

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Sue Chandler

Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

DECISION NO:

20/00124

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

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
- *the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
 - *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Provision of therapeutic practitioners for Kent's post adoption support service

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, I agree to:

A) Authorise KCC to directly employ therapeutic practitioners to operate as part of the multi-disciplinary team that provides post-adoption support services.

B) Agree to a short extension of the current contract of up to three months to ensure a smooth transition to inhouse provision

C) Delegate decisions about the establishment of the new service to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, or other Officer as instructed by the Corporate Director in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

Reason(s) for decision:**Background**

- 1.1 Currently, KCC commissions the Thomas Coram Foundation (known as Coram) to employ and provide clinical supervision for five practitioners who provide family systemic therapy, theraplay, clinical psychology and occupational therapy that forms part of Kent's post-adoption support offer for adoptive families in Kent.
- 1.2 Although this has worked well, KCC now has the capability and opportunity to bring the therapeutic element of the service inhouse when the current contract expires in March 2021. Kent's adoption services are now part of Adoption Partnership South East, the Regional Adoption Agency for Kent, Medway and Bexley. This means that the therapeutic input will need to be flexible enough to respond to changing needs and potentially to expand the scope of provision to cover Medway and Bexley as and when there is a need and funding is available.

Financial Implications

2.1 Although the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) income has covered most costs of the £310,000 annual cost of the post-adoption support service, this level of income generation cannot be guaranteed in the future. KCC will therefore continue to face the financial risk of a funding shortfall if the ASF is sharply reduced.

2.2 There are occasions when some ASF income needs to be returned and this can be for example because a therapeutic intervention ended earlier than planned. The Adoption Service ring fence the ASF income and carry over unused income, so the money is available to be returned and does not come of the adoption service base budget.
Legal implications

Equalities implications

3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening has been completed and has concluded that the proposed decision does not present any adverse equality impact.

Legal implications

4.1 Option 1 would require a competitive process to be undertaken in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Both options will have TUPE implications so the therapeutic staff employed by Coram would transfer to the successful external provider (in the case of Option 1), or to KCC (in the case of Option 2).

4.2 The receiving organisation would also inherit those individuals' continuous service from their outgoing employer and would be liable for the payment of any future redundancy costs.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee considered the decision on 15 January 2021. The Committee supported the decision.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The main alternative to bringing the service inhouse is to retender the contract before it expires in March. This option would not offer the same level of flexibility to adapt and respond to changing the requirements of Adoption Partnership South East over the next few years. Bringing the therapeutic service inhouse will also mean that KCC will no longer need to pay a management fee to an external provider to manage the service on our behalf.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None



27/01/21

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signed

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date