

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services

DECISION NO:

26/00005

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Young Carers – Commissioning of a new contract

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services, I agree to:

1. APPROVE the commissioning of a new Young Carers Service to commence on 1 May 2027 for a period of four years, with the option for two additional two-year extensions
2. **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education 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 above decisions.
3. **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, to exercise the contract extension options as permitted under the terms of the contract.

Reason(s) for decision:

The current Young Carers contract ends on 30 April 2027, and a new commissioned service must be procured to ensure seamless continuity of statutory support for young carers.

The total value of contract(s) will exceed the threshold for a Key Decision and impact across multiple districts of the Local Authority.

Background:

A young carer is someone aged under 18 who helps look after a relative with a disability, illness, mental health condition, or drug or alcohol problem. A young carer usually looks after their parent(s), or cares for a brother or sister. However it is not limited to those individuals.

The Children and Families Act (specifically [Section 96](#)), requires that young carers receive an assessment of their support needs, and that this assessment is repeated whenever those needs change.

There are over 10,000 Young Carers in Kent, however, it is likely that many young carers remain hidden from services.

What is being proposed?

The commencement of a procurement to put in place a Young Carers Service to ensure seamless delivery with the current contract, which ends 30 April 2027.

The contract will be for an initial term of four years with two individual two year extensions, taking the maximum period to eight years. The contract terms will have the ability to novate to new authorities, disaggregate on a geographical basis and terminate early, should the new authorities wish to reprocure sooner than the eight years.

Financial Implications:

Funding of the Young Carers Support Service is currently budgeted to be funded from the Council's General Fund. Spend is reported within the key service line "Early Help and Preventative services". As a statutory requirement under the Children and Families Act, this line is also committed in the 2026/2027 budget for ongoing provision.

The new contract is proposed to be for four years plus two, two year extensions. With an annual budget allowance commencing at £330k per annum, and with the discretionary inflation increase built in, the total contract value for the eight years would be £2.85m.

Legal Implications:

Legal advice will be sought to ensure that any contractual and commercial risks are identified at the earliest opportunity.

Section 17ZA of the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, legislates that Local Authorities must assess whether a young carer within their area has needs for support and, if so, what those needs are, if;

- it appears to the authority that the young carer may have need for support, or
- the authority receive a request from the young carer or a parent of the young carer to assess the young carer's needs for support.

The procurement of this service will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023, with the expected route of a Competitive Flexible Procedure

The impact of Local Government Reorganisation will be considered as part of the contract.

Relevant legal advice will be sought in relation to the appropriate contract terms and tender documentation to use with the procurement and application of TUPE which is considered likely to be required.

Equalities Implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. The EqIA has not identified any negative impacts. The new model will offer new and improved service access to protected groups.

Recommendations and other consultation:

1. APPROVE the commencement of procurement activity for a new Young Carers Service to commence on 1 May 2027.
2. APPROVE the approach to procure a four years, plus two years, plus two years contract for a Young Carers Service
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to, finalising the terms of, and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Option One – Do Nothing - Allow the existing contract to lapse 30 April 2027
Option Two – Create a new in-house model.

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