

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

DECISION NO:

OD-26-00012

For publication

Subject matter: Re-commissioning of the Health Visiting Service (CYP 0 to 4 years service) and Place Based Infant Feeding Service

Cabinet Member decision to which this action relates:

[Decision - 25/00001 - Re-Commissioning of the Health Visiting Service \(CYP 0 to 4 years service\) and Infant Feeding Support](#)

Decision:

As Director of Public Health, I agree to:

- I. **APPROVE** the Health Visiting 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 2nd January 2026 to 31st March 2029 (for three years and three months with a two-year extension option).
- II. **APPROVE** the Place-based Infant Feeding Support Service contract is awarded to NCT (National Childbirth Trust) through a competitive procurement process and effective from 2nd January 2026 to 1st January 2029 (for three years with a two-year extension option).

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 0-4 years. The Health Visiting Service and the Place-based Infant Feeding Service aim to improve health outcomes for children aged 0 to 4 years.

The previous Health Visiting Service contract expired on 1st January 2026 and a Key Decision ([25/0001](#)) was taken in 2025 to re-commission the Health Visiting Service and to commission a separate Place-based Infant Feeding Service.

The Record of Decision [25/00001](#) delegated authority to the Director of Public Health to:

- I. **APPROVE** the development of new Place-based Infant Feeding Support Service that aligns with the Health and Care Partnership areas from January 2026 onwards.
- II. **APPROVE** amendments to the current Health Visiting Service specification from January 2026, particularly the approach to the delivery of the mandated antenatal contact.
- 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.

This Officer decision confirms:

- a) The re-commission of the Health Visiting Service and contract award to Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust for the continuation of their services and
- b) The commission of a Place-based Infant Feeding Service to NCT.

Awarding the Health Visiting 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.

The Place-based Infant Feeding Service was competitively procured and the call-in period did not receive any external representations to challenge the decision being approved.

Financial Implications

The Health Visiting service and the Place-based Infant Feeding Service will be funded from the Public Health Grant.

The details of the service contracts are as follows:-

- up to £141,373,906 for a 3 year and 3-month contract for Health Visiting services (including Specialist Infant Feeding Service and Family Partnership Programme) with an optional two-year extension.
- up to £2,682,109 for a 3-year contract for a Place-based Infant Feeding Service with an optional two-year extension.

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 Health Visiting and Infant Feeding 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 services 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 Health Visiting Service has been 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. A DPIA has been developed for the new Place-based Infant Feeding Service.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The decision was considered and endorsed at the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 21 January 2025.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health took the Key Decision on 25 February 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 0 to 4 years”

Cross-Directorate Consultation:

- KCC’s Commercial and Procurement Division approved the procurement route for both the Health Visiting Service and the Place-based Infant Feeding Service.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

A business case was developed as part of the commissioning of the Health Visiting Service and the Place-based Infant Feeding 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 'Anjan Ghosh', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Signed Anjan Ghosh

Date 24 March 2026