

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Cllr Culhane - Cabinet Member for Children and Education

Date: 28 March 2022

Report Title: Approval to the financial contributions to CCG-held Speech and Language Therapy contract

Report author: Joe Gunning, Programme Lead, Children's Commissioning

Responsible Director: Jacqui McShannon – Director of Children's Services

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to secure and continue the provision Speech and Language Therapy Services (SALT). These services provide critical, specialist and statutory services to vulnerable children, families and young people in Hammersmith and Fulham.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet Member for Children and Education:

1. Approves the annual financial contribution of £1,112,074 towards the contract held by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for Speech and Language Therapy services provided by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH) for four years from April 2022 to March 2026. Total £4,448,296.
2. Approves an additional financial contribution of £67,460 per annum towards the contract held by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for Speech and Language Therapy services provided by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH) for an integrated Speech Therapist post within the Council's Joint Communication Team for a period of four years. Total £269,840.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Providing services that enable children and young people to reach their full potential.
Creating a compassionate council	Supporting critical services which will support local young people and their families to access services earlier and

	more easily.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Maintaining high standards of existing contracts.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Supporting critical services which will support young people and their families to access high quality local services
Taking pride in H&F	A high-quality service supporting some of our most vulnerable residents to access services.

Financial Impact

Speech and Language Therapy Services (SALT)

The CCG held contract for the provision of Speech and Language Therapy Service is funded by a budgeted contribution within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block (HNB) of £800,000 for Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F) resident pupils.

The balance of the contract value of £312,074 for non-H&F resident pupil SALT is expected to be recovered either:

- from other local authorities for out of borough pupils placed in H&F schools
or
- met within the ordinarily available offer by special school providers within their overall place funding and top-up resources.

Negotiations are ongoing with providers and special schools to agree the process for achieving this.

The 2021/22 forecast reported in the Corporate Revenue Monitor for month 6 is £0.8m spend which assumes full recovery of the SALT income. If the income for the financial year (FY) 2021/22 cannot be recovered, there is a risk that £312,074 will need to be met from the DSG HNB. The Council has committed as part of the DfE High Needs Safety Valve agreement to deliver savings of c£1.5m, further mitigations of c£300,000 would be required if the income can't be recovered.

Language Advisory Service

The Language Advisory Service is to be funded at an annual cost of £285,000 and is reflected in the HNB forecasts as part of the DfE High Needs Safety Valve agreement. The £68,000 included within the recommendation will be funded from this budget.

*Tony Burton, Head of Finance for Children's Services and Education, 25/01/2022
Verified by Emily Hill, Director of Finance, 1 February 2022*

Legal Implications

The recommendations at 1 and 2 (to Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust) above are for financial contributions, not for the award of contracts. The Council has powers to make these payments under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

John Sharland, Senior Solicitor (Contracts and Procurement), 14/12/2021

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Proposals and Analysis of Options

Speech and Language Therapy Services

1. Speech and Language Services are provided by Central London Community Health Trusts and contracted by the CCG. Approval is sought in this paper to release financial contributions towards this contract. This is a long-standing contract held by the CCG to which the Local Authority contributes annually in order to meet the LA's statutory responsibilities. The ongoing commitment by the Local Authority to this provision represents the development of a long-term strategic relationship with the newly formed Integrated Care Partnership to secure statutory provision whilst promoting early identification and help.
2. The Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) contract value covers expenditure for the provision of statutory SALT services to both resident and out of borough pupils as detailed within Section F of their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The Council is currently implementing recharge mechanisms with placing authorities for out of borough pupils attending H&F schools. The Commissioning Alliance have been consulted and subsequently placing authorities have been issued with the associated schedules and provided with the opportunity to review the information provided. Invoices are in the process of being issued for historic costs. Officers are currently regularising this within Special Schools core funding to negate the need for the Local Authority to recoup therapy costs from placing authorities. A process is being implemented for ongoing recoupment for out of borough students in mainstream schools.
3. In addition to implementing recharge mechanisms, an ongoing piece of work is underway to implement an early intervention Speech and Language Therapy offer with a view to ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs.

4. The new Joint Communication Team which launches in January 2022 will enable children to access Speech and Language services earlier and easier, specifically without the need for an EHCP through a coordinated triage, assessment and intervention model. This approach will improve access to Speech and Language services by creating an ordinarily available and early intervention offer ensuring those children that require support receive this when needed. The service will provide a suite of central services across the five key areas including: supporting parents, learning environment, school workforce, identification and intervention. There will be focus across key transitions points including early years to school age and secondary to post 16. The new Joint Communication Team will provide an integrated approach to provision with established relationships and links with CLCH and has been included within our HNB forecast. CLCH have been key partners in the design and development of the new service provision which will ensure integration and alignment within the core contract alongside clinical oversight.

Option 1: Agree to the financial contributions for the Speech and Language services, recommendations one and two. (Recommended)

5. This will secure existing provision enabling the Local Authority to continue to meet its statutory responsibilities for those children and young people who continue to require access to specialist Speech and Language Therapy services whilst investing in improving accessibility to services and provision through a new early intervention offer.

Option 2: Do not agree the financial contributions for the Speech and Language services, recommendations one and two. (Not recommended)

6. The Council would not be able to meet its statutory responsibilities if funding and in turn provision was to cease.

Option 3: Agree the financial contributions for the Speech and Language services (recommendation one) but do not agree funding to support development of an integrated early intervention offer (recommendation two). (Not recommended)

7. Whilst the Council would meet its statutory obligations through recommendation one, not approving recommendation two would significantly impact the development of an early intervention speech and language offer detailed in paragraph four of this report and would impact the commitments made in the transformation programme. This option is therefore not recommended.

Reasons for Decision

8. The decision enables the Local Authority to discharge its statutory duties in securing provision specified in Section F of the EHC Plan (s.42 Children and Families Act 2014) whilst supporting ongoing transformation work in developing a robust ordinarily available offer that supports meeting speech, language and communication needs earlier and without the need for an EHC Plan.

Equality Implications

9. The financial contributions outlined in this report help to secure continuity of existing provision supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families, therefore there are no negative equality implications for groups with protected characteristics, under the Equality Act 2010, arising from the approval of these proposals. The implementation of the new Joint Communication Team will have a positive impact on children and young people in the borough ensuring children are able to receive timely support.

Risk Management Implications

10. The value of the Service and continuing need has been clearly defined within the report in accordance with the council's Ruthlessly Financially Efficient priority, furthermore a course of action has been outlined that ensures continuity of service following engagement with partners to review and develop the offer in line with strategic objectives. It will also enable providers to continue to provide critical and vital support to vulnerable children, young people and families.

Implications verified by: Ray Chitty, Head of Insurance, tel 07739315565, 20/01/2022

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

11. There are no climate or ecologic emergency implications as a result of this report.

Implications verified by: Hinesh Mehta, Strategic Lead, tel 07960470125, 31/01/2022

Local Economy and Social Value Implications

12. There are no Social Value implications as a result of this report. This is because this is for a budget contribution rather than a contract award. The policy on social value therefore does not apply.

Implications verified by: Ilaria Agueci, Social Value Officer, tel 07776672878, 26/01/2021