

From: Andrew Scott-Clark, Director of Public Health

To: Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member, Adult Social Care and Public Health

Subject: Chlamydia Testing Service Contract extension (16/00062)

Classification: Unrestricted

Previous Pathway: Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee – 12 July 2016

Future Pathway: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report proposes a one-year extension to the County Council contract for the chlamydia testing service. The service has performed well since being competitively tendered in 2013 and provides good value for money. The one-year extension will cost a maximum of £344k and is included in the Public Health budget.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health is asked to agree to extend the existing contract for the chlamydia testing service to 31 July 2017.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report proposes a one-year extension to the County Council contract for the chlamydia testing service. The service has performed well since being competitively tendered in 2013 and provides good value for money. The one-year extension will cost a maximum of £344k and is included in the Public Health budget.
- 1.2. Kent County Council has a statutory obligation to ensure provision of open access sexual health services. At its March meeting, the committee noted and welcomed the range of sexual health services commissioned across the county.

2. Background

- 2.1. The National Chlamydia Screening Programme (NCSP) is a surveillance and prevention programme targeted at young people aged 15 to 24 years of age. Chlamydia is the most common bacterial sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the UK, affecting both males and females.
- 2.2. As part of its statutory responsibility for the prevention and treatment of STIs, the County Council commissioned a chlamydia pathology and testing service through a competitive tender process in 2013. The contract was awarded to Source Bioscience. The initial three-year term of the contract is now due to end but there is provision in the contract for a one-year extension.

3. Contract Performance

- 3.1. Source Bioscience have successfully and efficiently implemented and delivered the requirements of the contract over the past three years. The scope of the service has evolved in order to meet changes in demand and the new landscape of community sexual health services.
- 3.2. The contract now includes provision for online ordering of Chlamydia test kits, which encourages more people to take up the opportunity of a test. This new arrangements started in January 2016 and is accessed directly from the Kent County Council's sexual health website www.kent.gov.uk/sexualhealth
- 3.3. The use of the internet to access chlamydia testing kits has grown considerably in recent months and is a cost-effective way to identify infections as there is a significant number of people who have internet access but do not tend to visit face to face services. This has been evidenced over the past five months as there have been more than 400 online requests for chlamydia testing kits.
- 3.4. The positivity rates for internet tests from January to May 2016 was 11%; this exceeds the national targets for positivity rates and supports the case for continued investment and availability of tests online.
- 3.5. Further efficiencies and enhancements to the service were introduced in April 2015 with the introduction of a system which enables all laboratory test results from the Source Bioscience contract to notify the patient with their negative test results via text message or email. This is a much more cost effective way of managing patient notification as this reduces the administrative time and task of uploading data and contacting patients.

4. Proposed Extension

- 4.1. The original contract, awarded in 2013, allowed for a one-year extension. Extending the contract until July 2017 will allow the current service to continue to support improved performance in chlamydia testing rates.
- 4.2. The additional 12 months will also allow for further developments and efficiencies through integrating the programme into a wider digital service offer for promoting improved sexual health in line with the County Council's statutory responsibilities.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The payment mechanism for the Chlamydia Testing Service contract is entirely activity-based, which means that the County Council only pays for the tests which are actually requested and issued. There are no minimum or block payments.
- 5.2. The competitive tender process undertaken in 2013 also ensured that the contract provides best value for money. The basic unit charges have also remained fixed at the original 2013 values and have not risen with inflation. These fixed rates will also be maintained for the duration of the one-year extension.

5.3. The maximum cost of the one-year extension will be £344,000. The actual payments will be dependent on the number of chlamydia tests issued.

6. Conclusion

6.1. The County Council's Public Health team is proposing to extend the existing contract for chlamydia testing and pathology by one year to 31 July 2017. The contract has performed well over the past three years, delivered efficiencies and provided good value for money for the County Council.

6.2. The scope of the contract has evolved over the past two years to respond to the changing demand for the service. The additional year will enable this performance to continue and will continue to help the County Council to fulfil its statutory obligation to ensure provision of effective sexual health services.

6.3. The one-year extension to the contract will cost a maximum of £344,000 and is included in the Public Health budget.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health is asked to agree to extend the existing contract for the chlamydia testing service to 31 July 2017.

Background Documents:

None

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