

Contract for speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy for children with EHCPs

Report being considered by:	Schools Forum on 20th June 2022		
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Item for:	Information	By:	All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This purpose of this report is to inform the Schools Forum about re commissioning of the therapy service for children who have speech and language therapy, occupational therapy or physiotherapy written in to their Education, Health and Care Plans as an educational need.

2. Recommendation

2.1 To note the information in this report.

Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Council or the Executive for final determination?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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3. Introduction

3.1 West Berkshire Council commissions speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy for children who have one or more of these therapies stipulated in their Education, Health and Care Plan as an educational need. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide these therapies to children where they are written in to an EHCP as an educational need.

3.2 WBC only commissions therapy services which it has a statutory duty to provide. Provision of speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy for children who do not have an EHCP is the responsibility of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in Health. Therapy assessments carried out as part of an Education, Health and Care assessment are also the responsibility of the CCG. The Local Authority becomes responsible for therapy provision at the point at which an EHCP stipulating one of these therapies as an educational need is finalised.

3.3 The Council's contract for therapy services for children with EHCPs is currently held by the Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT). BHFT also have a contract with the CCG to deliver therapy services which are the responsibility of the CCG.

3.4 The therapy service commissioned by WBC delivers speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy to mainstream, resourced and

(maintained) special schools in West Berkshire. Most children with therapy in their EHCP have a therapy programme which is delivered by school staff and monitored and overseen by a therapist. Some children may receive direct therapy either individually or in a small group; this would usually be delivered as a block of therapy over a specified time period. The service also provides training to staff in schools.

3.5 The current contract cost is £323,820 per annum which is funded from the HNB. The contract expires on 31st August 2022.

4. Joint Commissioning of therapy services

4.1 It was agreed in 2021 by the Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership Children's Programme Board that therapies should in future be commissioned on a Berkshire West footprint as a joint arrangement involving West Berkshire Council, Brighter Futures for Children (Reading) and Wokingham Borough Council, with Wokingham as the lead authority.

4.2 The three Local Authorities have agreed a new service specification for the joint service, based on existing service specifications. The contract was advertised in February 2022 with a submission date of 29th April 2022.

4.3 Tenders are currently being evaluated by a panel with representation from all three areas.

4.4 The new contract, when awarded, will commence in September 2022. Each Local Authority will purchase an agreed amount of therapy to meet its own needs within the overall contract.

4.5 Due to procurement regulations it is not possible to share any more details of the process at this stage. However, it is likely that the cost of the new contract will be higher than the current cost due to inflationary and salary increases.

4.6 The final outcome of the tendering process will be reported to the Schools Forum when a decision has been made and when it is possible to make the outcome of the process public.

Appendices

None