

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

DECISION NO:

OD/25/00008

For publication**Subject matter:**

Activation of second extension for the Amparo support service for people bereaved by suicide

Cabinet Member or Council/Cabinet decision to which this action relates:

Please insert the Cabinet Member decision number and link or Council/Committee decision link
[DECISION NO: 20/00132](#)

Decision:

Activation of second 12-month extension (clause 2.2 of contract SC20060 – Lot 2): Support Service for People Bereaved by Suicide

Reason(s) for decision:**Background**

In 2020, KCC agreed to lead on a procurement process on behalf of Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group, now known as the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB). This service was broken down into two lots:

1. Specialist Bereavement Support Service for under 25 years olds
2. Suicide Bereavement Service

The collaboration between the ICB and KCC was set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which included an agreement that KCC would procure, contract with the winning bidder(s), and lead contract management of the Specialist Bereavement Support Service (lot 2). The service commenced on 1st August 2021 for the duration of 36 months with provision to extend by 2 x 12 months (Clause 2.2).

The first of these two extensions was activated and will expire in July 2025. We are now looking to activate the second extension, which will take the service up to July 2026.

The extension has been discussed with Listening Ear, who deliver the Amparo service. They have confirmed their interest in it being activated. It has also been discussed and approved at the Suicide Prevention Strategic Oversight Board and initial approval for funding received by the ICB.

Referral numbers into the service have risen consistently throughout the period of the contract and were further boosted in Summer 24 when we were able to work with Kent Police to change their Sudden Death Investigation Policy to include mandatory consideration of referral into Amparo. This has resulted in additional referrals coming from Kent Police. During the latest available 12 month period there were 95 referrals into the service. During this time, 168 face to face appointments and 744 telephone support sessions took place. A typical client remains with the service for a minimum of 35 weeks, for as long as they feel they need it.

Aside from direct referrals, Amparo have also been doing a rising number of Community Response Projects, including delivering drop-in support sessions for the Sikh community in Gravesend and work within schools to support affected CYP.

Following approval, Schedule 7 of the Contract will be completed to reflect this variation.

This paper was discussed at the Strategic Oversight Board on 8th October 2024 and the group gave approval for this to proceed.

Rationale

Key reasons for this change are as follows:

- **Financial** – The ICB holds the budget for this service and have confirmed that they are able to provide the funds for the initial 12-month extension.
- **Demand** – Referral numbers into the service have risen consistently throughout the period of the contract and were further boosted in Summer 24 when we were able to work with Kent Police to change their Sudden Death Investigation Policy to include mandatory consideration of referral into Amparo. This has resulted in additional referrals coming from Kent Police. During the latest available 12 month period there were 95 referrals into the service. During this time, 168 face to face appointments and 744 telephone support sessions took place. A typical client remains with the service for 35 weeks, for as long as they feel they need it.

Service continuity

The support for individuals in Kent and Medway who are experiencing high levels of distress and grief as an impact of their bereavement will remain in place without interruption.

Financial Implications:

None to wider Public Health budget as this is funded by the ICB (through their funding to the Suicide Prevention Programme administered by KCC PH). Therefore if approved, NHS Kent & Medway will provide KCC PH with £124,972 from the Mental Health Baseline to cover the 12-month extension.

Legal implications:

As this change relates to the terms of an existing contract, there are no legal implications of activating the contract extension.

Equality Implications:

There will be no changes to the service provision following the activation of the contract extension, and therefore no equality implications.

Comments received from members consulted:

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health commented: ““I endorse the decision for this contract extension. It sounds as though this contract is performing well”.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

- NHS Kent and Medway does not agree to fund the suicide bereavement support service from its MH baseline, but KCC PH uses part of the wider suicide prevention budget to ensure continued delivery of the service. This alternative has been rejected as it would mean a £135k reduction in the Suicide Prevention Programme’s budget, resulting in the withdrawal of other key elements of the service.
- NHS Kent and Medway does not agree to fund the suicide bereavement support service from its MH baseline, and KCC PH decides against using the wider suicide prevention budget to

ensure continued delivery of the service. This alternative has been rejected as it would leave individuals in Kent & Medway without access to emotional and practical support, increasing the risk to their own mental health and against the expectation of the NHS Long Term Plan.

Any conflict of interest declared by any executive member consulted by the decision maker and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:



Signed: Dr Anjan Ghosh

20 March 2025

date