



Report to the Leader (Education and Children's Services portfolio)

Decision Date:	27 April 2023
Reference number:	EC02.23
Title:	CYP Integrated Therapies (CYPITS) Recommissioning
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Anita Cranmer
Contact officer:	Marie-Claire Mickiewicz Marie.Mickiewicz@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected:	All Wards

Recommendations: To recommission the countywide Children and Young People's Integrated Therapies service (CYPITS) on a 3 +1+1 contract term to improve integration of therapy support and rebalance the local system.

Reason for decision:

1. To ensure that children and young people in Buckinghamshire continue to receive support and interventions to manage their therapy needs.
2. To improve early identification, intervention and outcomes for Buckinghamshire Children and Young People with therapy needs.
3. To enable work across the wider system that will reduce escalation of need and demand for therapies over time.
4. To support delivery against the Written Statement of Action (WSOA).

Executive summary

- 1.1 The Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) jointly fund the Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Integrated Therapies service (CYPITS) as part of a Section 75 agreement.
- 1.2 The service is statutory and provides Speech and language Therapy (SaLT), Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physiotherapy (PT) to children and young people in Buckinghamshire with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND), with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

- 1.3 Over the current contract life, statutory demand has increased and this, combined with a national shortage of SLTs and OTs has led to challenges in delivery of the CYPITS contract. Ultimately, the capacity within the service has been drawn away from other elements of provision towards statutory assessment, statutory provision and the support required for tribunals. This has led to the service being unable to meet the demand for non-statutory provision, and then over time, statutory provision.
- 1.4 It has been necessary to prioritise SaLT and OT support to children with statutory, high-level, or urgent need whilst continuing to support need at the SEND support level. This has led to children not receiving support at the earliest opportunity which in turn, has led to an escalation of need for children and young people. This places undue pressure on children, young people and their families, as they seek support for needs that could have been met earlier.
- 1.5 The current contract was due to expire on 31st March 2022 as the available 2-year extension options had been utilised. A waiver was subsequently agreed by the Council to further extend the contract until 30th September 2023.
- 1.6 The current annual contract value for the service is £3,764,384. The provider submitted a costings proposal which represented an increase to the total cost of the contract to cover the 18-month extension period to support the ongoing provision and increased demand. Responses to a request for information from the market (RFI) also identified funding as a key barrier to providers bidding on the contract.
- 1.7 Due to the transition within health from CCGs to ICBs, there has been a delay in confirming the budget for the future service. As a result, an additional 3-month waiver had to be requested to extend the existing CYPIT contract until 31st December 2023. This was to allow completion of the ICB Financial Planning Process for 2023-24 financial year and to confirm the final total value of the pooled budget for the service to be recommissioned.
- 1.8 A competitive tender process will need to be undertaken to procure the new service and once recommissioned, this would commence on 1st January 2024.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 The current position of therapy support in Buckinghamshire has a negative impact on children and their families. This impact is seen in many ways:
- reduces children's ability to engage in education and daily activities
 - negatively affects children's mental health
 - the effect of unmet needs on the family as a whole
- 2.2 A lack of a clear area strategy to manage this increase in demand was identified during the joint SEND Inspection in March 22. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) determined that a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was required due to significant areas of weakness with therapy provision being highlighted as a serious concern locally. The outcome also emphasised the need for a single Therapies Strategy for Buckinghamshire to meet CYP needs across the breadth of levels of need leading to escalation of demand for specialist provision.

- 2.3 A Therapies strategy has been developed, based on evidence-based guidance, best practice and stakeholder feedback, which describes a move away from referring all children to an expert therapist for support. Instead, it suggests an approach that develops expertise within the child's everyday environment. This includes the use of whole school approaches to better support children when in school and the role for community-based groups in promoting and supporting development and improved outcomes. The Strategy is currently going through sign off processes.
- 2.4 Areas that have already implemented this approach are seeing less pressure on statutory provision and fewer tribunal challenges. Areas that have not are experiencing similar challenges to those being experienced in Buckinghamshire.
- 2.5 Both the WSoA and the draft Therapies Strategy recognise the role of system partners in providing support for a range of SEND needs and focus on the further development of local universal and targeted support. This will enable specialist therapists to support children whose needs cannot be met via other levels of provision. This approach will involve implementing programmes of training to support non-therapists to appropriately support therapy need that does not require qualified intervention.
- 2.6 This rebalancing of the local system will support to mitigate the impact of the national shortage of therapists on Buckinghamshire's children, ensuring continuity of delivery wherever possible. Utilising the wider workforce across the system will support the move towards a better balance of support across universal, targeted and specialist levels of support.

The benefits of this approach are:

- Children will receive support with their development at the earliest point of intervention
 - Reduce the level of escalating need being seen in Buckinghamshire
 - Improve outcomes for children and young people
- 2.8 Longer term it is anticipated that this approach will reduce demand for, and dependence on, the limited specialist provision available and improve access to specialist provision for children with more complex needs. However, over the short- to medium-term is unlikely to deliver any reduction in the level of required therapy provision (statutory or otherwise). This is due to the level of cultural change required to support this approach across a wide range of professionals, as well as parents and carers.

3. Other options considered

Option 2 - Re-commission the service separating out health and education elements.		
Recommission the CYPITS separating out health and education elements.	Positives	Negatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding would be attributed proportionate to need. • Individual focus enabling increased equity for health and education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer an integrated service offer resulting in a less cohesive service offer. • A shift away from the overarching national ambition of integrated working. • Adverse impact on relationships as a result of disaggregating health and education elements. • Separation of funding streams could destabilise elements of delivery as funding is currently used flexibly across the contract.

Option 3 - Re-commission the service devolving aspects of the contract to special schools		
Recommission the CYPITS devolving aspects of delivery to Special Schools	Positives	Negatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More autonomy provided to special school settings. • Ability for special schools to target delivery based on therapy need of local population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less oversight of delivery and to facilitate change. • Risk of inequity of provision across the county. • Appetite and capacity of special schools to take on this additional responsibility. • Appetite of other providers to work within this model limited • Work would need to be completed to understand the level of delegated budget that would be required.



4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 The current service is jointly funded as part of a S75 agreement between local authority children's services and the ICB. The total contract value for the service is currently **£3,764,384** per annum.
- 4.2 A waiver for an 18-month extension to the current contract was agreed by the LA for the period 1st April 22 to 31st September 2023 on the existing contract value. Following communication of this extension to the provider, negotiations were requested to discuss an uplift to the contract value to help meet the significantly increased demand since the start of the original contract.
- 4.3 Due to the transition within health from CCGs to ICBs, there has been a delay in confirming the budget for the future service. As a result, an additional 3-month waiver had to be requested to extend the existing CYPIT contract until the 31st December 2023. This was to allow completion of the ICB Financial Planning Process for 2023-24 financial year and to confirm the final total value of the pooled budget for the service to be recommissioned.
- 4.4 Following the agreement of additional funding from the Council (funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant) and the ICB, the budget for the new service will be **£5,843,116** per annum
- 4.5 Discussions have taken place across the LA and ICB and additional recurrent funding to support the delivery of this service has now been agreed by both parties. Responses to a recent RFI also identified funding as a key barrier to providers bidding on the contract. (See confidential appendix for further information).
- 4.6 TUPE will apply to this recommission.
- 4.7 The business case seeks agreement for delegated officer decision for award of this contract following the tender process. Due to the value of the contract this will need to be set at the appropriate level in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 This proposal supports the 'Protecting the Vulnerable' priority within the Buckinghamshire Council Corporate Plan 2020-2025.
- 5.2 There is no property, HR, climate change, sustainability implications that have been identified in respect to this decision.
- 5.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed to identify any potential implications in relation to these proposals.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services has been consulted in regard to these proposals and is in agreement with the recommended approach.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 Key stakeholders from across the system have been engaged in these proposals. A workshop was held on September 2022 to support discussions around the new service model and requirements. A recommissioning project team has also been assembled to support the procurement process.
- 7.2 A public consultation has been run to support the development of a Therapies Strategy for Buckinghamshire. Information received as part of this consultation is being fed into the recommission of the Integrated Therapies Service.
- 7.3 A communication plan will be developed as part of the recommission.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 Once approved, the tender documentation will be finalised and the service will go out to market to be procured in April 2023.
- 8.2 A bidder event will be held with potential organisations and providers once the tender goes live. This will ensure that the vision for the service is communicated clearly and providers have the chance to ask any questions regarding the new service.
- 8.3 Timeline for recommission:

Timeline	Activity
Apr 23	Tender Opens
May 23	Tender Closes
Jun – Jul 23	Evaluation and Moderation
Oct 23	Contract Award
1 st Jan 24	New Contract Commences

9. Background papers

- 9.1 It is a legal requirement to make available background papers relied on to prepare a report and these should be listed at the end of the report (copies of background papers for executive decisions must be provided to democratic services). **Hyperlinks to papers published online should be used where possible. Where there are no background papers, insert none.**
- 9.2 Draft Therapies Strategy
Available at https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/therapies-strategy/supporting_documents/Draft%20Buckinghamshire%20Therapies%20Strategy%2023%20to%202026.pdf
- 9.3 Confidential Appendix 1 – CYP Therapies Recommission

9.4 Confidential Appendix 2 – CYP Integrated Therapies Business Case

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

