

Report to Cabinet

Monday 24 May 2021

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| Subject: | Procurement of School Health Nursing and Child Vision Screening Services. |
| Cabinet Member: | Cabinet Member for Leading Healthy Lives Cllr. Farut Shaeen |
| Director: | Director of Public Health Dr Lisa McNally |
| Key Decision: | Yes Definitions: (b) to result in the Council incurring expenditure, the making of savings or the generation of income amounting to - £250,000 or more where the service area budget exceeds £10m; (c) to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough. |
| Contact Officer: | Sarah Farmer, Children's Public Health Programme Manager. sarah_farmer@sandwell.gov.uk |

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Director of Public Health be authorised to commence a procurement process for the provision of School Health Nursing and Child Vision Screening Services to commence on 1 April 2022 for a period of three years to 31 March 2025 with the option to extend up to a further two years.




- 1.2 That the Director of Public Health be authorised to award and enter into a contract and licence agreement with the successful bidder, on terms to be agreed with the Director of Public Health for the provision of School Health Nursing and Child Vision Screening Services to commence on 1 April 2022 for a period of three years to 21 March 2025 with the option to extend up to a further two years.
- 1.3 That Cabinet also approve Variations to the Contract up to a maximum of 10% of the Contract value, should they be necessitated, and that authority to approve such Variations be delegated to the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the relevant cabinet member
- 1.4 That the Director- Monitoring Officer be authorised to execute any documents necessary to give effect to the proposals in recommendation 1.1 and 1.2 for the provision of School Health Nursing and Child Vision Screening Services.
- 1.5 That an exemption be authorised under rule 8.7 of the Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules 2018-2019 to allow a contract to be awarded to the successful tenderer in the event that the required number of tenders are not received.


2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 In order to prevent a gap in provision of the School Health Nursing and Child Vision Screening Services from 01 April 2022, we propose undertaking a procurement exercise.
- 2.2 The procurement exercise will provide an opportunity to review the current specification for the School Health Nursing Service in response to increasing demands upon the service and consultation feedback.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

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|  | <p>Best start in life for children and young people The best possible health underpins a child's or young person's ability to fulfil their potential as they grow up. Research shows that good health and emotional wellbeing are associated with improved attendance and attainment at school, which in turn lead to improved employment opportunities.</p> |
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| | <p>In addition, children who thrive at school are better placed to act on information about good health. Early detection and treatment of eye conditions is necessary to prevent permanent visual impairment.</p> |
|  | <p>People live well and age well</p> <p>The service will contribute to improving a wide range of outcomes. The national specification for 0-19 Healthy Child Programme identifies the following key impact areas for School Health Nursing Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building resilience and improving emotional health and wellbeing - keeping safe, managing risk and reducing harm - promoting healthy lifestyles including reducing childhood obesity and increasing physical activity - maximising achievement and learning - helping children to realise their potential and reducing inequalities - supporting additional health needs - transition and preparing for adulthood |

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 On the 13th December 2017 Cabinet approved the decision to procure a School Health Nursing Service (Key decision Ref. No. SMBC14/12/2017). Following a competitive process, a contract was awarded to Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospital Trust for 2 +1 Years. The option to extend period was utilised and this contract is due to end on the 31st March 2022. A procurement exercise is now required to ensure that there is no gap in service beyond this date.
- 4.2 Following the 2013 reorganisation, when Public Health transferred to the Local Authority, the responsibility for commissioning child vision screening became unclear for a period. It was however formally transferred to the Local Authority in 2015. In Sandwell, the CCG has continued to commission the service, however has now confirmed their intention to transfer the commissioning responsibility to the Local Authority from the 1st September 2021.



A direct award for a seven-month contract will be made to the current provider, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust to ensure there is no gap in service while this proposed procurement takes place.

- 4.3 It is anticipated that there will be increased demand on the School Health Nursing Service over the lifetime of the new contract due to an increase in the number of secondary school sites and expansion of existing sites. There are two new Free School Academies due to open in September 2022 (offering 1,650 places between them) and expansions of 3 other existing sites (670 places) A further 900 secondary places are required between 2023 and 2026.
- 4.4 There is also pressure from a rising number of referrals for assessments. Between 2018/19 and 2019/20 there was a 46% increase in Children in Care Health Reviews, and a 16% increase in the number of children requiring care plans for long term conditions. We are anticipating further increase in referrals due to planned improvement to the CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) pathway.
- 4.5 In addition, we anticipate that the COVID-19 Pandemic will have a long term negative impact on children and young people's health and wellbeing, and therefore we should be maintaining the capacity of our front-line services as a priority to address this increase in need.
- 4.6 To understand the need for a School Health Nursing Service in Sandwell, we have conducted consultations with children and young people, parents of both primary and secondary aged pupils, and staff within school settings. With the current COVID-19 restrictions, we have undertaken the consultation via online surveys. To generate a reflective understanding from children and young people, we have also utilised the SHAPE annual survey to gather their views as it has a wide reach across Sandwell.
- We have consulted with key partners at the Children and Young People's Commissioning Board to ensure all needs are identified, especially the needs of vulnerable children and young people, and to ensure that the service continues to complement and enhance existing services and pathways.



The results of these consultations will be reflected in the final service specification.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The option of removing the 0-5 Services from the Co-operative Working Agreement in order to conduct a large, single 0-19 procurement was also considered, however there was a risk that this would disrupt our high-performing Health Visiting Service during this pandemic/recovery period time when stability and continuity will be even more important.
- 5.2 The School Nursing Service is a key Public Health priority any change to the delivery of this would have a detrimental impact on the school population. Therefore, due to the high value and nature of the service the only realistic option is to competitively procure it.
- 5.3 We also considered undertaking a separate procurement exercise for the Child Vision Screening Service. This is a feasible option, but it was felt that by aggregating with School Nursing we may benefit from the economies of scale from a multi-million pound service.

6 Implications

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| Resources: | <p>6.1 Expenditure relating to the contract for School Health Nursing and Child Vision Screening Services is funded by the ring-fenced Public Health Grant. The overall budget for Public Health Services from 2022/23 and onwards is uncertain. In the event of any reduction in the Public Health Budget, a review of the contract values may be required to ensure that the costs of the service are able to be met from the Public Health Budget allocation.</p> <p>6.2 We propose that the budget for the first year of the School Health Nursing Service contract will be approximately £2,028,281 This is £82,237 more than the budget in the current contract for financial year 2021/2022 and will increase capacity by approx.</p> |
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2 full time equivalent posts to meet increased demand. We also propose to allow for a 2% uplift for each subsequent year to allow for inflation as follows:

| Contract period | School Health Nursing | Child Vision Screening |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2022/23 | £2,028,281 | £82,385 |
| 2023/24 | £2,068,847 | £84,033 |
| 2024/25 | £2,110,224 | £85,714 |
| Option to extend period: | | |
| 2025/26 | £2,152,428 | £87,428 |
| 2026/27 | £2,195,477 | £89,177 |

The additional resources will be found by redirection within the overall budget for Public Health during the development of the 2022/23 budget strategy.

6.3 The location of the current School Health Nursing service has recently transferred from the Lyng Centre for Health and Social Care to what was previously the Blackheath Library Building and operates under a licence from the council that is integral to the contract. The council is responsible for providing accommodation for the provider and this is integral to the procurement. A new licence would be agreed as part of any new contract, which will run until the service contract ends or is terminated.

6.4 The accommodation costs will be retained separately from the contract's budget and paid directly by Public Health. These will be £50,000 for the first year of the contract which is £32,000 lower than previous costs at the Lyng Centre for Health and Social Care and represents a 40.5% cost saving. Any subsequent cost increase due to inflation would be met by the Public Health Budget.



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| <p>Legal and Governance:</p> | <p>6.5 In addition to the National Healthy Child Programme, the School Nursing Service also delivers the National Child Measurement Programme which is a mandated requirement under Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013.</p> <p>6.6 The procurement process is governed by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.</p> |
| <p>Risk:</p> | <p>6.7 The corporate risk management strategy has been complied with to identify and assess the risks associated with the decision being sought. This has concluded that the following significant risks have been identified. For the risks identified, suitable measure will be in place to mitigate the risk to an acceptable level.</p> <p>6.8 Uncertainty about future financial resources and increased demand (see 6.1 and 4.2) - Mitigation would be to review contract values (6.2) and/or permitted variations being made to the specification. If service is no longer affordable we have the option to terminate the contract, re-model and re-procure with a reduced financial envelope.</p> <p>6.9 Risk that there are insufficient bidders for the contract - Mitigation would be to seek approval for an exemption under rule 8.7 of the Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules 2018-2019 to allow a contract to be awarded to a successful tenderer in the event that fewer than four tenders are received (Report Recommendation 1.3.)</p> <p>6.10 Risk of nil submissions – Mitigation would be to widely advertise Invitation to Tender, notify potential bidders including current provider, if necessary review specification and re-advertise.</p> <p>6.11 Risk of low cost, but poor-quality submissions – Mitigation would be to use a higher weighting for quality criteria scoring, seeking clarifications from bidders or re-advertising if necessary. We propose to</p> |



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| | <p>use a weighting of 60% towards quality and 40% towards price.</p> <p>6.12 Poor Performance of the future provider- Mitigation would include an effective performance management framework and putting sufficient contract monitoring resources and procedures in place.</p> |
| Equality: | 6.13 An initial equality screening has been undertaken and no adverse impact on protected groups has been identified if the recommendation is approved. If the recommendation to procure is not approved, there will be a risk of a service gap which could potentially affect several protected groups which currently receive targeted support from School Nurses as well as the universal population of school-aged children in Sandwell. |
| Health and Wellbeing: | 6.14 This is a health and wellbeing service that will contribute to a wide range of outcomes for children and young people (see section 3). |
| Social Value | 6.15 Tendering organisations will be required to identify how their organisation creates social value as part of the procurement process, (for example local volunteering and employment opportunities) and this will be one of the criteria for assessing the bids. |

7. Appendices

List appendices

8. Background Papers

National Commissioning Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-child-programme-0-to-19-health-visitor-and-school-nurse-commissioning>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-vision-screening/service-specification>

Recommendation from UK National Screening Committee:

<https://legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/vision-child>

