

ITEM 4

Dedicated Schools Grant SEND Therapies Contract Resources Report 7th October 2024

Recommendations

The Schools Forum is asked to: -

1. Note the Council's plans for recommissioning SALT and OT services.
2. Endorse the remodelling and procurement plans outlined in this report.
3. Endorse the inclusion of spot purchasing costs (£266,250) into the main contract as set out in the budget in section 6 of the report.
4. Note that the contract will be for an initial period of 3 years, with an option to extend for a further 2 years (3+1+1 model).

Members of Forum allowed to vote: - All school and academy members are able to vote. Only early years representatives from the non-schools' members are able to vote. Non-school members even if represented by school staff are not eligible to vote.

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Council's recommissioning of Speech, Language, and Communication (SALT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) services) following the previous discussion in June. It outlines key developments, stakeholder consultations, and the strategic direction for future service delivery.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council, alongside South-West London ICB, has historically been jointly commissioning Croydon Health Services (CHS) to provide essential SALT and OT support to children and young people in the community and schools.
- 2.2 In June, the Commissioning Service presented a report to Schools Forum detailing the pressures facing the current services. These included:
 - a) An escalation in the number of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) from 2,963 in 2018 to 4,960 in June 2024 without a corresponding budgetary increase;
 - b) High waiting times for both speech and language therapy and occupational therapy services;
 - c) Concerns from schools about the lack of provision in mainstream schools;
 - d) The current service providers, CHS and Allen Speech and Language Service, are operating at full capacity;
 - e) The impact of ICB's direct award of their contribution to CHS on joint commissioning.
 - f)
- 2.3 Since that report, further consultations have been held with key stakeholders, including:
 - a) South-West London ICB Commissioners
 - b) Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists at CHS
 - c) Croydon Locality Send Support Service
 - d) Schools Forum Chair and Subgroup Chairs
 - e)
- 2.4 These consultations have informed a new model that better addresses the growing demand, high waiting times, and the current lack of therapy support in mainstream schools.

3. Key developments and proposed delivery model.

- 3.1 There is consensus among stakeholders that the most effective way to address these challenges is to invest in universal provision and direct delivery within mainstream schools. This will ensure effective and timely interventions that support the learning and

development of children and young people, while reducing reliance on statutory interventions.

- 3.2 Disaggregated Resource and Alignment of ICB and DSG funding** Consideration has been given to how best to deploy the disaggregated resources from both South-West London ICB and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to maximise return on investment and deliver seamless services. The agreed approach to a remodelled service is as follows.
- 3.3 Croydon Health Services (CHS) will deliver a comprehensive, non-statutory, borough-wide service, which includes universal, targeted, and specialist therapy services for all children and young people aged 0-18.
- 3.4 This service will be funded by South-West London ICB and will not be part of the forthcoming procurement process.
- 3.5 The provision will include early years services (Chatterbox), services in special schools, and Enhanced Learning Provisions (ELPs).
- 3.6 The Council, on behalf of the Schools Forum, will commission statutory SALT services for children with EHCPs on a cluster basis to ensure localised service delivery and targeted interventions.

4. Cluster-Based Commissioning Model

- 4.1 The borough will be divided into 5 clusters of mainstream schools. Each cluster will receive a tailored service to reflect the specific needs of its schools, with service delivery shaped by the schools within each cluster. Clusters will be allocated funding proportionate to the number of EHCPs they represent, with a 5% deprivation weighting applied to Cluster 1 (the north of the borough).

4.2 The proposed clusters are:

Cluster 1: Schools in the following wards: Crystal Palace and Upper Norwood, Norbury Park, Norbury and Pollards Hill, Thornton Heath, Bensham Manor, West Thornton, Shirley North, Shirley South, Selhurst, South Norwood

Cluster 2: Schools in the following wards: Woodside, Addiscombe West, Addiscombe East, Shirley, Park Hill & Whitgift

Cluster 3: Schools in the following wards: Fairfield, Broad Green, Waddon, South Croydon

Cluster 4: Schools in the following wards: Selsdon and Addington Village, New Addington North, New Addington South, Selsdon Vale and Forestdale, Sanderstead

Cluster 5: Schools in the following wards: Purley Oaks and Riddlesdown, Purley and Woodcote, Coulsdon Town, Kenley and Old Coulsdon

4.3 This locality approach will:

- a) Allow schools to influence the prioritisation of cases.
- b) Ensure quicker response times.
- c) Enhance outcomes for children and young people through closer, responsive service delivery.

The Council's Commissioners will collaborate with CHS and SW London ICB to put in place effective contract management, quality assurance and clinical governance arrangements to ensure commissioned services are of a high quality

5. Summary of New Delivery Model

Table 1

ICB Funded Universal Offer	DSG Funded Statutory Offer
£1.7m	£1,041,250
Provider: CHS	Provider: Multiple suppliers
Services include:	Services include:
-Early Years, special schools, and ELPs	- SLT assessments and interventions for EHCPs
-SLT for Autism diagnostic pathway	- Cluster-based SLT provision
- Hearing impairment support	- Full range of SLT interventions
- EHCNA health advice	
- Developmental Language Disorder protocol	

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 To fund the proposals, an annual allocation of approximately £1,041,250 from the DSG is required – from the High Needs and Early years blocks. This includes a 25% uplift to meet increasing demand. CHS will oversee quality assurance and governance to ensure consistent service delivery across clusters. This will be funded as follows:

Service Area	Type of Service	Budget 2023/24	25% uplift	Budget 2024/5
Children's	Speech and language - £123k (From Early Years block)	123,000.00	30,750.00	153,750.00
Children's	Education / Commissioning £497k (From High Needs block)	497,000.00	124,250.00	621,250.00
Education	Spot Purchase (From High Needs block)	213,000.00	53,250.00	266,250.00
		833,000.00	208,250.00	1,041,250.00

7 Invitation to Tender

- 7.1 Subject to the Council's Commissioning Board clearance, the Invitation to Tender will be published in the second week of October. Evaluations will be conducted in November - December. Allowing for mobilisation and TUPE, it is anticipated that new providers will start delivery in April 2025.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The remodelled service will end the "assess and discharge" model and focus on providing continuous interventions within mainstream schools, aligning with statutory requirements and addressing the growing demand. These changes will ensure seamless integration of DSG funded services with South-West London ICB's universal and specialist services and

ultimately, ensure children and young people receive the right services at the right time in the right place.

9 Recommendations

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4. Note that the contract will be for an initial period of 3 years, with an option to extend for a further 2 years (3+1+1 model).1

Author's name: Alfred Donkor

Author's job title: Strategic Commissioner, Children's Integrated Commissioning and Procurement, London Borough of Croydon

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