

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Diane Morton, Cabinet Member for Adult Social
Care and Public Health

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00013

Executive Decision – key**26/00013 – All Age Home Care Service**

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services, I propose to:

- a) **APPROVE** the commissioning of an Open Framework All Age Home Care Service for adults and children to include Homecare, Care and Support in Prisons and Community Support Services for disabled children with the new arrangements to start on 1 April 2027;
- b) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to take relevant actions including but not limited to, finalising the terms of and entering into required legal agreements, as necessary to award the contract; and
- c) **DELEGATE** authority the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to open the Framework at regular intervals to allow new providers to join.

Reasons for decision: The current Care and Support in the Home contract which provides homecare services for adults, care and support in the Prison setting and community support services for disabled children is due to expire in 2027. Both extension periods for this contract have been applied and there is not provision for further extensions; it is therefore necessary to commission a new service to continue to meet the needs of people across Kent.

Following an options appraisal, the proposal which is to be taken forward is to reprocure a new All Age Home Care Service using external providers. This will therefore require a tender process to commence in Spring 2026 before awarding the contract in Autumn 2026.

It is proposed that the new contract will be a new Procurement Act 2023 compliant Open Framework, which will be a series of frameworks over an eight year period, with the first re-opening of the framework taking place at the end of Year 3 and the second re-opening of the framework taking place at the end of Year 6. Additionally for the Prisons element of the procurement, this will be call-off through a mini-competition or a direct award of the framework.

It is the Council’s priority to establish new arrangements which deliver high-quality, person-centred care in a way that represents clear value for money. This commissioning exercise will secure sustainable pricing that supports workforce

stability and market resilience balanced against appropriate competition across the market. The aim is to increase the number of contracted providers to ensure there is sufficient contracted capacity across Kent to meet current and future demand. This will support the development of a diverse and resilient local care market and ensure better cost control.

The expectation is that the service will commence no later than 1 April 2027.

Financial implications: The annual value of the new contract will be circa £89.7m as follows:

- a) £84m on Homecare for adults
- b) £0.14m on care and support in Prisons
- c) £5.6m on Homecare and community based support for disabled children.

The lifetime value of the contract, over the 8 years, will be circa £807m as follows:

- a) £759m on Homecare for adults
- b) £2.65m on care and support in Prisons
- c) £45.3m on Homecare and community based support for disabled children

Demand for these services is expected to increase in the coming years with population growth forecasted and the Council's intention to support more people in their own homes. It is expected that this contract will offer clear, consistent and transparent unit costs across Kent, supported by clearer commissioning arrangements and strengthened contract management. This approach is intended to improve financial predictability and value for money for the Council while ensuring pricing remains sustainable for the market and continues to support service quality and workforce stability.

The budget for these services will come from the Adult Social Care Operations core budget and from the Children's Strengthening Independence Service core budget

Legal implications: The current contracts do not provide for any further extensions and could only be considered where permitted under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

When commissioning these services, the Council must consider and have regard to its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 which, amongst other duties require local authorities to have regard to the sustainability of the social care market. Further the Council must comply with the requirements set out in the Children Act 1989, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005, as well as the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The procurement of these services must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and associated regulations. External legal support would be obtained to support the process and drafting of the terms and conditions to ensure legal compliance, manage risk, and support effective contract management.

Equalities implications: Two Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) have been completed for Adults and Children and have been formally signed off by the EqIA

Team. The assessments considered the potential impact of the proposed commissioning approach on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. They confirmed that the proposed service promotes equitable of access to care and support, supports fair and consistent decision-making, and mitigates the risk of disparities in service delivery across different localities in Kent.

Data Protection implications: Two Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) have been completed. The Adults Homecare DPIA was submitted to the Information Governance (IG) Lead on 19 December 2025 and the DPIA for Children’s services was submitted on the 7 January 2026. Both DPIAs will be updated with any information required as the recommissioning process progresses.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation: The proposed decision will be considered at the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 11 March 2026 and the outcome included in the decision paperwork which the Cabinet Member will be asked to sign.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

| Option Overview | Reason for Discounting/ Carried Forward |
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| <p>Option 1: Do nothing - Continue as we are</p> <p>Maintain the existing contracts for Case and Support in the Home until contract expires on 31 March 2027/ June 2027.</p> | <p>Not recommended - This option would not address existing and emerging pressures within the market, including increasing demand, rising costs, workforce challenges, and limited commissioning leverage. Continuing without change would reduce the Council’s ability to shape the market, improve value for money, or strengthen quality and performance oversight, increasing financial and operational risk. This option would also rely on spot-purchasing arrangements with limited ability to manage the costs.</p> |
| <p>Option 2: Extend current contract</p> <p>Extend the current Care and Support in the Home contracts past the 2027 expiration dates.</p> | <p>Not recommended - There is no contractual provision for further extensions beyond the current end dates. In addition, extending the contracts would perpetuate existing cost pressures, constrain the Council’s ability to introduce improved service models, and limit opportunities to rebalance capacity, pricing, and performance expectations in line with current and future needs. This option would not represent value for money.</p> |
| <p>Option 3: Build an in house offer</p> <p>KCC providing the service in house and remove the need for externally commissioned providers.</p> | <p>Not recommended as a primary model - While an in-house offer could provide greater direct control, this option would require significant upfront investment, ongoing workforce recruitment and management, and substantial operational infrastructure. It would also present scalability and resilience risks given fluctuating demand. Overall, this option would carry a high financial and resource burden and would not offer the flexibility or value for money required at scale. However, the Council will continue to keep delivery models under review and may consider a targeted in-house provision in the future where this would address specific capacity or market sustainability issues.</p> |

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| <p>Option 4: Reprocare using external providers</p> <p>KCC continues to use the external market to deliver Homecare and community based support services across Kent.</p> | <p>Recommended option - This option offers the most effective balance between market control, affordability, service quality, and provider sustainability. It enables the Council to strengthen value for money through improved commissioning leverage, clearer pricing and quality expectations, and better alignment with assessed need and strategic priorities. Recommissioning supports a scalable and sustainable model that can respond to increasing demand, promote prevention and independence, and ensure robust oversight and market resilience into the future.</p> |
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Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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Signed

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Date