

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Strategic Commissioning
and Public Health

DECISION NO:

18/00003

For publication

Key decision – affects more than two electoral districts

Subject: Infant Feeding Support

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Strategic Commissioning and Public Health, I approve the implementation of the new model for infant feeding support, as outlined in the attached recommendation report

Reason(s) for decision:

KCC is firmly committed to supporting children across Kent to get the best start in life. In 2015, responsibility for commissioning the NHS Health Visiting service, which is delivered by Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT), was transferred to KCC. This provided a new opportunity for KCC to expand its delivery of services to families, as the health visiting is a universal service, available to every family with a child of pre-school age.

Following the transfer, KCC reviewed its approach for breastfeeding support. It recognised that its previous bespoke investment into breastfeeding was relatively small scale, and that a small proportion of families eligible for support could access the service.

KCC has therefore developed a new model which embeds breastfeeding support into health visiting, to offer the opportunity for support to more families across Kent. This model builds on national Department of Health guidance which has identified areas in which health visitors can achieve high impact, one of which is breastfeeding.

The Health Visiting service would hold responsibility for the provision of infant feeding services, including breastfeeding.

- The service will run 36 professionally led drop-in clinics weekly with focussed breastfeeding support, in collaboration with Breastfeeding Peer Supporters.
- In addition, there will be referrals to 24 dedicated specialist clinics (6 per week) spread across the county, with location and frequency based on need.
- In addition, arrangements will be in place to spot purchase specialist services from specialist organisations where needed.
- There will be the facility to provide home visits, again based on need.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation

The Infant Feeding Public Consultation was launched on 17th July 2017. This was then paused on 3rd August 2017 when it was realised that members of the public were unclear about the information presented on the proposed model.

The consultation was relaunched on 23rd October 2017 and ran until 3rd December 2017, providing six more weeks to receive responses to the proposed service change, in addition to the two weeks in July/August.

The re-launch of the public consultation was reported in a verbal update at the 22nd September 2017 meeting of The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee, with an explanation given for the re-launch.

The Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 1st December 2017 received an update on the progress of the infant feeding consultation, and resolved that the detailed findings and subsequent proposal be presented to the committee at its next meeting.

An extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet Committee on 8th February considered, commented on and endorsed the proposed decision, subject to further information requested by Members during the discussion being included in the decision paperwork. This information is now attached in the form of a Member briefing note.

As the minute of the discussion at the 8 February meeting is lengthy, this is included as a separate document as part of the decision paperwork

Any alternatives considered:

Ending the provision of Community Infant Feeding Support

There is clear evidence that this support is needed by families in Kent, and therefore ending the provision is not an appropriate option. The Health Visiting Service sees the work that PS Breastfeeding CIC undertakes as a part of their core role.

Extending the contract with PS Breastfeeding CIC

PS Breastfeeding CIC has delivered the Community Infant Feeding Support over recent years. The KCHFT Health Visiting Service can offer a high-quality service which will reach all women (approximately 17,500 births per year) and is more integrated with other parts of the health sector. As the Health Visiting service is now sufficiently trained and resourced to deliver this service, an additional service is no longer required. Extending the existing contract would also cost KCC Public Health up to £404,000 a year, which would not be the most efficient use of public funds.

Re-procuring an additional infant feeding support service

Infant feeding support is a core responsibility of the Health Visiting service and they are now sufficiently trained and resourced to deliver this. Commissioning a duplicate service would not be an efficient use of public funds.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

NONE

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signed

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date

12 March 2018