



## **ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSIONING INTO THE NEW CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING MODEL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report seeks agreement from the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee to include the current Public Health funding, allocated specifically for emotional health and wellbeing support for children and young people, within the new local model to be jointly commissioned from April 2024. The joint commission between Public Health, the Children and Young People's Department and Wirral Place Integrated Care Board (ICB) will transform available support and will provide a more effective and co-ordinated approach to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The activities outlined in this report support the vision of the Wirral Plan 2021-2026, specifically the themes of 'Brighter Futures' and 'Active Lives' and Priority Area 3 of the Wirral Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-27 to 'Ensure the best start in life for all children and young people'.

The proposed actions affect all wards within the borough and is a key decision.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is recommended to authorise the Director of Public Health to:

1. Allocate the budget for the current mental health commissions funded from the Public Health Grant, into the joint commission led by Wirral Place ICB for the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Model, for a contract period of five years (1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2029). With the option of two one-year extensions in accordance with the spend profile in paragraph 4.5 of this report.
2. Agree in consultation with the Director of Children's services the Council's preferred tenderer, and notify the Wirral Place ICB of this decision.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 To ensure that Public Health funding for mental health support is appropriately and fully integrated into the new model for children and young people in Wirral.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 It is necessary to recommission the services highlighted in order to comply with Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Wirral Council Contract Procedure rules. Other options related to contract length, contract value and several smaller contracts (the current situation) were considered. However, this work is a transformational project across the whole system of support for emotional health and wellbeing for children and young people. In order to meet the needs of children and young people more effectively, increase access, improve outcomes, and provide value for money it is considered that this support should be a joint commissioning venture (with Wirral ICB acting as the accountable body) rather than stand-alone commissions.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The recent Children's Society report on wellbeing, The Good Childhood Report 2022, shows that children's happiness with their lives continues to decline in the UK. In Wirral, things are no different, as evidenced by the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment: a considerable number of children and young people are struggling with their emotional health and wellbeing. Stretched services, tight thresholds and long waiting lists can make it very hard for children and young people to get the help that they need when they need it. This is putting pressure on children, young people, families, communities and the many teams and organisations trying to help them.
- 3.2 Whilst there are a wide range of effective services supporting children and young people, the offer across Wirral is not well coordinated. Many services work independently, making it difficult for professionals, young people, and parents to navigate what is available. It also makes it very hard to understand the issues within specific areas in the system, as it is not possible to track a child or young person's journey through services or understand what someone has accessed before they hit a crisis point.
- 3.3 The Children's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation project is a partnership project between Wirral Council and Wirral Place Integrated Care Board (ICB). The project intention is to bring emotional health and wellbeing services together to provide a single route to access support in Wirral, to make it easier for children and young people to get the support they need when they need it. The scope of this project is all services that support emotional health and wellbeing for children and young people aged 0 -18, with a GP in Wirral and/or resident in Wirral.
- 3.4 The joint ICB/Council project group has worked through Wirral's Future in Mind steering group to understand the challenges in the existing system and design a more effective model of services. At various points, professionals with expertise in other areas have also supported the design of different elements. In addition to this,

the Council has worked with different groups of children and young people to understand their priorities for this project, as well as to ask for and test ideas.

- 3.5 An Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment has been completed to help inform and shape the provision of Wirral's future model and to prioritise and identify key areas for development and ensure that any decisions are based on the available evidence. The needs assessment includes quantitative data on emotional health and wellbeing in Wirral, alongside qualitative research involving key groups to best inform service development.
- 3.6 The new model will be in place from April 2024 and will focus on empowering children and young people to learn how to look after their wellbeing and make it easy to access extra support when they need it, as well as share their learning with their peers. A key element of the model will be a Single Point of Access to provide a co-ordinated approach to support and prevent duplication/multiple referral routes.
- 3.7 The commissions will support delivery against outcomes included within the Public Health Outcomes Framework. Furthermore a joint outcomes framework has been developed, which incorporates overall outcomes of the new model, including those from a range of perspectives, for example, individual outcomes for children and young people accessing support and improvements in their emotional health and wellbeing, parent/carer/trusted adults knowing how to support their children and young people, and professionals accessing training, reporting greater knowledge about emotional health and wellbeing and how to provide support.
- 3.8 This model and the future proposed contract meet the requirements of the Wirral Local Delivery Plan where Children's Mental Health is a specific priority locally. Within the Wirral Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-27 there is a priority to 'Ensure the best start in life for all children and young people' which will be supported through this commission.
- 3.9 The current contracts will continue during the commissioning process and a period of service mobilisation will be built into the tender process to ensure there is no loss of service and a seamless transition for existing service users is maintained.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The specific funding contribution to the model from the ring-fenced Public Health Grant relates to current commissions with Kooth Digital Health Limited and Action for Children. One-year contracts (with the option to extend for a further year) were awarded to Kooth Digital Health Limited and Action for Children following a tender process in 2021. Contracts commenced on the 1 September 2021 and are due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. To ensure compliance with Public Contract Regulations and Wirral Council contract procedure rules it is necessary to retender this service.
- 4.2 Permission was sought and granted for direct awards with the current providers for the interim period between current contract end and the joint commissioning of the transformational new model. This will enable support to be continued for children and young people and bring the commissions in line with the new model timeline.

- 4.3 The existing contract values are £101,310 for Kooth Digital Health Limited, and £238,436 for Action for Children, per annum.
- 4.4 The ringfenced Public Health grant currently funds the services highlighted. The value and availability of the Public Health Grant for 2023/24 onwards has been recently announced and provides each local authority with a 3.3% cash terms increase.
- 4.5 The expenditure for the model at present levels would be £339,746 per annum, and £2,378,222 over the potential seven-year term from the Public Health Grant. Inflationary uplifts may be applied in line with Wirral Place ICB agreement and the resource available within the Public Health Grant.
- 4.6 The commission will include funding from Wirral Place ICB which has already been agreed through their appropriate governance structures. Funding from the Children's and Young People's Department budget which will support specific aspects of the model have also been through the appropriate governance structures.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Wirral Place ICB will be the host procurement body as the strategic and financial weight of the project sits predominantly with the ICB's Health and Social Care agenda. The commission will be compliant with their contract regulations and procurement rules.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) may be applicable. The incumbent providers will provide the Council with anonymised details of staff engaged in the provision of relevant services, who may be subject to TUPE. This information will be shared with the tender documentation. It is the responsibility of tenderers to liaise with incumbent suppliers to establish whether TUPE regulations apply to the contract and to ensure that TUPE information provided by incumbent suppliers is accurate.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 It is necessary to commission the support highlighted in order to comply with the Public Contract Regulations 2015. There is always a risk of disruption to service provision during service redesign, recommissioning, and commencement of new services. To mitigate against this and minimise disruption, adequate time to plan for, and implement the mobilisation of new services, is built into the procurement process between contract award and commencement.
- 7.2 The procurement process is also subject to scrutiny and at risk of legal challenge. Particular regard is given to contract procedure rules and relevant legislation at all stages of the process. Wirral Place ICB will be the host procurement body as the strategic and financial weight of the project sits predominantly with the ICB's Health and Social Care agenda. The procurement will be supported by the Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit and its technical procurement team.

7.3 In the current challenging financial climate, the impact of any future reductions in budget or policy implications on the amount of funding available for Public Health is unknown. The value and availability of the Public Health grant is indicative of 1.3% for 2024/25 but is not known beyond that. This risk will be mitigated by the insertion of appropriate termination clauses in the contracts.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 There has been extensive engagement and consultation with key stakeholders in order to inform the development and design of the future model. This has included:

- Engagement sessions with a wide range of stakeholders to understand their current strengths and challenges and gain insight into the issues that are affecting Wirral children and young people
- Engagement with children, young people and parents/carers
- Qualitative insight work with local children and young people to understand their needs and the ways support can be tailored to meet their needs
- Worked through the Future in Mind Steering Group to shape the project
- Strengthened everyone's understanding of what a more effective model needs to achieve by conducting an in-depth strategic needs assessment across partners (completed in August 2022 and updated in November 2022)
- Gained a solid understanding from key professionals of the appetite for a new way of working as well as potential barriers and challenges of the new model and Single Point of Access.
- Worked with diverse groups of professionals to generate and refine ideas about how the new model could work.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 The Equality Impact Assessment for these decisions can be found at:  
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 During the procurement process, bids will be evaluated on any social value added to the service. Bidders will need to consider and demonstrate how they can have a positive impact on Wirral's environment and climate.

10.2 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no direct impact on emissions of carbon dioxide.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Community Wealth building is a new approach to economic development that proposes a more common-sense approach to how we create a good local economy. Emotional health and wellbeing is essential for resilient communities.

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**APPENDICES**

N/A

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Wirral Children’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment; November 22
- Action for Children - Preventative and Early Intervention Secondary School Based Counselling Service contract
- Kooth Digital Health - Young People’s Confidential Online Counselling and Advice Service contract
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board: Finance, Investment and Resources Committee Meeting; Wirral’s Children’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation Project. April 2023

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

This report is being considered by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in accordance with Section 2.2(c) of its Terms of Reference:

All Public Health functions (in co-ordination with those functions reserved to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s statutory health functions)

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH COMMITTEE</b> (Overarching Public Health re-commissions paper)	<b>19<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>
<b>CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE</b> Proposed Recommissioning of Public Health Services for Children and Young People	<b>1<sup>st</sup> December 2020</b>
<b>CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE</b> The New Model for Children and Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing	<b>21<sup>st</sup> June 2023</b>