

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

DECISION NO:

OD-26-00008

For publication

Subject matter: Parent Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS)

Cabinet Member decision to which this action relates:

[25/00012 Family Hubs Start For Life – Parent Infant Mental Health Service - extension](#)
[Decision - 25/00070 - Parent Infant Mental Health Service - additional expenditure](#)
[25/00109 - Best Start Family Hubs Programme](#)

Decision:

As Director of Public Health, I agree to:

APPROVE the contract award for the PIMHS service (Parent Infant Mental Health Service) to the Real Group Ltd effective from 5 March 2026 to 31st August 2028, with an option to extend for a further 24 months.

Reason(s) for decision:

On 4 October 2022 the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services took an executive decision (decision number [22/00094](#)) to adopt the principle of Kent becoming a Family Hub Transformation Authority.

On 24 October 2023 a further decision (decision number [23/00075](#)) by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health was taken to:

- I. APPROVE the development and improvement activity to deliver a Parent Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS).

The PIMHS service is a specialised service aimed at strengthening the relationship, attachment and bond between parents / caregivers and their babies from pregnancy to the age of two years. This is a new service for Kent and will provide early intervention and therapeutic support to support challenging in bonding and mental health and parent infant relationships.

A further decision (decision number [25/00012](#)) was taken to extend the period of delivery (due to a delay in securing a supplier). The Record of Decision delegated authority to the Director of Public Health to:

- I. APPROVE the development of Parent Infant Mental Health Service for a period of 31 months and subject to evaluation and availability of funds from the Public Health Grant an extension for a further 24 months.
- II. APPROVE the expenditure £2,059,928 via the Family Hub Grant initially (subject to grant acceptance approval) and then the Public Health Grant (subject to availability).

III. 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

IV. 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.

A subsequent decision was taken (decision [25/00070](#)) to:

- a) APPROVE the additional expenditure of £400,000 across the contract period for the Parent Infant Mental Health Service from the DfE Family Hub Grant and Public Health Grant to support venue costs.
- b) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to exercise the additional expenditure and enter into relevant contracts or legal agreements; and
- c) 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.

Decision [25/00070](#) increased the PIMHS budget to include venue costs, with a new budget of up to £2,459,928.

A compliant, competitive procurement process took place and the contract awarded to the Real Group Ltd.

This Officer decision confirms the award of the contract to the Real Group for the Parent Infant Mental Health Service.

Financial Implications

The combined approval from Key Decision **25/00012** (£2,059,928) and Significant Decision **25/00070** (£400,000) provides a total authorised value of **£2,459,928**. The PIMHs service will be funded from the Family Hubs Start For Life grant.

The details of the contract are as follows:-

30 months, excluding potential extension

- Service - £1,056,136.86
 - Premises - £102,072.83
- Total contract value £1,158,209.58

30 months, including 24-month potential extension

- Service - £1,905,509.69
 - Premises - £209,500.83
- Total contract value £2,115,010.53

At the time Key Decision 25/00012 was approved, the final DfE grant allocation was not yet confirmed (25/00109).

The contract values reflect a 2% per year annual pay uplift (with the exclusion of the first year). This

uplift reflects the need to retain the workforce; services have specialised roles which can make it difficult to retain staff, especially given Kent's proximity to London, with higher wages available there.

The Department for Education (DfE) funding referenced in Key Decision 25/00012 is the same Family Hub grant that was formally accepted under Key Decision 25/00109, which authorised Kent County Council to enter into the relevant grant agreements and accept the Best Start Family Hub Grant Award.

Furthermore, any future decision to exercise the optional extension will only be taken once the corresponding external funding allocations (DfE and/or Public Health) have been formally approved. An officer decision will be completed at the point of entering into the extension period.

Legal Implications

The commissioning of this service took place 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 Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Directors of Public Health (DPH) in upper tier (UTLA) and unitary (ULA) local authorities have a specific duty to protect and enhance the population's health.

KCC commissions these services as part of its condition of its Public Health Grant.

Equalities implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the service in scope ([EQIA](#)).

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.

Data Protection implications

General Data Protection Regulations are part of current service documentation for the contract and there is a Schedule of Processing, Personal Data and Data Subjects confirming who is data controller/ processor. A DPIA is in the process of being drafted and will be updated following contract award to ensure it reflects up-to date information reflects data processing activity.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Cross-Directorate Consultation:

- KCC commercial and procurement approved the procurement route for both the Health Visiting service and the place-based Infant Feeding service.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health approved the Key Decision to extend the contract period for the Parent Infant Mental Health Service ([25/00012](#))
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health approved the non Key significant decision ([25/00070](#)) to increase the contract value, following market feedback.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health Diane Morton comment

"I endorse this decision to establish a new Parent Infant Mental Health service to support families and improve health outcomes for children."

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

A business case was developed as part of the commissioning of the PIMHS service and this included an options appraisal. The highest scoring option was the one that was taken forward and commissioned.

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 "Anjanand", with a stylized flourish at the end.

signed

30 March 2026

date