

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

DECISION NO:

OD-26-00037

For publication

Subject matter: Kent Drug and Alcohol Inpatient Detoxification Service – Recommissioning

Cabinet Member decision to which this action relates:

[Decision - 25/00106 - Kent Adult Drug and Alcohol Service](#)

Decision:**As Director of Public Health, I agree to:**

APPROVE the Award of the Kent Drug and Alcohol Inpatient Detoxification (IPD) Service (Bridge House), to the Kent and Medway Mental Health NHS Trust, from 01 April 2026 for an initial period of three years until 31 March 2029, with the option to extend for up to two additional one-year periods (subject to continued OHID/Public Health Grant funding).

Reason(s) for decision:

Kent County Council (KCC) commissions drug and alcohol services as part of its statutory duties under the Public Health Grant, aimed at reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol and to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Kent.

The Kent Drug and Alcohol Inpatient Detoxification Service (IPD) plays a critical role in supporting residents with high-risk, complex clinical needs who require medically managed withdrawal in a 24-hour, NHS-led specialist facility. Inpatient detoxification is a Tier 4 specialist intervention, with availability having significantly declined nationally; only five NHS units remain operational in England.

Under Regulation 3 of the Provider Selection Regime (Direct Award Process A), KCC must award a contract without competition where:

- There is an existing provider of healthcare services and
- The Authority is satisfied that the services are capable of being provided only by that provider due to the nature of those healthcare services.

Officers presented the proposed approach to follow Direct Award Process A at internal governance meetings, including the Commercial and Procurement Oversight Board and the Integrated Commissioning Advisory Group.

Following consideration, it was concluded that Kent County Council is satisfied that the criteria for Direct Award Process A are met in relation to Bridge House (delivered by Kent and Medway Mental Health NHS Trust), on the basis that:

- Bridge House is the only available provider capable of delivering this highly specialist level of IPD to local residents with complex needs; there is no alternative NHS provider in Kent capable of delivering the same clinical model at the required risk level.
- The scarcity of provision means the specialist staffing, governance, clinical oversight and

risk-mitigation model delivered at Bridge House is not replicable in the local market.

The award therefore satisfies the authority that the relevant health care services to which the proposed contracting arrangements relate are capable of being provided only by the existing provider due to the nature of the relevant health care services and therefore Direct Award A must be followed.

Financial Implications:

The majority of the funding for the service will come from what was the OHID Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant (DATRIG), which has now been consolidated into the Public Health Grant from 01 April 2026. A stipulation of receiving the Inpatient Detoxification element of funding is that local authorities **MUST** be part of a consortium; the funding cannot be used for any other purpose and would need to be returned to OHID if not utilised.

For 2026/27, KCC will also contribute a small proportion of funding (£50,500) directly from the Public Health Grant, but this will be decided on a yearly basis, dependent on the funding position at the time.

The maximum total value payable under this Contract, inclusive of all extension periods and allowing for anticipated demand growth and potential price increases, is £2,452,191. The Council does not guarantee that the full value will be spent under this Contract; annual Contract values will be based on the number of bed nights purchased and provider-set tariffs and available funding.

Legal implications:

This recommissioning follows the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) 2023, introduced under the Health and Care Act 2022. Appropriate legal advice has been sought via the Governance, Law and Democracy team, which confirms that Direct Award A must be followed.

Equality Implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been completed. Evidence demonstrates no negative impact and confirms the service will support vulnerable groups and advance equality. Providers will conduct annual EQIAs as per contractual obligations.

Data Protection Implications:

Data protection requirements are included within the contract documentation. KCC Commissioners will ensure ongoing compliance by regularly reviewing these requirements and implementing any updates, in line with changes to legislation, guidance, or organisational policy. Providers are expected to adhere to all current data protection standards, and any new or revised requirements will be formally communicated and incorporated into contract management processes as necessary.

Comments received from any Members or Officers consulted:

This proposal was discussed at the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 21 January 2026, and Members endorsed the recommendations prior to the Cabinet Member taking the decision.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Options rejected included:

- Allowing the contract to lapse and relying on spot purchase arrangements – rejected due to loss of priority access and OHID grant conditions requiring consortium membership.
- Joining another consortium (e.g., West Sussex) – rejected due to increased travel distances, reduced aftercare access and lack of local provision.
- Discontinuing the current arrangement and instead purchasing additional bed-nights as part of the existing Hampshire Consortium (this is a separate consortium arrangement, led by

Hampshire County Council, of which Kent County Council is already a member). This would require patients to travel to Fareham and would mean there is no local inpatient detoxification provision.

- Seeking competitive procurement – rejected as no alternative provider exists locally capable of delivering NHS-led Inpatient Detoxification services at required clinical standards and is not legally compliant with PSR.

Any conflict of interest declared by any executive member consulted by the decision maker and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:



30 June 2026

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signed

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date