

From: Mrs Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

To: Health Reform and Public Health Cabinet Committee

Date: 16 March 2023

Subject: NHS Health Check System

Key decision: 23/00010

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: None

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

Kent County Council (KCC) has a statutory responsibility to provide the NHS Health Check programme which is delivered via Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT), General Practitioners (GPs) and pharmacies.

Delivery of this programme has been challenging since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and there are opportunities to deliver the service differently. A review has commenced which will look at both the clinical and cost effectiveness of the programme and make recommendations on the future contracting model for the service.

An IT system is required to facilitate effective delivery of the programme, including data capture, invitation processes and national reporting. KCC has contracted with *Health Diagnostics* since 2018 and the current contract comes to an end on 30 September 2023, following previous extensions.

To allow time for the review to conclude, a further six-month extension is needed for the IT system, meaning the contract will come to an end in March 2024. The maximum budget for this extension will be £166,369, which includes pass through costs for sending out invitations. The contract performs well, has high user satisfaction levels and is cost efficient.

KCC will lead a competitive procurement process which is due to start June 2023. KCC will work closely with KCHFT, as a delivery partner of the NHS Health Check Programme, and Primary Care. The new system will need to be in place by 1 April 2024, with a maximum investment of £2,672,378 over the course of an initial term of five years with two optional twelve-month extensions. It is important to note that a significant proportion of the costs is not directly for the system itself but for postal costs linked to invitations. The system will cost approximately £240,000 a year. KCC is currently piloting use of text messages to support a more cost-efficient approach.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE** or to **MAKE RECOMENDATIONS** on the proposed decision to:

1. **EXTEND** the current NHS Health Check System contract by six months to end on 31 March 2024.
2. **COMMENCE** a formal procurement activity in June 2023 for a new NHS Health Check System contract to start on 1 April 2024, for an initial period of five years with the option of two 12-month extensions.
3. **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Public Health to award a new contract and take relevant action, including, but not limited to, finalising the contractual terms, entering into a contract and other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The paper provides an overview of the context of the NHS Health Check Service and the IT system used to support the programme. It outlines the current review, the contracting arrangements and future commissioning process of an IT system. The route to market is informed by a comprehensive options appraisal, market engagement, which has been concluded, and stakeholder consultation.
- 1.2 It asks the committee to endorse the recommendations to extend the current contract, commence procurement and delegate authority for the Director of Public Health to award a new contract.

2. Background

- 2.1 Local authorities are mandated to provide the NHS Health Check¹ programme via *The Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013*². The programme supports the NHS Long Term Plan³ and Integrated Care Board on Cardiovascular Disease prevention.
- 2.2 Both the service and the IT system contributes to 'Priority 1: Levelling up Kent' of the *Framing Kent's Future Our Council Strategy 2022-2026* as the programme is a preventative approach for improving population health. The IT system also contributes to 'Priority 4: New Models of Care and Support' as the data that is collected through the system can be used to support commissioning and decision making around the delivery of the programme in addition to supporting wider commissioning activity and population health management.

¹ [NHS Health Check - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

² [The Local Authorities \(Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives\) Regulations 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

³ [NHS Long Term Plan](https://www.nhs.uk)

- 2.3 Kent Community NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT), KCC's partner for several public health services, provide outreach and sub-contract to many GPs across Kent as well as Pharmacies to deliver the NHS Health Checks. The programme has been impacted since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, with Primary Care having to pause delivery whilst prioritising ongoing pressures during the pandemic period. Primary Care are slowly resuming health check programme participation but require re-training to ensure effective delivery.
- 2.4 The programme cannot function effectively without a suitable IT system in place as it assists with the operational processes, including user experience, secure data capture of confidential information, and monitoring of the performance. It will ensure that the programme is provided effectively, and it supports KCC to meet its statutory obligations of delivering the NHS Health Check Service and reporting outcomes to Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). Appendix 1 provides more detail on the background, benefits, and outcomes of the NHS Health Check programme, and why a system is required to support it.
- 2.5 In 2018, Public Health commissioned *Health Diagnostics* to provide the system. Over the contract term the performance of the contract has been good and there is positive feedback from users of the system. A benchmarking activity has been undertaken which showed that the price KCC is paying for the current system is acceptable.
- 2.6 During COVID-19, the strategic decision was taken to use the emergency procurement regulations in 2021 to extend the IT system contract for 18 months. This was due to the disruption caused by the pandemic and the need to provide stability of one system to GP's during this time. Originally, the contract was due to end in March 2022 after two 12-month optional extensions had been utilised. The new end date is now 30 September 2023.
- 2.7 Due to a series of significant developments, including reduced engagement from Primary Care providers, financial pressures, and the focus on prevention in the Integrated Care Strategy, a review of the NHS Health Check Programme is currently underway. This review will look at:
- The clinical and cost effectiveness of the current service model in collaboration with key stakeholders and partners.
 - Appraisal of evidence of best practice to identify a potential new service model.
 - Analysis of the NHS Health Check data in terms of performance, uptake, and coverage to identify where improvement can be made.
 - Consider the views of stakeholders and residents on the programme.
 - Consider planning for future challenges to the NHS Health Check programme.
 - Consider refining the NHS Health Checks offer so it is more accessible to underserved or protected communities.
 - Analysis model options and make recommendations to inform the commissioning of the programme.

- 2.8 To allow time for the review to conclude, (March 2023), a six-month extension to the current IT system contract is recommended, bringing the current IT system end date to March 2024.
- 2.9 To ensure that the programme remains value for money and is as effective as possible, commissioners are working with the current systems provider and KCHFT to pilot the use of SMS text message invitations in place of traditional physical letters.

3 Commissioning requirements for the new system

- 3.1 KCC is leading the commissioning process for a new IT system and will start a competitive tendering exercise in June 2023. A detailed provision timeline for this procurement is available in appendix 2.
- 3.2 KCC is closely working with KCHFT and the Primary Care team in the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) for the re-commissioning of the IT system.
- 3.3 It is anticipated that there may be some changes to the commissioning model for the NHS Health Check programme following the review, which will allow for cost efficiencies. There are also opportunities to contract differently, such as through GP federations or clusters of GPs which can be explored during 2023/24.
- 3.4 The timing of this piece of work will enable the IT system requirements to be finalised alongside the conclusion of the review.
- 3.5 Changing system represents a huge undertaking in the form of training for staff, new processes needing to be established, time to transition, and more. Flexibility will be built into the service specification, contract, and payment mechanisms to ensure the system can respond flexibly to future changes resulting from the review. For example, the number of licenses and service users using the system may increase/decrease over time and can be priced separately.
- 3.6 Following engagement with service users and partners, the requirements for the IT system will be to:
- Extract data from GP clinical records to identify, invite, and provide targeted invites to the eligible population.
 - Facilitate the NHS Health Check, including mandatory data collection as set by OHID.
 - Provides functions that facilitate behaviour change in clients e.g., healthy lifestyle advice prompts.
 - Calculate a client's risk of developing a heart attack or stroke (Q-Risk score).
 - Collect client experience data for feedback purposes.
 - Automatically transfer client results to the GP clinical system.
 - Refer to other health improvement programmes where applicable.
 - Report results and outcomes back to KCC
 - Assist with payments of primary care for the delivery of the NHS Health Check

- 3.7 A long-term contract is deemed to be the most suitable option for this provision as this will allow KCC and Kent residents to recoup benefits of innovation and investment. Therefore, it is recommended the contract length will be five years, with an optional two 12-month extension.
- 3.8 Market engagement sessions conducted late 2022 and previous procurements found that a minimum of six months mobilisation was required for a successful and effective mobilisation/transition. This includes a training programme for staff/service users and testing of the system.
- 3.9 Performance, outcomes, activity, and service levels will be monitored by KCC through the submission of quarterly performance reports and contract monitoring meetings.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The yearly value for the contract is variable as it depends on the number of licenses made available, volumes/type of invitations sent based on the size of the eligible population. There is an additional payment which is passed through to a secure NHS approved mail house to pay for postage and packaging of the invitation letters.
- 4.2 A maximum allowable budget is included in the table below, a further breakdown of costs can be found in Appendix 3.

	Requested six-month extension	New Contract Value (Five years with two 12-month extension)
Invitations	£56,619	£922,515
System Costs	£109,750	£1,749,864
Maximum Budget	£166,369	£2,672,378

- 4.3 Commissioners will work over the contract term to reduce the value of the contract. This will include increasing text messaging if deemed viable following the pilot.
- 4.4 Funding is from the Public Health ring-fenced grant, provided to the local authority annually from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for the purpose of commissioning public health services for the Kent population. Delivery of NHS Health checks is a requirement of the grant.

5 Corporate implications

- 5.1 The following implications are relevant to this project:
 - **Legal:** Additional legal advice has been sought in relation to the contract extension and is set out below:
“KCC is relying upon Regulation 72(1)(b) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“PCR 2015”) to make this contract extension of 6 months. The conditions of Regulation 72(1)(b) are met in that a contract extension is required for economic and technical reasons, a change of provider any sooner would cause significant inconvenience

and/or a substantial duplication of costs for KCC and the value of the contract extension does not exceed 50% of the contract value. A modification notice will be published accordingly in compliance with Regulation 72(3) PCR 2015.”

- **Equalities:** An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been created which identified that the system will need to conform with Accessibility Regulations 2018⁴, this will form part of the tender requirements and is a current requirement of the system. Once a provider has been awarded the contract, commissioners will review the EQIA and work with the supplier to ensure that appropriate action is taking place to reduce any barriers of using the system. For the current EQIA, refer to Annex 1.
Depending on the findings of the review, a new EQIA and DPIA will be developed on the changes on the service model for NHS Health Checks. The changes will on service model will not affect the aims/outcomes/functions of the IT System.
- **Data:** A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) screening tool has been conducted and the recommendation from the Data Protection Officer was that a full DPIA will need to be carried out. This will be produced in conjunction with the successful provider following awarding the contract. No significant implications to data processing are expected as the same data sets will need processing in the new service.
- **Other corporate implications:** The service will interact with and refer patients to other services commissioned by KCC and other organisations.

5.2 Commissioners have had conversations with KCC’s Director of Technology, which identified that this re-commissioning project does not need to go to the Strategic Technology Board as it will not interact or sit on KCC IT infrastructure.

5.3 The Interim Strategic Commissioner was in support of the decision to extend the contract, and this has been subsequently approved by Head of Strategic Commissioning (Children and Young People’s Services) in absence of the Interim Strategic Commissioner.

6 Conclusion

6.1 KCC will work in partnership with KCHFT to deliver the mandated NHS Health Check programme. KCHFT provide outreach and manage the sub-contracting arrangements with Primary Care providers.

6.2 Delivery of the programme has been affected since COVID-19. Several developments have led to a review of the programme which is currently underway.

6.3 An IT system has been in place since 2018 and is essential for the delivery of the programme. The IT system provision includes, inviting the eligible population, data capturing, updating GP clinical records and invoicing.

⁴ [Understanding accessibility requirements for public sector bodies - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/understanding-accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-bodies)

- 6.4 The current extension comes to an end on 30 September 2023, a further extension of six months is required to allow for the review to conclude, bringing the contract to an end in March 2024. This will ensure review finding can be reflected in the system requirements.
- 6.5 KCC is working collaboratively with Kent and Medway ICB and KCHFT to re-commission the IT system following the end of the additional extension.

Recommendation(s):

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7 Background Documents

- [Framing Kent's Future - Our Council Strategy 2022-2026](#)
- [NHS Health Check - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- [The Local Authorities \(Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives\) Regulations 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [NHS Long Term Plan](#)
- [NHS Health Check Programme review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/136431/Framing-Kents-Future-strategy-document.pdf

8 Additional Documents

- Annex 1 - EQIA
- Appendix 1 – Background, benefits, and outcome of the NHS Health Check programme, and why a system is required to support it.
- Appendix 2 – Provisional procurement timeline for NHS Health Check system
- Appendix 3 – Current and projected maximum costs for an NHS Health Check system.

9 Contact details.

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