
From: Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health

To: Diane Morton, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Subject: All Age Homecare Services

Key Decision : It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions
It involves expenditure or savings of maximum £1m – including if over several phases

Decision no: **26/00013**

Classification: Unrestricted Report – Exempt Appendix (Exempt from publication by S12A Paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of providers)

Past Pathway of report: Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 11 March 2026

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: All

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: The report provides the Cabinet Member with the background and rationale for commissioning a new Open Framework contract for an All Age Homecare Service for adults and children which includes the following lots:

- Lot 1- Homecare Services for Adults,
- Lot 2 - Care and Support in the Prison Setting, and
- Lot 3 – Community Support Services for Children

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care is asked 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) **APPROVE** the alignment of the relevant existing contracts, where required, to maintain service continuity during the commissioning and mobilisation period;
- c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, to take relevant actions including, but not limited to, finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision
- d) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to open the Framework at regular intervals to allow new providers to join.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the current service delivery arrangements for Homecare, Care and Support in Prisons and Community Support Services for children. It considers alternative options for service delivery and makes recommendations for the future of these services that ensure continued high-quality support, good outcomes for people and value for money.
- 1.2 These services are currently delivered through a closed service contract under the Care and Support in the Home (CSiH) contract. There are two contract periods relating to this contract:
 - SC18032 started in April 2019 for 4 years (with an optional extension of +2 years and another +2 years). The adults services are part of this contract period.
 - SC19012 started in June 2020 for 4 years (with an optional extension of +2 years and another +1 year). The disabled children service is part of this contract period and began in February 2022.
- 1.3 Both extensions have been applied and therefore the contracts expire in March 2027 (for adults) and June 2027 (for disabled children). There is no provision for further extensions beyond these dates. It is therefore necessary to commission a new service that will continue to provide these services across Kent.
- 1.4 To ensure strategic alignment with other key services delivered by the Council, this commissioning activity will seek to provide the following services:
 - Homecare Services for Adults,
 - Care and Support in the Prison Setting, and
 - Community Support Services for Disabled Children.
- 1.5 The Supporting Independence Service and Extra Care Support elements of the current Adults Care and Support in the Home contract will be commissioned as part of the Supported and Residential Living contract which will go-live in 2027. This approach will create a clearer separation between regulated and unregulated activities for adults, enabling more innovative management of unregulated services.
- 1.6 Development of the new service has been informed by lessons learned from previous procurements, stakeholder engagement and relevant impact assessments. The new service will provide a fit for purpose model which delivers sustainable, high-quality care and improved outcomes for residents on Kent.

2. Background

- 2.1 Homecare and community support services support the Council in discharging its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, the Children Act 1989 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, by enabling people to receive appropriate care and support within their own homes and communities. These services play a critical role in promoting independence, improving quality of life, preventing the escalation of need and the requirement

for more intensive interventions, reducing the risk of family and carer breakdown, and supporting timely discharge from hospital for individuals who are medically fit. They represent one of the least restrictive and most proportionate ways of meeting a person's assessed care and support needs, enabling people to continue to live within their own/family home.

- 2.2 KCC's strategic priorities are outlined in the Reforming Kent strategic statement which puts emphasis on supporting residents that need our help, but not taking over someone's life. This commissioning exercise aligns with Reforming Kent as these services offer one of the least restrictive ways of meeting a person's eligible needs. People and their families/ carers will be empowered to take personal responsibility and the new service will encourage prevention and the use of technology to support people to live independently for longer and remain in their own homes. For disabled children the new service will enable families to maintain care at home and in their communities and build life skills that prepare young people for adulthood.
- 2.3 This commissioning activity will deliver services which provide people with the right care and support to help them to either remain independent, or build their independence and live meaningful lives. This ambition aligns closely with the visions set out in Adult Social Care's strategy, [Making a Difference Every Day 2022-2027](#) "making a positive difference every day, supporting you to live as full and safe a life as possible and make informed choices" and [Kent's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2025-2028](#) "support children and young people to achieve through living healthy, safe lives in which they feel seen and included".
- 2.4 The current combined planned annual spend on services in scope for 2025/26 is £87m as follows:
 - a) £82m on Homecare for adults
 - b) £125k on care and support in Prisons
 - c) £4.9m on community support services for disabled children.
- 2.5 This planned spend is to meet the following demand for services across Kent:
 - a) Over 55,000 hours of Homecare per week delivered to over 4,500 Adults.
 - b) Over 2,000 hours of support per week delivered to over 200 Children.
- 2.6 Over the life of the contract, the social care and health landscape has experienced significant change, including increased acuity of need, workforce pressures, hospital flow challenges, and demographic growth. These factors have had a direct impact on both demand and the cost of delivery.
- 2.7 Throughout 2025, demand for services has increased significantly and is forecasted to continue to rise in future years. The demand for Adults requiring Homecare has increased by nearly 10% during 2025 and the demand for children requiring Homecare and community support services has increased by nearly 25% during 2025. This reflects both demographic growth and the Council's strategic commissioning intention to support more people to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible, reducing reliance on more restrictive and higher-cost care settings such as residential care.

- 2.8 It is the Council’s priority to establish new arrangements that deliver high-quality, person-centred care in a way that represents clear value for money. This will include aligning service models with assessed need, reducing reliance on higher-cost and more restrictive forms of care, supporting timely and effective hospital discharge, and promoting prevention and early intervention to avoid escalation of need and associated cost pressures.
- 2.9 This commissioning exercise will secure sustainable pricing that supports workforce stability and market resilience balanced against appropriate competition across the market. The ambition is to ensure a more standardised approach to unit cost across the county, but recognising that Kent is a diverse collective of rural and urban areas and there needs to be recognition reflected in the rates.
- 2.10 A further ambition for this commissioning exercise 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.
- 2.11 Co-production will be embedded in service delivery to ensure care and support is responsive, proportionate and outcomes-focused, enabling the Council to achieve the best possible outcomes while making effective use of public funds.
- 2.12 The expectation is for the new service to commence no later than April 2027.
- 2.13 There may be a requirement for the Prison’s contract to go live at a later date, given the additional mobilisation requirements, such as care worker vetting. Dependent on the mobilisation period, the current contracted provider may be required to continue delivering under the existing arrangements. If this is required, this will be progressed under the authority of this decision.

3. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

3.1 Before deciding on the preferred way forward, the following options were considered:

Option Overview	Reason for Discounting/ Carried Forward
<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</p>

	limited ability to manage the costs.
<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>
<p>Option 4: Reprocure 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>

- 3.2 The proposal which is to be taken forward is to procure services using external providers. This will therefore require a tender process to commence in Spring 2026 before awarding the contract in Autumn 2026.
- 3.3 In depth market analysis has been undertaken across both the Adults and Children's Home Care Service and this has informed the approach for the new All Age Home Care Service. The findings will be available in full to support the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care in considering the decision
- 3.4 The findings from this market analysis are attached as exempt appendix 1 (Adults) and exempt appendix 2 (Children's) (Exempt from publication by S12A Paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of providers). Whilst these appendices were not published with the ASC & PH Cabinet Committee papers, they had already been considered by the Cabinet Member prior to the committee meeting and prior to the decision being taken. They are included here to ensure the decision record fully reflects the information relied upon.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the new contract will be a new Procurement Act 2023 compliant Open Framework, which will be a series of frameworks, with the framework reopening at regular intervals. Additionally for the Prisons element of the procurement, this will be call-off through a mini-competition or a direct award of the framework.

4. How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement

- 4.1 This commissioning exercise aligns with Reforming Kent as these services offer one of the least restrictive ways of meeting a person's eligible needs which supports the ambition to support residents that need help without taking over their lives. People and their families/carers will be empowered to take personal responsibility and the new service will encourage prevention and support young people to build life skills to prepare them for adulthood.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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
- 5.3 Alignment of the Prisons contract based on three months of additional delivery from the current provider will cost between £30k and £35k.

- 5.4 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 The budget for these services will come from the core budget within the Adult Social Care Operations budgets and the core budget within the Children's Strengthening Independence Service.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The current contracts do not provide for any further extensions and could only be considered where permitted under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 6.2 There is no procurement risk arising from aligning the Prisons element of the current contract. This will be for a time limited period to allow for the preferred supplier of the Prison service to obtain the correct vetting and security clearance required, following the completion of the Homecare Procurement.
- 6.3 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 214, 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.
- 6.4 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.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 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.

8. Data Protection Implications

- 8.1 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 7 January 2026. Both DPIAs will be updated with any information required as the recommissioning process progresses.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 The existing contracts operate under a closed service contract which will expire in 2027. While this contract has supported the Council to meet its statutory duties and strategic commissioning intentions to provide least restrictive care and support and support more people to remain at home, it has led to growing price variation and limited market control, due to the inability to add additional providers to the contract to meet the increase in demand.
- 8.2 With demand set to increase and cost pressures continuing to dominate both the Council and the market, it is essential that the new contracting arrangements are fit for purpose and can continue to meet the care and support needs of Kent residents.
- 8.3 Various options for service delivery were evaluated, including maintaining the status quo and expanding in-house services. However, both were deemed insufficient due to high costs or limited scalability. The proposed solution is a new Procurement Act 2023 compliant Open Framework, which will be a series of frameworks, with the framework reopening at regular intervals. Additionally for the Prisons element of the procurement, this will be call-off through a mini-competition or a direct award of the framework.
- 8.4 The projected budget for the service shows significant variances if the current model continues due to the use of non-contracted providers and varied rates across Kent. Implementing a new framework is expected to achieve improved cost control through better consistency and transparency in unit costs across Kent.

9. Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care is asked 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) **APPROVE** the alignment of the relevant existing contracts, where required, to maintain service continuity during the commissioning and mobilisation period;
- c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, to take relevant actions including, but not limited to, finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision; and
- d) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care and Health to open the Framework at regular intervals to allow new providers to join.

10 Background Documents

None

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment - Adults
Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment – Children’s
Exempt Appendix 1 – Market Analysis – Adults
Exempt Appendix 2 – Market Analysis – Children’s

12. Report Author

Louise White
Project Manager
03000 413184
Louise.White4@kent.gov.uk

Lead Officers

Jo Harding
Senior Commissioner - Adults
03000 416201
Jo.Harding@kent.gov.uk

Steve Lusk
Senior Commissioner - Children
03000 410258
Steve.lusk@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director

Helen Gillivan
Director of Adults and Integrated Commissioning
03000 410180
Helen.Gillivan@kent.gov.uk