

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal
Regeneration and Public Health

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00037

Executive Decision – Key Decision

26/00037 - Suicide Prevention Services

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration and Public Health, I propose to:

- a. **APPROVE** the procurement of Suicide Prevention Services from 1 April 2027:
 - Specialist Suicide Bereavement Support Service, CN260672 - Three-year contract (1 April 2027 – 31 March 2030) with an optional extension, up to 24 months.
 - Suicide Prevention Training Workshops (CN260673) - Three-year contract (1 April 2027 – 31 March 2030) with an optional extension, up to 24 months.
- b. **APPROVE** the continuation of partnership working arrangements with the Integrated Care Board (ICB), including the review and refresh of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the delivery of the Suicide Prevention Programme;
- c. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to commission the relevant services and enter into contracts or other legal agreements, including a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with relevant partners, to deliver Suicide Prevention Services;
- d. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health, to exercise relevant contract extensions
- e. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health, to take all other relevant actions, including but not limited to, negotiating, finalising the terms of, and entering into the required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision

Reasons for decision:

National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England (2023–2028) specifies that Local Authorities, through their Public Health teams, are expected to lead multi-agency suicide prevention partnerships, develop local suicide prevention strategies, and coordinate delivery across the system. Therefore, Kent County Council (KCC) leads the suicide prevention programme, including commissioning services, even though the funding originates from NHS budgets.

Existing Suicide Prevention Services are due to end on 31 March 2027. New contracts are required to be competitively procured to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality suicide prevention and bereavement support services from 1 April 2027. This is an Executive Member Key Decision as services are delivered across Kent and Medway (more than 2 electoral divisions) and it supports the delivery of aims within the Kent and Medway Suicide & Self-Harm Prevention Strategy 2026-2030.

How the proposed decision supports the Council's Strategic Statement:

The recommissioning of Suicide Prevention Services supports delivery of Kent County Council's Reforming Kent strategic priorities by contributing to improved health outcomes, reducing inequalities, and strengthening preventative approaches across the system.

Financial implications:

The total value of the new services, including all extension options, is £940,000 over a maximum five-year period, comprising:

- Specialist Suicide Bereavement Support Service (CN260672): £130,000 per annum (up to £650,000 over five years)
- Suicide Prevention Training Workshops (CN260673): £58,000 per annum (up to £290,000 over five years)

KCC leads the suicide prevention programme as the Public Health authority, with funding provided by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) under an existing Memorandum of Understanding. While formal funding confirmation from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) is pending, it is anticipated that this will be in place by the end of Summer 2026. Procurement activity will not commence until funding is secured.

It is important to note that delaying the Key Decision until ICB funding is confirmed would mean the next available opportunity to bring this to Cabinet Committee is 22 September 2026, due to the summer recess. This would not allow sufficient time to undertake procurement, contract award, and the required mobilisation period (approximately four months) ahead of the planned go-live date for services of 1 April 2027. Such delays would risk service disruption and loss of continuity for service users. By progressing governance and decision-making now, the council can ensure timely recommissioning and a smooth transition to new contracts, while maintaining robust financial assurance by only proceeding to contract award and mobilisation once funding is formally secured.

Legal implications:

Commissioners will follow the relevant regulatory frameworks (Provider Selection Regime, Procurement Act and Spending the Council's Money guidance) in relation to the procurement undertaken.

Equalities implications:

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken for this activity and indicates that the recommissioning of Suicide Prevention Services is unlikely to have any negative impact on staff or service users. The services are designed to be inclusive, accessible, and free at the point of use, supporting equitable access across all communities. Delivery models incorporate reasonable adjustments and a

flexible approach to ensure the needs of individuals with protected characteristics are met.

Data Protection implications:

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) are in place for the existing services and will be refreshed prior to the new services going live.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision was discussed and endorsed at the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 8 July 2026.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Four options have been considered for the future of Suicide Prevention Services in Kent and Medway as the current contracts approach expiry on 31 March 2027, with Option 3 being identified as the option to be progressed;

- **Option 1: Do nothing** - allow the existing suicide prevention services in Kent and Medway to come to an end 31 March 2027. This option is not recommended, as it would leave bereaved individuals without access to essential support, risk higher long-term costs and contradict national and local strategic priorities.
- **Option 2: Extend current suicide prevention services in Kent and Medway.** This option is not preferred at this time. While this would maintain continuity, it may limit opportunities for innovation, market testing, and securing longer-term value for money.
- **Option 3: Recommission suicide prevention services in Kent and Medway via open procurement.** This is the preferred option. Recommissioning the services through a competitive procurement process will ensure transparency, allow for market engagement, and support the identification of the most suitable provider. This approach enables service improvement, innovation, and alignment with the NHS Long Term Plan and the Kent & Medway Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy 2026–2030, while supporting continuity and minimising disruption through robust mobilisation and transition arrangements.
- **Option 4: Bring suicide prevention services in Kent and Medway service in-house.** This option is not preferred due to potential service disruption and lack of specialist expertise; may be revisited in future commissioning cycles.

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