

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

DECISION NO:

25/00011

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Public Health Service Transformation Programme – Children Young People (CYP) 5 to 19 years services recommission

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, I propose to:

- I. **APPROVE** amendments to the current Kent School Public Health Service Specification from April 2026 specifically:
 - (a) the removal of the Children and Young People's Counselling Service, from the school health contract;
 - (b) changes to target cohorts for Online Health Assessments,
 - (c) increased flexibility to Whole School Approach offer
 - (d) review and adaptation of the Emotional Wellbeing Package of Care to avoid duplication with Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) schools, better target need and improve outcome reporting;
- II. **APPROVE** the required expenditure, via the Public Health Grant, from April 2026 to April 2031 (with an option to extend for a further 5 years to 2036) to implement the amendments to the Kent School Public Health Service
- III. **APPROVE** the establishment of a new standalone Therapeutic Support Service to support children and young people with mild to moderate emotional and mental health needs who are aged between school entry in Reception up to 19 years old. This service would be aligned with the wider Therapeutic Alliance model being procured by NHS Kent and Medway and be delivered as part of the Family Hub network. The service would commence from November 2025.
- IV. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to implement the changes to the Kent School Public Health Service and undertake the required activity to establish a new standalone Therapeutic support service.
- V. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to exercise relevant contract extensions and enter into relevant contracts or legal agreements; and
- VI. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health, to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to allocating resources, expenditure, and entering into contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

Background:

Kent County Council (KCC) commission the Kent School Public Health service (5 to 19 years). This service commenced on 1 April 2017 and ends on 31 March 2026.

The Service is currently delivered by Kent Community Health Foundation NHS Trust (KCHFT).

The contract includes CYP Counselling Service and the intention, following recent Public Consultation, is to commission a new CYP Therapeutic Support Service.

Decision:

The decision is to agree service model changes for the Kent School Public Health service (5 to 19 years) and new proposed CYP Therapeutic Support Service (TSS).

The main changes are to separate the emotional and wellbeing service from the Kent School Public Health service and commission both services separately.

Kent School Public Health Service

To also make minor amendments to the service specification including; improved data reporting, quantifying interventions, increasing engagement from families not in school / in school for reduced time periods, flexibility to support a wider range of partnership i.e. colleges, amongst a number of other additional improvements.

These changes will be delivered through the re-commission of the Kent School Public Health service and a change to the service specification.

The positive changes will be that reporting is improved, that the service work with a wider range of partners and broaden its reach.

Therapeutic Support Service (TSS)

The new TSS model will take account the views of Kent residents generated through the Emotional and Wellbeing Public Consultation, which closed on 12 November 2024.

Some of the positive changes will be; offering a range of opportunities for children and young people to take part in therapeutic activities, improving alignment with the wider system of children and young people's mental health services.

Reason for Decision:

In July 2023, KCC commenced the Public Health Service Transformation Programme (PHSTP). The programme responded to a series of strategic developments, challenges, and opportunities in the commissioning landscape, and is underpinned by an evidence-based review of all internal and external Public Health funded services and grants.

The Programme required the evaluation of existing service models and collaboration with key stakeholders to identify recommendations for future service delivery.

Papers on this were presented in relation to Public Health Transformation (PHSTP) at Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee in January 2024, May 2024, November 2024 and January 2025.

As part of the PHSTP, stakeholder engagement and public consultation has been undertaken. All responses and contributions from have been analysed and informed this decision. A new service specification will be developed, which encompasses learning from all the engagement and consultation undertaken.

The Kent School Health Service leads the Healthy Child Programme for 5 to 19 year olds. Delivery includes; health assessments, vision and hearing screening, delivery of the mandated National Child Measurement Programme (weighing and measuring), drop-in clinics and whole school approach support on mental health. The contract also includes the CYP Counselling service for children and young people with mild to moderate emotional wellbeing needs.

How the proposed decision meets the priorities of New Models of Care and Support as set out in “Framing Kent’s Future – Our Council Strategy 2022 – 2026”

Kent School Public Health Service supports the Council to achieve the following priorities set out in the Council’s Strategy 2022-2026 ‘Framing Kent’s Future’:

Framing Kent’s Future and aligns with the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy including to ‘strive for children and young people to be physically and emotionally healthy’ as part of the outcome to ‘Give child and young people the best start in life’ and ‘to work with our partners to hardwire a preventative approach into improving the health of Kent’s population and narrowing health inequalities.’

KCC has a statutory duty to improve the health of the population and reduce health inequalities (Health and Social Care Act 2012).

How the proposed decision supports Securing Kent’s Future

The School Health service, as lead for the Healthy Child Programme, play a vital role in ensuring the effective and timely provision of preventative health and wellbeing services and can help meet key health and prevention priorities.

Financial Implications

The financial implications for the services are as follows:

- Up to £25,210,393 for a 5-year School Public Health Service
- Up to £11,559,498 for a 5-year contract with a possible 5-year extension for a Therapeutic Support Service.

The costs outlined above fit within the financial budget envelope and will be funded through the ring-fenced Public Health Grant.

Equalities Implications

Equalities Impact Assessments have been completed for the two services in scope (School Public Health Service) and The Therapeutic Support Service. The EQIAs have identified potential negative implications for certain protected characteristics and mitigations have been built into the service specification. The EqlAs will be regularly reviewed.

Data Protection Implications

A new Data Protection Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken and completed during mobilisation. Initial screening has already been completed and determined a full Data Protection

Impact Assessment will need to be completed.

The provider(s) will also be required to undertake a Data Protection Impact Assessment during mobilisation and support the completion of KCC's Data Protection Impact Assessment.

Legal Implications

Spending will be compliant with 'Spending the Council's Money' and relevant procurement legislation, which is likely to be The Healthcare Services Regulations (Provider Selection Regime) 2023 for those where a contract bound by law is required. An assessment will be conducted to ascertain the applicable procurement legislation.

TUPE regulations are likely to apply for the CYP Therapeutic Support Services.

During mobilisation, KCC needs to be conscious to mitigate the disruptive effect that this may have on current people accessing the service.

Legal and Commercial advice will be sought as and when required.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be discussed at the Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee on 11 March 2025 and the outcome included in the paperwork which the Cabinet Member will be asked to sign.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

School health services

- Discontinue/ Decommission the Current Service. This option was discounted as school health lead the national Healthy Child Programme for 5–19-year-olds, there is a mandated requirement to deliver the national child measuring programme and national recommendation to undertake vision and hearing screening. The preventative service prevents escalation of need and reduced demand for specialist services.
- Adaption of School Public Health Model - Revision of online health assessments to be conducted through KCC. This option was discounted as although KCC have the infrastructure to deliver and analyse online surveys, KCC does not have the clinical governance and infrastructure required to assess and respond to survey responses.
- Keep Current Service the Same - No Change/ Do Nothing. This would not deliver for local residence or support the aspirations of the Transformation programme

Children and Young People's Counselling Service

- Keep Current Service the Same - No Change/ Do Nothing. This was discounted as the current service model requires financial investment at an unsustainable level to keep within the original target waiting times of 12 weeks.
- Jointly commission the therapeutic support service with NHS Kent and Medway as part of their proposed Therapeutic Alliance. This option was actively explored with NHS Kent and Medway, but proposed procurement timelines and anticipated contract lengths could not be aligned at this time. In addition, the Therapeutic Alliance model proposes to mainly support those with moderate needs.

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

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