

Report to Alan Sinclair, Director of Adults and Health

September 2022

YMCA Blended Counselling Contract Extension

Report by Catherine Galvin, Assistant Director Commissioning, Adult Services and Health

Electoral division(s): All

Summary

West Sussex County Council contracted YMCA Downslink to provide Blended Counselling as of the 1st of November 2018, to run three years until 31st of October 2021, with the option of a 2-year extension.

The contract is designed and monitored by the Children and Young People Joint Commissioning Unit (CYP JCU). The contract is with West Sussex County Council; however, all financial accounting and budget responsibilities defaults to the NHS element of the CYP JCU budget.

Blended Counselling is a key component of West Sussex's Emotional Wellbeing Offer and throughout 2022-2023 YMCA Downslink will have a lead role in the implementation of the new West Sussex Single Point of Advice (SPOA).

Recommendation

The Director of Adults and Health is requested to approve the extension of the contract with YMCA Downslink to supply Blended Counselling for children aged 11-18 in West Sussex by applying the +2 year extension provision in the contract until 31st October 2023.

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The Contract with YMCA Downslink to provide Blended Counselling began in November 2018, to run three years until October 2021, with the option of a 2 year extension.
- 1.2 In 2018 the Service was competitively tendered and YMCA Downslink were successful with the most economically advantageous tender.

- 1.3 The blended counselling offer sits below the threshold for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and is the only universally available 'no-cost' counselling offer for Children and Young People in West Sussex. The service sees around 1,500 Children and Young People per annum and in 21/22 recorded greater than 12,000 clinical contacts with children.
- 1.4 The services offer a range of counselling modalities including Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, art therapy and Systemic Family Therapy.
- 1.5 Delivery over the 3 years has been satisfactory with no contractual censure or challenge made by the commissioners.
- 1.6 The original contract ended on the 31st of Oct 2021 and moved to implied terms pending renewal. Agreement to renew has been delayed until now because:
 - Initial consideration was given to novating the contract to an NHS contract as all funding comes from NHS Integrated Care Board. This was explored and it was deemed to be legally too complex compared to agreeing an extension of the West Sussex County Council contract.
 - It has taken time with the NHS Integrated Care Board to agree the increased funding envelope. This is now set in the Children and Young People Joint Commissioning Unit base budget for 22/23 and 23/24 and so contracting can be agreed.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 The proposal is for a 2 year contract extension, applied retrospectively, to run from 1st of November 2021 to 31st of Oct 2023. The extension value is £1.2 Million over 2 years (£616,000 per annum). This service is fully funded by the NHS and is cost neutral to the Local Authority (though the Local Authority is the contract owner). The extension includes an uplift of £154K per annum for the 2 year period, to address the significant waiting list for the service.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 The possibility of returning to the market was explored but the original tender and our understanding of the market indicates there are no other providers sufficiently set up for this specialist provision.
- 3.2 The possibility of not having a 13-25 counselling offer was explored but the significant current Mental Health risk to Children and Young People in West Sussex meant this would be a regressive and high-risk step.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 Consultation has been had with NHS colleagues within the Integrated Care Board, Foundations for Our Future, Director of Children, Young People, and Learning, YMCA Downslink.

5 Finance

5.1 Revenue consequences Integrated Care Board (ICB)

	Current Year 2022/23 £m	Year 2 2023/24 £m	Year 3 2024/25 £m	Year 4 2025/26 £m
Revenue budget	0.616	0.359	0	0
Change from Proposal	0	0	0	0
Remaining budget	0.616	0.359	0	0

5.2 Payments are direct from the ICB managed by the responsible officer within the ICB who holds the budget for the contract.

5.3 The effect of the proposal:

(a) How the proposal represents good value

21/22 performance of the contract saw 1561 referrals, with over 918 children receiving 12,394 total clinical contacts (averaging >12 contacts per child). The cost of for that year was £551k. With a cost for counselling of £601 per child and £44 per session. This is a reasonable cost.

(b) Future savings/efficiencies being delivered

This is cost neutral to WSCC, however the WSCC service YES (Youth Emotional Support) is the main referrer to this service, as such it could be said that YMCA Blended Counselling has a positive cost impact on YES provision.

(c) Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact

N/A

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
West Sussex County Council Adult Services may not be in the position to fund this service should NHS funding cease.	Assurance has been provided from Senior Finance Officer at Sussex Health, that the funding sits in base budget and is not at risk for 2022/23 and 2023/24
Though Sussex ICB intend to recommission the service at contract	As the funder of this contract, and a party to the contract via the Joint Commissioning Unit, Sussex ICB is clear on the potential for redundancy costs

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
end (via tender), there is a possibility of redundancy liabilities should there be change in the provision and life-for-like posts not available.	and this may sit in the financial envelope for 23/24. Sufficient funding is available to cover this eventuality.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

- 7.1 In terms of [Our Council Plan](#) this provision matches the commitment to keeping people safe from vulnerable situations by providing a universal wellbeing offer which prevents escalation to higher tier Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision or Children’s Social Work.
- 7.2 Legal implications
- The Council will enter into a services contract using terms and conditions, approved by Commercial Legal Services and compliant with section 10 of the Council’s Standing Orders on Procurement and Contracts.
- 7.3 **Equality duty and human rights assessment** – Due regard is given to equalities duty in the specification of the contracted service. An Equalities Impact Assessment carried out at specification design remains applicable and YMCA apply Equalities duty in their internal quality assessments.
- 7.4 **Climate change** – Not applicable
- 7.5 **Crime and disorder** – Not applicable
- 7.6 **Public health** – This service is commissioned in partnership with Sussex Integrated Care Board who cover the full cost. The offer of counselling is a Children and Young People element of the [West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy](#).
- 7.7 **Social value** – The proposed service is expected to support the wellbeing of more than 1000 young people in West Sussex per annum.

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Appendices None

Background papers None