

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

## DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

## DECISION NO:

OD/26/00011

For publication

**Subject matter: Re-commissioning of the School Public Health Service (Children & Young People (CYP 5 to 19 years' service)).**

### Cabinet Member decision to which this action relates:

[Decision – 25/00011 – Re-commissioning of the School Public Health Service \(CYP 5 – 19 years service\)](#)

### Decision:

As Director of Public Health, I agree to:

- I. **APPROVE** the School Health Service contract is awarded to Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT), through the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Route C, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2030 (four years).

### Reason for the decision

Kent County Council has a statutory responsibility as a condition of its Public Health Grant to deliver public health services for children aged 5 to 19 years. The School Public Health Service aims to improve health outcomes for children aged 5 to 19 years.

The previous School Public Health Service contract expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and a Key Decision ([25/00011](#)) was taken in 2025 to re-commission the School Public Health Service and to commission a separate Therapeutic Support Service.

The Record of Decision delegated authority to the Director of Public Health to:

**APPROVE** amendments to the current Kent School Public Health Service Specification from April 2026 specifically:

- (a) the removal of the Children and Young People's Counselling Service, from the school health contract
  - (b) changes to target cohorts for Online Health Assessments,
  - (c) increased flexibility to Whole School Approach offer
  - (d) review and adaptation of the Emotional Wellbeing Package of Care to avoid duplication with Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) schools, better target need and improve outcome reporting.
- II. **APPROVE** the required expenditure, via the Public Health Grant, from April 2026 to April 2031 (with an option to extend for a further 5 years to 2036) to implement the amendments to the Kent School Public Health Service.

- III. **APPROVE** the commissioning of a new standalone Therapeutic Support Service to support children and young people with mild to moderate emotional and mental health needs who are aged between school entry in Reception up to 19 years old. This service would be aligned with the wider Therapeutic Alliance model being procured by NHS Kent and Medway and be delivered as part of the Family Hub network. The service would commence from November 2025.
- IV. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to implement the changes to the Kent School Public Health Service and undertake the required activity to establish a new standalone Therapeutic support service.
- V. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to exercise relevant contract extensions and enter into relevant contracts or legal agreements; and
- VI. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health, to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to allocating resources, expenditure, and entering into contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

This Officer decision confirms:

- a) The re-commissioning of the School Public Health Service and contract award to Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust for the continuation of their services.

Awarding the School Public Health contract under the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award C has been deemed the appropriate procurement route as the new contract is not materially different in character to the previous contract, and KCC is assured that the existing provider is satisfying the existing contract and will likely satisfy the proposed contract to a sufficient standard.

In reaching this decision, an evaluation of the provider's performance to date was undertaken with reference to the following key criteria (as required under regulation 5 of the PSR):

- a. Quality & Innovation
- b. Value
- c. Integration, Collaboration & Service Sustainability
- d. Improving Access, Reducing Health Inequalities and Facilitating Choice, and
- e. Social Value

The results of the evaluation were reviewed by an internal panel, which concluded the provider had evidenced each of these items to a sufficient degree. The call-in period did not receive any external representations to challenge the decision being approved.

### **Financial Implications**

The School Public Health Service will be funded from the Public Health Grant.

The details of the service contract are as follows:-

- up to £21,898,681 for a 4-year contract

The above values reflect a 2% per year annual uplift to the contracts (with the exclusion of the first year). This uplift reflects the need to retain the workforce; services have specialised roles and high caseloads. This makes it difficult to retain staff, especially given Kent's proximity to London, where higher wages are available.

In terms of affordability, the annual increase in the Public Health Grant is only generally known for the current year, so it is not possible to know with certainty that there will be sufficient Public Health Grant to fund the increase. If the Public Health Grant increases prove to be insufficient, then savings will need to be delivered in the service model.

### **Legal Implications**

KCC has a legal duty to provide Public Health services including the School Public Health Service under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The recommissioning of these services will fall under the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) introduced under the Health and Care Act 2022. Appropriate legal advice was sought in collaboration with the Governance, Law & Democracy team and was utilised to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

### **Equalities implications**

Equalities Impact Assessments (EQIAs) have been completed for the service in scope.

Current evidence suggests that there is no negative impact and this recommendation is an appropriate measure to advance equality and create stability for vulnerable people.

Providers are required to conduct annual EQIAs as per contractual obligations.

### **Data Protection implications**

General Data Protection Regulations are part of current service documentation for the contracts and there are Data Protection and Processing Schedules confirming the data processing relationships between the parties.

The Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for the School Public Health Service is being updated following contract award to ensure it continues to have the most up-to date information included and reflect any changes to data processing as a result of the specification enhancements.

### **Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

The decision was considered and endorsed at the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health took the Key Decision on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health Diane Morton comment “I endorse this decision to support families and improve health outcomes for children aged 5 to 19 years.”

### **Cross-Directorate Consultation:**

- KCC’s Commercial and Procurement Division approved the procurement route for the School Public Health Service.

### **Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

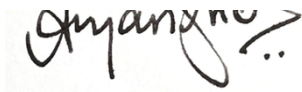
A business case was developed as part of the commissioning of the School Public Health Service and this included an options appraisal. Alternative options were assessed against critical success factors including value for money, sustainability, evidence of effectiveness and alignment with insight

from residents (among other criteria).

The highest scoring options were progressed and led to the procurements detailed above.

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

None

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gyanendra", with a flourish at the end.

19 March 2026

Signed

date