



Decision Ref. No.
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DECISION RECORD ¹

Officer Key Decisions are subject to the Council's Call-In Procedure (Annex 9 of the Council's Constitution <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/who-we-are-and-what-we-do.aspx>)

Subject:

Single Tender Action for the Award of a Contract for the provision of Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Challenging Behaviour Service for those with Learning Disabilities and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (PALMS)

Staff Contact: **Deborah Sheppard**

Executive Member: **Teresa Heritage**

Tel: **01442 454224 / 01438 844686**

Portfolio: **Children, Young People & Families**

1. Decision

To sign off the single tender action to allow the direct award of a contract to Hertfordshire Community Trust for the provision of Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Challenging Behaviour Service for those with Learning Disabilities and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (PALMS).

2. Reasons for the decision

PALMS have been providing Specialist interventions for Children and Young People with Autism, Behaviours that challenge and/or Mental Health difficulties whose needs have not been met by a mainstream community intervention. Due to the success of the service and need of the local population, the demand on the service has consistently been greater than clinical capacity. The service has implemented a number of initiatives including: skill mixing; redesign of service delivery to incorporate an increase in group working; development of a seamless pathway from initial assessment to treatment. As a result of these initiatives the service has been able to be responsive to the needs of the local population and has successfully continued to meet the demand including significantly improving access time.

There is a recognition that our current CAMHS offer has some systemic issues that we need to address such as:

- **There is lots of good provision in Hertfordshire, but it is not co-ordinated and can be difficult to navigate for Children/Young people and their parent/carers.**
- **Children and Young people can and do bounce between services.**
- **There is a need for more capacity.**

Providers across the system have been reporting and experiencing the impact of these systemic problems within services. This is contributing to extended wait times and more Children and Young People with escalating issues and consequently needing a specialist intervention. Without this provision in Hertfordshire it is anticipated that there would be an increase in the number of CYP with escalating Mental Health issues and a gap in service provision.

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Commissioners and Partners are currently reviewing options in terms of the Early Intervention Services going forward and are hopeful that we can move towards an Integrated Care System in which providers work together and are accountable for a system rather than just their own service. However, whilst work to achieve this is ongoing it is vital that we support the market, reduce commercial sensitivity and not de-stabilise existing providers, the system and CYP who are receiving services.

The loss of service to CYP and their family/carers, if we were unable to directly award would be considerable and would result in pressure on an already strained statutory social and health care services. The Single Tender Action for this period will allow us time to plan and start working towards an integrated Care System in which providers work together and are accountable for a system rather than just their own service. Due to this approach we need to reduce commercial sensitivity to support partnership working.

The Integrated Health and Care Commissioning Team have consulted with Hertfordshire County Councils Legal service who have provided the below in relation to the approval of this Single Tender Action:

“Legal Services has confirmed that the proposed direct award of the contracts is compatible with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. In particular, the Council may rely on the exemptions provided in Regulation 12 and/or Regulation 32.”

3. Alternative options considered and rejected ²

A tender process was considered however PALMS is a very specialist service for which there is not a developed market currently this coupled with the fact that we are undertaking a whole system redesign is why this option was rejected.

4. Consultation

At the Children and Young People's Emotional and Wellbeing Board meeting held on Wednesday 6th March, Board agreed to this approach and that further investment into PALMS was needed to maintain the current level of service and mitigate the need to source tertiary specialist services.

This approach has also been agreed at the following boards:

- Herts Valleys CCG Commissioning Executive
- East and North Herts CCG Executive Board

(a) Comments of Executive Member

No Comments

(b) Comments of other consultees ³

All other consultees at the various boards agreed with the approach and supported the decision to award directly via a Single Tender Action.

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5. **Following consultation with, and the concurrence of the Executive Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.**

Signed:

Title: Date:

6. Copies of agreed document to:

- All consultees
- Chairman, and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Hard & electronic copy available for public inspection both at County Hall and on www.hertfordshire.gov.uk Democratic Services - Room 213 County Hall. democratic.services@hertfordshire.gov.uk

¹ for guidance see Chief Legal Officer's note "Taking Decisions"

² details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer at the time the decision was made

³ If the matter has local significance, but no general significance for the Council and no controversial aspects, the officer shall consult or inform the local member in writing (or by e mail) and proceed. It is essential that all officers responsible for delivering services ensure that local members are kept well briefed on issues affecting their areas.

