: Community Support Services for Children, Young People and Adults with Sensory Needs

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, I agree to:

- a) **COMMENCE** formal procurement activity to establish a Framework of providers to deliver Community Support Services for Children, Young People and Adults with Sensory Needs, for a maximum period of four years; and
- b). **DELEGATE** authority to the Director Adult Social Care and Health to award contracts and take relevant action, including, but not limited to, finalising the contractual terms, entering into a contract and other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision: Currently, one-to-one ongoing assistance for children, young people and adults with sensory needs supported by social care teams are spot purchased via Individual ('Indi') contracts when this is arranged on someone's behalf by the council. This means that there are no clearly defined contract terms or specifications used to ensure consistent outcomes for people.

The aim of this commissioning is to support people across the lifespan pathway with sensory needs to live as safely and independently as possible by providing them with the assistance required as identified within their Care and Support Plan. All support is person-centred based on identified needs, but typically the type of support provided assists adults with maintaining and improving their independence by supporting people with activities such as managing finances, shopping, using public transport to attend appointments and social activities. The need for 'specialist' support to be commissioned is to ensure that a person's individual communication needs are met by the support worker assisting them (e.g., British sign language).

The number of adults in Kent predicted to have serious impairments is predicted to rise in the future for all three types of sensory needs. This commissioning activity supports:

- **Framing Kent's Future**, the council's Strategy (2022-2026), by 'supporting vulnerable children and families and helping adults who draw on social care to lead the lives they want to live and improving the way we design and deliver our care and support services'.
- **Making a Difference Every Day**, the Strategy for Adult Social Care (2022-2027) which aims to ensure that 'People experience flexible and creative ways of arranging support which enable a balance between choice for the person we support, quality and value'.
- **Kent's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities** (2021-2024), particularly the principle that Kent is a place where all children, young people with SEND and their families 'benefit from working with skilled practitioners who understand their needs and how these can be best met'.

It is recommended that contracted purchasing arrangements are put in place via a Framework of providers for a maximum period of four years.

Commissioning the service externally will establish innovation, choice and control for the people we support.

Financial Implications: Using the identified spend on this service in 2022/23, the estimated budget requirements for spend over the proposed contractual period are:

- Adult Social Care and Health services: £229,000.00 per annum/ £916,000.00 over 4 years, funded by individually commissioned care and support budgets within the ASCH Operations revenue budget.
- Children Young People and Education Services: £30,000.00 per annum/ £120,000.00 over 4 years.
- TOTAL: £259,000.00 per annum/ £1,036,000.00 over 4 years.

The Framework will not commit the council to a minimum level of spend over the contract period.

Although savings against the current hourly rates paid by the council are unlikely to be achieved in the future, formal contractual arrangements will enable better forecasting and service demand projections as well as better value for money as service quality requirements are formally agreed.

Legal implications: Legal advice will be sought should it be required.

Equalities implications: An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed, having been contributed to by Sensory Team Managers and commissioners. At this stage, no negative impacts on any protected characteristics have been identified. This service will offer flexible and personalised support.

This commissioning project will support the authority to meet requirements under the Equality Act (2010) and the public sector Equality Duty.

Data Protection Implications: A Data Protection Impact Assessment is in progress and will be updated as the project progresses and further details (e.g., successful providers) are known.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation: The proposed decision was discussed at the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee on 17 May 2023 and the recommendations were endorsed.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do nothing (continue to arrange individual packages of support on a spot purchase basis) – This option is likely to lead to a lack of consistency in service, with no minimum standards enforceable and is not compliant with the Public Sector Contract Regulations (2015).

Provide the service in-house – This would restrict the choice of people eligible for support, restrict flexibility in service delivery and not take advantage of existing specialist knowledge and skills available within the VCSE sector.

Vary an existing contract – This would only allow for a short-term solution as the contract that this service could potentially be added to is over half way through its contracted term (excluding potential extensions), and the lack of a competitive process would reduce the ability to demonstrate value for money.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

Clair Bell

14 June 2023

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signed

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date

