

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TAKEN BY:**

**Sue Chandler,**

**Cabinet Member for Integrated Children’s Services**

**DECISION NO:**

21/00067

**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) result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or
- b) 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**

Supporting Parents to Build Resilience and Self-Help Strategies (Neurodevelopmental Pathway).

**Decision:**

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

- A) Allow Commissioners to commence formal procurement activity to tender for a service, award a contract and develop internal provision for ownership and oversight of the activity.
- B) Delegate authority for the Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education to award a contract following a competitive tender process, in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

- Decision
  - This decision is required because the total value of the contracts involved will exceed the threshold for a Key Decision.
  - The decision will impact across multiple districts of the Local Authority.
- Background
  - Parents have told us that if their child has either received a diagnosis, awaiting diagnosis, or considering a referral to the Neurodevelopmental (ND) Pathway, currently support and advice is inconsistent across the County, creating a postcode lottery. The new proposed dedicated service will increase the total Countywide offer to parents by 42%, with a strong presence in each of the four areas, offering a flexible range of both pre-diagnosis and post-diagnosis support.
  - The Service will be delivered by Area Facilitators, paid Parent-Facilitators and Parent-Volunteers, placing lived experience at the heart of all activity, building resilience and developing self-help strategies amongst fellow parents.
  - The proposal to have the Service Co-ordinator post sitting within Integrated Children Services, ensures a direct reporting line and oversight of the Countywide service. In

addition, the Service Co-ordinator will report regularly to the Multi-Agency Neurodevelopmental (ND) Steering Group that interconnects all ND support across the County, ensuring the model remains fit for purpose and fit for the future.

- The model has been designed through engagement and co-production with parents and other key stakeholders with the aim of addressing issues highlighted by the SEND inspection of 2019.
- The model will be delivered in two phases:
  - o **Phase One** - Provision will focus on supporting all those parents and carers of children and young people currently on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway in receipt of an Integrated Children's Service intervention (either Social Care or Early Help).
  - o **Phase Two** - will extend eligibility to all families that are either on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway or are being considered for a referral onto the pathway.
- Options Appraisal
  1. Do Nothing.
  2. Create the new service In-House.
  3. Externally commission the new service.
  4. Hybrid Model - Externally commission the new service with additional KCC oversight via the Integrated Children's Service Co-ordinator post.

Based on the options appraisal and further discussion at CYPE DMT, the recommended option is **Option 4, Hybrid Model - To Externally Commission the new service with additional ICS oversight via KCC Service Co-ordinator post.**

- Stakeholder engagement and co-production has been a key part of building the proposed new model, with parents sharing their knowledge and experiences, which have informed the preferred option. Further engagement will be undertaken to inform the specification.
- Commissioners expect the contract term to be three years. There will be a requirement to include flexibility within this term to make sure that it is delivering to the expected standard and coverage. This might mean that, following market engagement, either a contract of three individual years is awarded or a three- year contract with annual hard review points is included to assess whether the next year will be managed in the same way (this is in addition to the usual contract termination clauses.) There would be an option to extend the contract for a further two years at the end of its term.
- Strategic Plan:

This will support the following strategic outcomes of KCC:

  - Kent's children have the best start in life and families get the right help and support when they need it; and
  - every young person in Kent gets the education, skills and experiences they need for a successful future.
- Financial Implications
  - The funding available is £400,000 (From the £1.2m previously funding the Early Help Pathway in CYPMH contract. The remaining £800k is providing the Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) service) with the addition of £100,000 funding from Kent and Medway CCG per year for the length of the contract/SLA = **Total annual funding £500,000.**
  - Future financial pressures are expected to be limited to pay inflation and will be reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. No direct financial savings have been identified in relation to this proposal. Financial risks associated with proposal are expected to be low: potential costs will be managed through the tender process and ongoing contract management for the

commissioned service.

- Legal Implications

- This work is taking place, in part, due to the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) joint review of SEND provision for Kent CYP and the resulting Written Statement of Action (WSoA) KCC implemented to address the concerns of the review.

The SEND inspection of 2019 highlighted issues regarding the following:

- The widely held concern of parents that the local area is not able, or in some cases not willing, to meet their children's need.
- The limited role parents and carers have in reviewing and designing services for children and young people with SEND.

- Equalities implications

- An EqIA screening has been completed and found a full action plan was not required. This will continue to be developed and reviewed as this project progresses.

**Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee considered the decision on 14 September 2021.

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=894&MId=8871&Ver=4>

**Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

Option 1 – Do Nothing: This option was discounted as doing nothing would result in no change to the current fragmented and inconsistent offer to parents across Kent. Additional support services are required to meet the demand.

Option 2 - Create the new service In-House: This option was discounted as parents have told us they are nervous/not likely to approach KCC regarding initial worries with their child. This could impact on the uptake of support services and the recruitment and retention of Parent Facilitators & volunteers. There is also a risk that staff could be pulled into other KCC work if required, impacting on the sustainability of the model.

Option 3 - Externally commission the new service. This option was discounted as it did not include robust Integrated Children's Service management oversight included in Option 4. The additional KCC Service Co-ordinator post will offer robust oversight of the whole Countywide offer, bringing consistency and sustainability to the model.

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



30-09-21

.....  
signed

.....  
date