

Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	11 November 2020
Subject:	Children and Young People Strategic Commissioning – Emotional Wellbeing Service and Information, Advice and Guidance Service
Key Decision:	Yes - effects communities living or working in an area of two or more wards of the Borough
Responsible Officer:	Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director People Services
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Christine Robson 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

This report sets out the background, the current commissioning arrangements and the proposals to approve financial contribution and issue a direct award to current providers to Emotional Wellbeing Service and Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Service to Harrow's Children and Young People.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for People Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People, together with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Major Contracts to:
2. Issue a direct award to the incumbent provider for the Harrow information advice and guidance service; and
3. Approve the financial contribution to be made by the Council to Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group, for the Harrow's Emotional Wellbeing Service.

Reason:

To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duties to:

- meet the emotional and mental health needs of children and young people
- encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education or training and to assist the most vulnerable and risk of disengaging with education or work.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

1. Local Authorities has a statutory duty to provide Emotional Wellbeing and Careers Information Advice and Guidance services for children and young People. Harrow Council (the Council) commissions two providers Barnardo's (through its partnership arrangement with Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group) for the Harrow Horizons Emotional Wellbeing Service and Prospects Services for the Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance Service. The current contracts for these services end in March 2021. This report sets out the legislative and local context and the approach to re-commissioning these services.

2. The recommendations in this report contribute to the Council's Corporate priorities:
 - Tackling poverty and inequality
 - Addressing health and social care inequality
 - Thriving economy

Options considered

3. Three options have been considered:
 - Option 1: Do nothing - allow the contracts to end in March 2021. This will create a gap in statutory service provision and will be detrimental to Children and Young People at a time of significant uncertainty and increase anxiety arising from the covid pandemic.
 - Option 2: Secure delegations from Cabinet to issue a direct award to the incumbent provider for the Harrow information advice and guidance service and approve the financial contribution to be made by the Council to Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group, for the Harrow's Emotional Wellbeing Service.
 - Option 3: Carry out procurement process for the careers, information, advice and guidance service. The current contract expires 31st March 2021.
4. Option 2 is the preferred option because it will ensure that there is a continuity of service and allow an analysis of how the pandemic has impacted the health, well-being and education, employment and training opportunities. To then incorporate these learnings to design services for the future accordingly with the opportunity to consult service users.

Current situation

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services

5. In accordance with the Children Act 1989, the Council has a duty to 'Promote the Health and Well-Being of Looked-After Children'. Increasing and improving mental health services through an integrated approach with local authorities and health services, was a key objective in the Government's Future in Mind Transformation Plan. In this context, in October 2015, the Health and Well-Being Board, agreed to develop an integrated Emotional Health and Wellbeing Targeted Service with Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Council.
6. The North West London Integrated Care Partnership (HICP) has agreed its Out of Hospital Recovery Plan to progress the integration of health and social care and the systems recovery from the covid emergency response. There is a Children and Young People Workstream which includes emotional and mental health.

NHS Long Term Plan (January 2019)

7. Mental health support for children and young people will be embedded in schools and colleges. The Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper set out proposals to improve mental health support in schools and colleges, Harrow was successful in the recent Green Paper bid to deliver the mental health support teams (MHST) from November 2020. The Harrow Horizons Service will be involved in this initiative.
8. The plan also states an additional 345,000 CYP aged 0-25 accessing NHS funded services by 2023/24, with a year on year increase of 70,000, which represents **7,000 a year** more than the 63,000 required in 19/20. This represents a 10% increase. Harrow Horizons have provided access to an intervention to 470 children between April and August 19, the activity continued to over the next 7 months the total accessing was approximately 1,128 an increase of 398 on the previous year's activity.
9. The Council and the CCG entered into a Section 75 Agreement to commission services such as Future in Mind Children and Young People's Emotional, Health and Well-Being Service. The CCG are the lead commissioner and following a competitive procurement process, appointed a national charity – Barnardos, as the service provider.
10. Children and young people from Harrow were involved in the design of the new service, selecting the provider and naming the service from the outset. Subsequently a small number of young people have continued to be involved in Harrow Horizons youth participation group that encourages the voices of service users to help develop and improve the quality of provision.
11. Harrow Horizons Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Targeted Service is run by experienced clinicians and mental health practitioners, the service works closely with schools, providing short- to mid-term therapeutic intervention. Offering mental health and therapeutic support, including early intervention. It offers a person centred, age appropriate and flexible approach.
12. The total annual contract value is £540,000 comprising £270,000 contributions from the CCG and the Council.
13. The Service provides good value for money as the financial envelope was set for 4 years with no yearly uplifts and will remain the same for the direct award contractual years.
14. Full staffing capacity has been maintained with a staffing team with a broad range of skills and experience, ensuring they can meet the diverse needs of the children, young people and families receiving a service.
15. The clinicians are trained in a variety of therapeutic modalities examples include: psychodynamic therapy, person-centered therapy, art, music, play

and drama therapy, integrated eye movement therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, integrative therapy and therapeutic counselling.

16. During the covid pandemic, clinicians have reported since April 2020, a higher number of bereavement cases being referred. The nature of these referrals are more complex grief due to the circumstances such as not being able to say goodbye to family members during lockdown.
17. In addition, the clinicians have observed higher levels of general and school-based anxiety, particularly for older young people who have missed the opportunity to sit GCSE and A level exams.
18. In responding to the government guidelines on safe practice, the service provider has adapted their delivery model to ensure a continuity of support to their vulnerable young people by introducing telephone, video link and operating an information and referral advice line for professionals, families and young people.
19. Clinicians have reported that the adapted remote working model, even with its own IT challenges, has shown to be a positive alternative for children and young people. Feedback gathered showed that for some service users, telephone counselling can be more accessible and preferred method of support, than face to face interventions. This method also allowed greater interaction and involvement with parents and carers due to a change in their working patterns.

Careers, Information, Advice, Guidance to Young People

20. The Education Act 2011 places the duty for local authorities to encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education or training and to assist the most vulnerable and risk of disengaging with education or work. In addition, Local Authorities are expected to have arrangements in place to ensure that 16 and 17 year olds have received an offer of a suitable place in post-16 education or training and that they are assisted to take up a place.
21. Prospects Services is commissioned to fulfil the Council's duties in relation to encouraging, enabling and assisting young people to participate in education, employment or training and to provide Careers Information, Advice and Guidance to young people targeted as those most in need until the end of their contract term, March 2021.
22. The annual contract value is £400,000. For the period of 18 months direct award period the contract value will be £600,000.
23. The service provides good value for money as the financial envelope was set for 5 years with no yearly uplifts and will remain the same for the extension period. It has shown year on year increases in activity targets.
24. Although in Harrow the NEET numbers are low, those that make up this cohort, in the main, have multiple barriers. During the covid pandemic

Careers Advisers have continued to build a rapport with existing NEET and young people that have become NEET via telephone, video calls, emails and through other professionals.

25. Careers Advisors have noticed that during the pandemic young people have had increased anxieties and disruptions to their life and have appreciated the ongoing consistent support that has been offered. The consistency of service and approach is imperative for this cohort of young people who take a long time to engage with support services.

Next Steps

26. The rationale for seeking approval for direct awards to current providers to Emotional Wellbeing Service and Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Service to Harrow's Children and Young People are as below.
27. The impact of the covid pandemic has restricted the ability to co-produce and co-design (with stakeholders) new services, officers have had to shift priorities in order to respond to the immediate needs of the community.
28. It has been essential to support and encourage current providers to transition their current delivery model to more safe and appropriate alternatives ways in order to meet the needs of children, young people and their parents/carers.
29. Harrow CCG and the Council have been successful in the bid to deliver mental health support teams in schools, Barnardos are a key partner in this initiative, therefore stability with the continuation of service delivery is essential.
30. There is anticipation of a rise in NEET young people even though we do not know to what extent, the covid pandemic may cause disengagement from education due to multiple barriers that young people may be facing. It is therefore important that Prospects Services continue to work closely with schools so that they are informed of young people dropping out of education at the earliest point and are able to work alongside agencies to build a package of support around the young person, support them to move back into EET.
31. Evidence has shown that year 11 and 13 groups missing 3 months' worth of education has had an impact on GCSE and A level attainment. Potentially this will not only have an impact next year on their academic achievements but also a knock-on effect to their mental wellbeing. Both Barnardos and Prospects Services are qualified and skilled to respond to these areas of projected need.

Ward Councillors' comments

32. Not applicable

Performance Issues

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services: Barnardos – Harrow Horizons

33. Clinicians are continuing to work with a full caseload of clients. The current waiting time from referral to assessment is approximately 2-3 weeks. The waiting time for assessment to first session is approximately 5 weeks. It is anticipated that waiting times may increase in line with the number of referrals.
34. The main referral source for this service are GP's and Harrow schools. Due to the reduction of patients presenting to GP surgeries and the closure of schools the Harrow Horizons received 134 referrals in quarter one April - June. By quarter two, the number of referrals have been increasing to 185 referrals to date.
35. Harrow Horizons continually monitor the emerging themes and key issues children and young people are facing. The most prevalent is a sense of heightened anxiety around their current situation and future, followed by low mood, family conflict and loss and bereavement.

Careers, Information, Advice, Guidance to Young People – Prospects Services

36. Harrow historically has maintained a low number of young people that are NEET in comparison to other London boroughs. The robust tracking and support offered to young people who are NEET has supported this ongoing low figure to be maintained and is evident in the NEET to EET movement for the 16-18 cohort.
37. Harrow has remained in quintile 1 for the DfE annual scorecard for the last 4 years that Prospects Services has been delivering in the borough. Harrow has maintained continuous low levels of NEET and Not Known and presents much lower levels than the London and National average.

38. NEET Comparison - 2019 Scorecard

	Combined NEET/ NK	NEET	Not Known
Harrow	2.1%	1.2%	1.0%
London Average	5.5%	2.6%	2.9%
National Average	4.8%	1.7%	3.0%

39. The low level off NEET has been maintained alongside there being a low percentage of young people whose destination is not known. The 1.0% of not known means there are very low numbers of potential hidden NEET.
40. In the period between April 2020 and August 2020 there has been a 0.3% (16) rise in NEET 16-17-year olds (academic age). This rise during these

months has been mainly due to the 6 monthly employment destination tracking which has identified young people who were in employment 6 month previously now NEET, some of these 16 would have been as a direct result of the covid pandemic.

41. The covid pandemic could present itself more prominently in statistical data in the months and years to follow. Harrow has a higher than national average participation rate at 95.6% (National- 84.8% and London 91.1%). During the April- August period the majority of Year 12-13 cohort will have been participating in full time learning, we expect this would have continued during the lockdown period when students would have been learning at home, with low drop out rates or exclusions from school/ college.
42. The increase in NEET will be more evident in the next part of the year and into early next year with leavers from Years 11, 12 and 13 who do not want to stay in education find looking for employment or apprenticeships more challenging. There is also the implication that many learning providers, such as some training providers are now offering more online virtual approach to learning. This method of learning could see a disengagement for some vulnerable young people and see them dropping out becoming NEET.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No
 Separate risk register in place? No

43. The key risks and mitigations are summarised in the table below:

Risk	Mitigation
Non availability of statutory services	Direct Awards to current providers
Challenge from other providers	Competitive procurement process has been undertaken previously The council can compliantly direct award under the light touch regime as the values are below the threshold
Current service providers not able to fulfil additional government funded initiatives for the borough	Direct Awards to current providers so they can continue delivery

Procurement Implications

44. It is in the opinion of the Head of Procurement that it is in the best interest of the Council to offer a direct award to Prospects and approve the financial contribution to be made by the Council to Harrow Clinical

Commissioning Group, for the Harrow's Emotional Wellbeing Service. The direct award can be made compliantly under the "Light Touch Regime" Public Contract Regulations 2015 as the value of the contracts are below the threshold.

45. Approve funding to Harrow CCG via s75 for the Barnardos - Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services: Harrow Horizons for 2 years from the 1st April 2021 until 31st March 2023
Direct Award to Prospects Services: Careers Information, Advice and Guidance for 18 months from the 1st April 2021 until 30th September 2022

Legal Implications

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services: Barnardos

46. The Council and the CCG entered into a Section 75 Agreement under the National Health Service Act 2006; this agreement enables the Council and the CCG to enter into partnership arrangement to provide services and pool resources. This agreement remains valid until 2022 therefore the commissioning intentions as set out in this report for the emotional health and wellbeing services can be fulfilled through the Section 75 Agreement. The CCG as lead commissioners and the contracting authority must adhere to the obligations under Public Contracts Regulations (2015) in their appointment and extension of the Contract with Barnados.
47. The Scheme Specification for the Future in Mind Children and Young People's Emotional, Health and Well-Being Service, which sits under the Section 75 Agreement will need to be updated to reflect the additional years service as well the revised Key Performance Indicators to be agreed by the Council and the CCG.

Prospects Services – Careers, Information and Guidance

48. Legal notes that the value of the direct award contract to be made to Prospects Services fall below the EU threshold for the light touch regime therefore the procurement is not subject to the full requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR); the EU Treaty principles of equal treatment, fairness and non-discrimination, however must still be adhered to.

Financial Implications

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services: Barnardos – Harrow Horizons

49. The annual contract value is £540,000 made up of £270,000 contribution from the CCG and £270,000 Local Authority contribution.

50. The total contribution from the Local Authority over the two years would be £540,000. The service is funded from children and young people's directorate

Prospects Services - Careers Information and Advice and Guidance

51. The annual contract value is £400,000, for the eighteen months contract, the total budget requirement is £600,000. The service is funded from a general fund within children and young people's directorate.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

52. Equalities Impact Assessment were undertaken as part of the initial procurement processes. The key matters identified were:

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Services: Barnardos – Harrow Horizons

53. The conclusions of this assessment undertaken October 2016 was that the implications are either positive or neutral, with no adverse effect, in that the service will provide emotional, mental health interventions to those vulnerable children and young people in Harrow.

54. The assessment did not identify any potential for unlawful conduct or disproportionate impact and conclude that all opportunities to advance equality are being addressed.

55. During the monitoring of the contracts, data on the ethnic profile from of the service users since the commencement of the service has been gathered as below:

Ethnic group	No of referrals	Percentage
Asian or Asian British	577	32%
White	491	27%
Black or Black British	238	13%
Mixed	225	12%
Other Ethnic Groups	185	10%
Rather not say	104	6%
Data: June 2017 – March 2020		

56. Statistics show that access to Harrow Horizon has been reflective of the local community and BAME children and young people with a majority from Asian/ Asian British backgrounds.

57. The service has continued to meet the current gap for children and young people who have a moderate emotional, mental health need in addition to their learning disability/difficulty. Quarter one data (April – June 2020) reported 22 young people with special needs, referred by Harrow Schools, were engaging in the service.

Prospects Services - Careers Information and Advice and Guidance

58. The conclusions of this assessment undertaken in February 2015 was that the implications are either positive or neutral in that the service will provide support to those young people that are in risk of disengaging or not in education, employment or training.
59. The assessment did not identify any potential for unlawful conduct or disproportionate impact and conclude that all opportunities to advance equality are being addressed.
60. During the monitoring of the contracts, data on the ethnic profile of the service users has been gathered and shows:
- June 2020 data show that amongst the 102 young people that are NEET, 70 are male and 35 are White British/White Other. There would be a positive impact therefore as the numbers potentially accessing the service would be higher for this ethnic group.
 - December 2019 NEET figures show that from the cohort of young people resident in Harrow that have SEN is 822. Of this number, 13 are not in education, employment or training. The local authority has a statutory responsibility to provide this service for young people with SEN and therefore there will be a positive impact.
61. Prior to issuing the Direct Awards, officers will collate up to date data and refresh the EqlAs to reflect the current local community demographics.

Council Priorities

62. The recommendations in this report contribute to the following Council Priorities:
- **Tackling poverty and inequality** supporting children and young people into employment and good emotional and mental health.
 - **Addressing health and social care inequality** by providing high quality services for Children and Young People particularly in the context of covid and the increasing prevalence of poor mental health.
 - **Thriving economy** to support vulnerable children and young people continue in education, employment and training.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer:

Jo Frost, on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer

Date: 5th October 2020

Statutory Officer:

Blessing Enejo, on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 15 October 2020

Statutory Officer:

Lisa Taylor *on behalf of* the Head of Procurement

Date: 5 October 2020

Statutory Officer:

Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director of People

Date: 28 October 2020

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO as it impacts on all Wards

EqIA carried out: NO

EqIA data has been refreshed as above and will be continually monitored and updated during the contract period.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Priya Ganatra, People Services, Strategic Commissioning Manager.

Priya.ganatra@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

Call-in waived by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

NO