

REPORT FOR: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting:	19 February 2015
Subject:	Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Services
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Chris Spencer, Interim Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Simon Brown, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

1. London North West Healthcare NHS Trust has been the provider of a paediatric speech and language therapy services to Harrow children and young people for many years.
2. The changes in legislation with regard to special educational needs and disability (SEND) within the Children and Families Act 2014 make it appropriate to strengthen the joint commissioning arrangements with the Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for this service to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people in Harrow.

3. This report sets out the background, the present position and the case for the proposed recommendation.
4. Officers will bring a further report to cabinet to seek approval to award a new contract.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

- a) Give approval to entering into a Section 75 agreement with the Harrow CCG from June 2015.
- b) Approve the joint re-procurement of paediatric speech and language therapy services at a date to be determined in consultation with Harrow CCG. Officers will report back with an update by April 2016.
- c) Approve under waiver an award of a contract to NWLHT to provide the service for a period commencing on the 1 April 2015 and ending on the 30 June 2015 with an estimated contract value of £172,000.00. The approval of this recommendation is requested through a waiver of Contract Procedure Rules 6 (Authorisation) and 7 (Procurement Method) as set out in clause 13 and Table 2 of Contract Procedure Rules 2014.

Reason: (For recommendations)

Owing to the changes in SEND legislation there is a need to ensure the future arrangements for commissioning the service are robust and consistent with changes in legislation. The joint re-tendering of the service will provide the opportunity to research best practice in this field and ensure best value.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

5. The Children and Families Act 2014 has introduced major changes to the support for children and young people with special educational needs and disability. The Act states local authorities and its commissioning partner bodies must make arrangements ('joint commissioning arrangements') for the education, health and care provision to be secured for children and young people that have special educational needs and who have a disability.

6. The proposed recommendation will allow the Council to continue to support vulnerable children and young people with speech, language and communication needs in partnership with the health service.

Background and current position

7. **National picture:** Communication is a foundational life skill and research indicates that the development of a child's communication ability has an impact on their literacy, school performance and employment prospects as well as on their emotional wellbeing and behaviour. Most children acquire speech and language skills with relative ease. Where difficulties arise they may be due to neurodevelopmental problems or other impairments. Others may be as a result of reduced developmental opportunities, limiting the child's learning of language which are commonly linked to social disadvantage. Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) encompass a wide range of difficulties related to all aspects of communication in children and young people. These can include difficulties with fluency, forming sounds and words, formulating sentences, understanding what others say, and using language socially.
8. **Local Picture in Harrow:** Harrow Council and Harrow CCG commission a service for children and young people with SLCN between the ages of 0 – 18 years (19 years if in special school).
9. The overarching aim of the service is to support the delivery of universal, targeted and specialist services to identify and to ensure the improved outcomes for children and young people with communication and language difficulties in Harrow. The service follows a universal, targeted and specialist model of provision. The model adopted for this service is recommended by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, Position Paper 2006, and supported by the Bercow review 2008.
10. The **universal service** supports all children in terms of facilitating good practice in their everyday settings to ensure optimum development of speech, language and communication. This includes: core training to health professionals, management strategies, development and provision of appropriate literature/products to support schools and parents, information and signposting to relevant resources to support SLCN.
11. The **targeted service** works with parents, school staff and early years practitioners to identify and support children with speech, language and communication difficulties who require targeted interventions. Targeted interventions may be led by education staff with support from a speech and language therapist (SLT). The degree of SLT involvement will be dependent on the context, the competences of the wider workforce and the needs of the children and young people.
12. The **specialist service** supports children/young people with identified and complex SLCN and/or eating and drinking difficulties requiring a specialist service that should be led by the speech and language therapy service with support from schools, early years practitioners, parents and carers.

Why a change is needed

13. A change is needed for the following reasons:

- to ensure we have an appropriate service specification that meets the needs of all children and young people in Harrow;
- to achieve a fully jointly commissioned arrangement as required by the Children and Families Act 2014.

Options Considered

Options	Advantage	Disadvantage
Transfer funding to the CCG to commission the service. The local authority would enter a section 75 agreement in order to jointly commission this service.	<p>CCG becomes the main commissioner and local authority becomes the associate commissioner.</p> <p>This option gives commissioners time to re-visit the service specification and then undertake a joint tendering exercise.</p> <p>Tight joint monitoring arrangements would be required.</p> <p>This is the preferred option and the one being recommended.</p>	The budget from the health service sits within a block contract.
Split the service and fund individual parts separately	There is not an advantage for this option as this service is jointly commissioned.	This option does not support our joint commissioning arrangements with health.
Continue with the current arrangement	There is no advantage to continue with the current arrangement as it is important we develop the service in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014.	We would not be achieving the joint commissioning and partnership working as required by the Children and Families Act 2014

14. The preferred option would require the local authority to enter into an agreement with the CCG under section 75 of the National Health Services Act 2006. This is an agreement between local authorities and NHS bodies. The section 75 agreement will include arrangements for pooling resources and delegating the primary commissioning function to the CCG and the local authority becoming an associate commissioner for the service. The service will be jointly commissioned and jointly monitored.

Performance Issues

15. This service has been monitored on a quarterly basis and has been performing well. The provider has provided good quality information to support the monitoring arrangements.
16. The service has reported continued significant rise in demand for new assessments particularly within the schools services. From 1st of August 2014 the speech and language therapy service at London North West Healthcare NHS Trust had an active caseload of 1839 children and young people which reflects a 13% growth in comparison to 1630 patients reported in August 2013. Of the 1839, 1326 (72%) are males and 513 (28%) are females.

Age	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19
No. of Children and Young People	680	783	275	101
% of Children and Young People	37	42.6	14.9	5.5

Ethnicity	White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Other Ethnic category	Did not state their ethnicity
No. of Children and Young People	504	100	741	213	58	223
% of Children and Young People	27.4%	5.4%	40.3%	11.6%	3.1%	12.2%

17. Partnership working with colleagues within children's and education services continues on a positive trend across the service with some significant achievements. The provider has made positive working relationships with staff in schools, children's centres and other educational settings.

Environmental Implications

18. There are no environmental implications.

Risk Management Implications

19. There is no separate risk register in place and the service is not included in the directorate risk register.

Legal Implications

20. The proposals in the Report will enable the council to comply with the requirements in the Children and Families Act 2014
21. Paediatric speech and language therapy services are Part B services under public procurement legislation and so the award of a temporary contract to NWLHT is allowed.

Financial Implications

22. The annual value of the contract will be £688k. This is funded in the main from the ring fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and is contained within the overall DSG funding available for special educational needs.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

23. Harrow Council and Harrow CCG will need to comply with the Equality Act 2010 when making decisions affecting the delivery of this service. The proposal of entering a Section 75 agreement and joint re-procurement with the CCG will deliver better value for money whilst achieving better outcomes for service users. An equality impact assessment has been carried out and concludes there is no identified and potential unlawful conduct or disproportionate impact and all opportunities to advance equality are being addressed.

Council's vision:

24. The report incorporates the administration's priorities:
- Making a difference for the vulnerable
 - Making a difference for families.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 6 February 2015		
Name: Stephen Dorrian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 6 February 2015		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO, as it impacts on all Wards
EqIA carried out:	Yes
EqIA cleared by:	EqIA quality assurance group 5.1.15

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Roger Rickman, Divisional Director, Special Needs Services, Children and Families Directorate

Tel: 020 8966 6334

Background Papers:

Speech, Language and communication needs task and finish group – report January 2014

Profile of Children and Young People accessing Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Services – September 2014

Equality Impact Assessment – February 2015

Call-In Waived by the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	NOT APPLICABLE <i>[Call-in applies]</i>
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