

## LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

**Report to:** Cllr Sanderson, Deputy Leader

**Date:** 05/09/25

**Report Title:** Approval of the financial contributions to the ICB held Speech and Language Therapy contract

**Report author:** Joel Thompson, Commissioning and Contracts Officer

**Responsible Director:** Jacqui McShannon, Executive Director for Peoples

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### SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to continue the financial contributions to the Speech and Language Therapy Services (SALT) contract held by Northwest London Integrated Care Board. These services provide critical, specialist and statutory services to vulnerable children, families and young people in Hammersmith and Fulham.

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### The Cabinet Member for Children and Education:

1. Approves the annual financial contribution of £638,753 towards the contract held by Northwest London Integrated Care Board for Speech and Language Therapy services provided by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH) for five years from March 2025 to April 2030, for a total of £3,193,765.
2. Approves an additional financial contribution of £71,636 per annum towards the contract held by the Northwest London Integrated Care Board 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 five years, for a total of £358,180.

**Wards Affected:** All

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| 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 Service

1. The Speech and Language Therapy Service provided by Central London Community Health Trusts and contracted by the NWL ICB is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block (HNB) of £638k for Hammersmith and Fulham resident pupils.
2. The 2025/26 financial year forecast reported in period 4 is £0.638m. The forecast assumes £14,250 SALT income recovery for non-resident pupils. Risk of unrecovered income will be met from DSG HNB.

### Integrated Speech Therapist post

3. This post is within the Joint Communication Team (JCT), funded by the DSG HNB. The 2025/26 financial year forecast reported in period 4 for the team is £0.283m. The £0.072m will be funded from this budget.

*Prepared by Ozioma Onwochei, Principal Accountant for Corporate Finance, 17/09/2025*

*Reviewed by: Tony Burton, Head of Finance, Children's Services and Education, 18/09/2025*

*Verified by James Newman, AD Finance, 12 November 2025*

## Legal Implications

The payments to the ICB will be formalised in an SLA.

*Angela Hogan, Senior Solicitor (Contracts and Procurement), 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025*

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## Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

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## 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 NWL ICB. Approval is sought in this paper to release financial contributions towards this contract. This is a long-standing contract held by the NWL ICB to which the Local Authority contributes annually 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 ICB 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 in H&F schools as detailed within Section F of their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
3. The early intervention Joint Communication Team was established in 2022 and provide a robust SEN Support offer in building capacity across settings to identify and meet speech, language and communication needs through universal and targeted provision. A small specialist pathway is provided through this service for more complex needs through 0.8 FTE from CLCH integrated into the service.
4. In parallel the Council has commissioned an independent review of the speech and language economy (0-25) in the context of constrained resources across the partnership. This should provide a shared understanding of current commissioned activity across the local area, along with opportunities to redesign to meet presenting needs linked to our Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) guidance. Whilst this paper provides the governance for a five-year period, contributions are made on annual basis in the event of any variation required.
5. The contract provides for services in 65 settings across Hammersmith and Fulham supporting over 450 young people. 85% of capacity is directly deployable with non-deployable capacity delivering in key areas including the provision of statutory advice for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments. Benchmarking of costs per hour based on the Royal Speech and Language Association research are comparable reflecting value for money.

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

6. 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 early intervention services and provision to meet needs.

7. This is an existing contractual arrangement held by the NWL ICB. The service is not being re-procured but continued under the current contract, to which the Local Authority contributes annually. This approach maintains continuity of provision and supports the development of a long-term strategic relationship with the ICB.

**Option 2: Do not agree the financial contribution and instead procure the provision of Speech and Language Therapy services independently. (Not recommended)**

8. This option involves the Council withdrawing its financial contribution to the NWL ICB and commissioning Speech and Language Therapy services directly. This option would have an adverse impact on the financial efficiency of the service for the Local Authority and disrupt the continuity of the service for children and young people.
9. By pooling procurement activity via the NWL ICB, the Council can leverage greater market influence and secure better value for money. The Local Authority does not have sufficient volume or scale to drive market competition independently, and standalone commissioning would likely result in higher costs and reduced efficiency.
10. Some children and young people receiving Speech and Language Therapy services access both health and education provision. Contributing to the ICB enables therapist consistency and streamlines service provision across these domains. Independent commissioning would risk fragmentation of services and loss of continuity for young people accessing the service.
11. Continued contribution to the ICB supports a long-term strategic relationship that strengthens joint working and integrated service delivery. Procuring independently would undermine this collaborative approach and reduce opportunities for system-wide transformation. This option is therefore not recommended.

**Option 3: Do not agree the financial contributions for the Speech and Language services, recommendations one and two. (Not recommended)**

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

**Option 4: Agree the financial contributions for the Speech and Language services (Option 1) but do not agree funding to support development of an integrated early intervention offer (Option 2). (Not recommended)**

13. Whilst the Council would meet its statutory obligations through recommendation one, not approving recommendation two would significantly impact the provision of an early intervention speech and language offer detailed in paragraph three of this report. This option is therefore not recommended.

## Reasons for Decision

14. 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.

## Procurement Implications

15. Contract Standing orders (19) require all procurement for High Value Contracts to be compliantly procured, either through competitive tender or, accessing suitable frameworks, or working collaboratively or in partnership with other Contracting Authorities (34). In this case, the subject of the contract (85142100 – Physiotherapy services) falls within the scope of the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime).
16. Procurement of Health care related services, in collaboration with other Contracting bodies can either be in the form of joint participation in a procurement exercise or the delegation of the procurement activity in its entirety to the Partner authority through a Section 75 Agreement, (NHS Act 2006). PSR regulations allows the Contracting Authority, in this case Northwest London Integrated Care Board, to direct award of contracts to incumbent suppliers in specific circumstances. Commissioners should seek confirmation from Northwest London Integrated Care Board that PSR requirements have been complied with.
17. In order to comply with our Transparency Duties. Officers, on completion of the necessary S75 documentation must create a project using the Council's capitalEourcing eProcurement portal and then create a contract entry (and upload a copy of the SLA).

*Joe Sardone Category Lead – People. Procurement and Commercial 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025*

## Equality Implications

18. 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. This provision particularly benefits Disabled children and young people and those from global majority backgrounds, who may face compounded barriers to accessing support. Our Joint Communication Team has also had a positive impact on children and young people in the borough ensuring children are able to receive timely support.

19. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and will be attached to this report in Annex 1. The EIA concludes that the continued funding of SALT services through the NW ICB will have a positive impact on several protected characteristics, particularly age, disability, and race. The service supports children and young people with SEND, including those with and without EHCPs, promoting early intervention and equitable access to communication support. The provision is culturally responsive and inclusive, helping to reduce barriers for children from global majority backgrounds. No adverse impacts were identified, and an action plan is in place to monitor service access by race and SEND status.

Yvonne Okiyo, Strategies Lead *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## **Risk Management Implications**

20. There is an operational risk of extending the suppliers that that LBH&F become dependent upon them and find it hard to disengage should there be an issue and/or that the quality of the interface and associated service declines due to supplier complacency.  
This risk should be reduced. It is advised that supplier performance engagement is made a key part of a ongoing review cycle and assessments.

*Implications verified by: Jules Binney, Risk and Assurance Manager, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2025*

## **Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications**

21. The Central London Community Health Trust have a [Green Plan 2024-2026](#) in place which informs their procurement procedures and contract specifications. This plan clearly outlines routes to reduce green house gas emissions through the reduction of energy usage, adoption of remote working, utilisation of public transit, and decarbonisation of corporate assets. Contract monitoring for the SALT service will ensure alignment with this plan to respond to the Climate Emergency.

*Implications verified by: Charlotte Slaven, Head of Climate Strategy & Engagement, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025.*

## **Local Economy and Social Value Implications**

22. 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 Harry Buck, Social Value Officer (Procurement), 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025*

## **Annex 1**

Equalities Impact Assessment:

[2025\\_2030 SALT NW ICB Contribution EIA .docx](#)