

From: Sue Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee
9 March 2021

Subject: Provision of Community Support Services for Disabled Children and Young People

Decision number and title: 20/00102 - Community Support Services for Disabled Children & Young People

Key decision affecting more than 2 electoral divisions and involving expenditure over £1m

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: None

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: ALL

Summary:

Community Support Services for Disabled Children and Young People are currently spot purchased, leading to a range of contractual and financial relationships, and negating the possibility of managing the market in a proactive and supportive manner across Kent. There is significant correlation between suppliers for adults and children's services and therefore it is proposed that the activities are brought together under the existing framework for Adults provision. It is proposed that Children's services is included in the procurement for the upcoming re-opening of the Adults Care and Support in the Home contract with future buying taking place through this provision for the duration of this contract.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services on the proposed decision to follow a competitive procurement process for children's community support services within the Adults 'Care and Support in the Home' contract (PROD attached as appendix A)

Delegate decisions on the implementation to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other Officer, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health as appropriate.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There is currently a mixed economy of Community Support Services for Disabled Children, Young People and their families across Kent, predominantly externally sourced providers under spot-purchase arrangements.
- 1.2 These arrangements do not facilitate a holistic approach to the market across Kent, generating a wide range of locally agreed rates and costs which are difficult to manage and administer. Information and intervention regarding effectiveness and performance is difficult within disparate working arrangements and variable contractual arrangements.
- 1.3 For some time it has been our ambition to find a better commissioning solution to the provision of home based Community Care and Support for disabled children.
- 1.4 Adults Social Care faced similar challenges and have recently procured a framework (Care and Support in the Home) which brings a common set of terms and conditions, performance and reporting criteria as well as the opportunity to make more informed decisions about provision for each family's requirements as identified by Care Managers and Social Workers.

2. Body of the report

- 2.1 Opportunities now exist to integrate support to Disabled Children, Young People and their families within one framework. Analysis suggests strong alignment of at least 80% between providers of spot purchased for support to children & young people and those included in the Adult's Care and Support in the Home Framework.
- 2.2 In identifying the best way forward for the provision of children's community support services a number of options have been considered as outlined below:
- 2.3 Options Considered
 - 2.3.1. Do Nothing – this option would allow the continuance of local spot purchasing of community support for disabled children and all of the current risks (financial and otherwise) that are inherent in this approach. This option has been discounted for this reason.
 - 2.3.2. Procure a new Framework ringfenced to Disabled Children and Young People (0-25) – this option is viable and would provide commonality of terms and conditions alongside the opportunity to manage performance, costs and provision in a more holistic fashion, however there would be resource implications in preparing and letting a new contract for this activity alongside a significant amount of duplication with the already let Adults contract. Confusion between the two frameworks would continue given the proportion of suppliers undertaking both sets of activity. The opportunity to overview the whole market would be reduced in this option.

2.3.3 Integrate with 'Care and Support in the Home' framework recently let by the Adult's Commissioning Unit to include provision for children and young people (0-25). The Framework already provides support to individuals 18+ and given the high correlation of suppliers to Children's services there should be minimal disruption to the market in taking this approach. Duplication is minimised and the opportunity for overview of the whole market is enabled. This is therefore the recommended option.

2.4 The proposed decision meets the objectives of 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)'

This service is purchased to meet the KCC Strategic Outcome of 'Children and young people in Kent get the best start to life'.

The main supporting outcomes of the above are:

- Kent communities are resilient and provide strong and safe environments to successfully raise children & young people
- We keep vulnerable families out of crisis and more children and young people out of KCC care
- Children and young people have better physical and mental health

2.5 The contract is due to reopened in mid-March 2021 with evaluation and award following. Currently the expectation is for a potential 'go-live' as soon as possible following this once systems and processes have been amended in line with the proposal.

2.6 The proposal is to place all new business with the new contract from that point forward. We do not propose to move all existing local arrangements across to the new contract – these will be replaced over time as they expire or opportunity allows. This will provide minimum disruption to the market whilst allowing the move to a more organised approach.

2.7 Alongside this children's services will readjust their 'buying' approach and develop a more centralised facility negating the need for social workers to search for providers and spend time on the administration of local agreements. This facility will be made available centrally freeing up some of their time for more important tasks.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 The current budget for Children's Community Support Services is £1.3m.

3.2 The contract for Care and Support in the Home is due to expire on 31 March 2024, with potential for extension for a further 36 months.

3.3 The financial implication of this decision is therefore circa £3.9m followed by a potential further circa £3.9m should extensions be put in place. This subject to budget setting decisions and fluctuations in need.

4 Legal implications

4.1. Activities and services undertaken are covered under the Children and Families Act 2014, and the new provision will be fully compliant with Statutory Duties included within this legislation.

4.3 A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Care and Support in the Home contract provision last year. Additional scoping has confirmed that this is adequate for children's activity.

5 Equalities implications

5.1. An EqIA has been undertaken as part of the Care & Support in the Home contract provision last year. Preliminary scoping has confirmed that this is adequate for children's activity.

6 Other corporate implications

6.1 The overall contract is managed by Adult Social Care Commissioners. There will be support provided from Children's Commissioners where issues arise for Children's Services.

7. Governance

7.1 The accountability for the contract overall sits with Richard Smith, Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health. For the Children's Service elements of the Contract, on-going statutory responsibility for the Children and Young People, along with budget responsibility sits with Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education. The management of the service would sit within the SEN and Disabled Children and Young People Division.

8. Conclusions

8.1 In summary the proposed approach brings together a number of benefits as outlined below:

- Facilitates much improved overview of the market and the activities undertaken
- Clarifies responsibilities under a uniform contract
- Facilitates improved buying arrangements for social workers
- Allows clarity of communication between KCC and providers
- Facilitates transparent and easily understood decision making
- Provides opportunities to harmonise costs of provision that is largely similar
- Still allows variation in price for geographical location or complexity of need

- Negates the cost/time required for separate procurement exercise for Children's activity

8.2 Risks related to this change will be managed through taking a phased migration to the new provision, with existing arrangements remaining in place until their expiry or change of need

9. Recommendation

Recommendation(s):

9.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services on the proposed decision to follow a competitive procurement process for children's community support services within the Adults 'Care and Support in the Home' contract (PROD attached as appendix A)

Delegate decisions on the implementation to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, or other Officer, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health as appropriate.

10. Background Documents

None

11. Contact details

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