

Overview and Scrutiny

Subject: Torbay 0-19 Service Procurement

Director: Lincoln Sargeant and Nancy Meehan Cabinet Member: Hayley Tranter and Nick Bye

1. Issue

Background

Torbay Local Authority, specifically Public Health and Children's Social Care, are responsible for commissioning the services that sit within the Healthy Child Programme, also known as 0-19 provision. The current 0-19 Service contract, held by Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (TSDFT) with Action for Children and The Children's Society - Checkpoint (TCS) as sub-contracted providers, expired in March 2024 and a further one-year extension has been agreed with the contract holder. Procurement planning for a new service has been initiated and is progressing in line with new contract start dates for April 2025, decisions for which are governed by the 0-19 Procurement Board, with membership including the Directors of Children's Social Care, Finance and Public Health.

0-19 commissioning arrangements

Torbay Local Authority Cabinet Members have endorsed the 0-19 Procurement Board's decision that the Authority undertake a 'hybrid' commissioning model, resulting in some of the current 0-19 provision following the Health Care Services Provider Selection Regime (('PSR for Health') a UK Government set of regulations for procuring health care services) with other provisions following a separate process where some services are re-procured and others delivered in-house.

The outcome of the PSR for Health framework assessment of the in-scope services, led by Procurement and endorsed by the 0-19 procurement Board, was to follow a direct contract award process to the incumbent provider and to not follow a competitive tender process. The result from the process was based on the *existing provider satisfying and likely to satisfy the proposed contract to a sufficient standard.*

Current 0-19 Services to be directly awarded to the incumbent contract holder, TSDFT with Action for Children as a sub-contracted provider are the 0–5-year-old provisions with School Nursing and include:

- Public Health Nursing (Health Visiting and School Nursing)
- National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)
- Family Hubs as Community Services
- Early Help and Family Support
- Child Development and School Readiness

The current 0-19 services to follow an open market procurement include:

- Advocacy Services
- Independent Visitor's Service

The 0-19 services to be delivered in-house, forming part of a wider Torbay Council youth service include:

- Young People's Substance Misuse
- Missing and Return Home Conversations

Risks and opportunities

As the grant funded Family Hubs Start for Life programme is not expected to be sustained by the government beyond March 2025, a shortfall has been identified for programmes linked to 0-19 provision. Torbay's substantive Family Hubs as community centres along with the breadth of support available to families from the Hubs are not at risk; however, Family Hubs Start for Life services, financed through the Start for Life grant have been identified as being at risk including Infant Feeding, Volunteer and Peer Support, and Perinatal Infant Mental Health. Additional funding specifically for these programmes is not available under the existing 0-19 financial envelope and therefore would be required from core Council revenue streams if these programmes were to be continued post March 2025. A proposal has been put forwards to continue these provisions as part of sustained Council revenue from April 2025 onwards, with an emphasis on Perinatal Infant Mental Health provisions which are considered the greatest risk to children and families if the programme is no longer resourced.

The opportunity afforded by the PSR for Health direct award route is that the conclusion of a new contract and specification should, in principle, be concluded within the next 6 months in time for an April 2025 start date. This approach is beneficial for several reasons:

1. Reduces officer time to set up and deliver an open market procurement exercise where there is no material value identified for the Authority or our residents,
2. keeps consistency of provider and delivery models where there are no significant concerns which need to be rectified;
3. allows for a re-design of the current provision whilst maintaining existing services that are well established,
4. allows a strategic focus and re-design on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) early identification and support offer, developed and implemented alongside key strategic partners including families.

2. Proposed timetable for progression

The timeline for progression is predicated on the approval of the PSR for Health regime and outcome of direct award. If approved, a new service start date would be expected to be no later than April 2025. For this to be achievable, the following timetable for progression includes:

- Negotiation on Finance and Specification with incumbent providers: April - September 2024 (ongoing)
- Initial draft specifications: August 2024 (completed)
- Specification sign-off: October 2024
- Issuing and signing of contract: December 2024
- Lead in time, including service transfer and TUPE: by April 2025

3. Wider engagement - members and community (as appropriate)

Community engagement has included working alongside service users to hear their experiences when accessing 0-19 provision. Insights have been gathered with support from the community and voluntary sector, the Children's Social Care participation team and through the 0-19 service-user feedback exercises. All of which have been taken into account and considered when developing the model.

Consultation on the preferred hybrid model will take place with key strategic stakeholders and wider with council leadership and members if required.