



Northumberland

County Council

CABINET.

11th July 2023.

Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Service for Northumberland – Permission to Award Contract.

Report of: Cllr Veronica Jones – Improving Public Health and Wellbeing.

Lead Officer: Gill O'Neill - Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the background to the need to provide a drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service as part of the Council's statutory public health functions, to confirm that the procurement exercise has commenced, and to seek permission to award the contract once the exercise is complete.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the award of the contract to the successful contractor for £3,356,709 per annum. The maximum contract period is October 2023 – March 2030.

3. Link to Corporate Plan

- 3.1 The delivery of a drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service supports the vision of our Corporate Plan 2023 – 2026 by tackling inequalities and achieving value for money.
- 3.2 People who use drugs and alcohol problematically are among those most likely to experience health and social inequality. They are least likely to seek help from services and will often suffer discrimination and stigma. Drug treatment is evidenced as reducing inequality for individuals and communities, by improving health, reducing crime and improving social functioning¹.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586111/PE_Evidence_review_of_drug_treatment_outcomes.pdf

3.3 Drug and alcohol treatment is evidenced as being cost effective due to the savings created by the reduced health and social care burden and reduced criminal behaviour². The treatment service will also create economic benefits via employment opportunities for local people, the use of community spaces, attracting additional investment from Government and supporting its client group to become economically active.

4. Key issues

4.1 Following permission from Cabinet in January 2023, a formal tender exercise to secure a drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service has been initiated by the Council and a successful applicant organisation will be identified in July 2023, via an open and transparent procurement process. The new contract will commence on 1st October 2023.

4.2 The length of the contract will be 4.5 years with the option of extending for a further 2 years. Maximum contract period: October 2023 – March 2030.

4.3 Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), local authorities have the duty to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of their local population by ensuring that there are public health services aimed at reducing drug and alcohol misuse. As a condition of receiving the Public Health Grant, local authorities are required to 'improve the take up of, and outcomes from, its drug and alcohol misuse treatment services'³

4.4 The contract price for the service is £3,356,709 per annum and £21,818,608 in total (maximum period of 6.5 years – see Procurement section below for detail). There is no financial implication for the Council as the service is fully funded via the Public Health Grant.

4.5 The re-commissioning of the service will create opportunities to develop service provision to ensure it can appropriately respond to new and emerging needs and demands within the local community. A comprehensive needs assessment has informed the commissioning process. The development of the service specification and procurement process has been considered through an inequalities lens to ensure a proportionate and targeted programme of work is offered.

5. Background

5.1 The use of drugs and alcohol is widespread within the UK, and although many people will use drugs and alcohol in moderation, even this can be harmful, and long term and excessive use will often lead to addiction and serious health harms. The harmful use of drugs and alcohol has a far reaching and often catastrophic impact upon the individual, local communities and wider society. Addiction is linked with the

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-health-grants-to-local-authorities-2022-to-2023/public-health-ringfenced-grant-2022-to-2023-local-authority-circular>

breakdown of relationships and families, increased criminal behaviour, loss of employment and a range of health issues including cancer, blood borne viruses, respiratory disease and poor mental health.

- 5.2 Deaths from drug misuse are at their highest ever rate across England and Wales, with the most deaths occurring amongst those aged between 40 – 49⁴. The North East has the highest rate of drug related deaths in England and has done for the past 9 years. Similarly, alcohol related deaths in the UK are at their highest rate for the past 20 years, with most deaths attributed to alcoholic liver disease⁵. The North East has the highest rate of alcohol related death in England and saw a 20.5% increase between 2019 and 2020.
- 5.3 It is estimated that the combined social and economic cost (including lost productivity, crime and treatment) as a result of drug and alcohol misuse, is £32.2bn per year in the UK⁶.
- 5.4 There is a strong association between socioeconomic position, social exclusion and substance-related harm in relation to both drugs and alcohol. People living in more deprived areas and with lower individual resources and socioeconomic capital are at greater risk of harm. The highest levels of alcohol and drug-related deaths in the UK occur in those areas of greatest neighbourhood deprivation⁷.
- 5.5 People who use drugs and alcohol problematically are often among the most vulnerable in society. They are more likely to be in poor health, die early, be a victim of crime and be in temporary or unstable accommodation.
- 5.6 The Council (via the Public Health Ring Fenced Grant) has consistently maintained its investment in drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services and as a result, has an effective system with a skilled workforce that creates positive outcomes for some of our most vulnerable and marginalised residents.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsrelatedtodrugpoisoninginenglandandwales/2021registrations#:~:text=3%2C060%20drug%20poisoning%20deaths%20registered,aged%2045%20to%2049%20years>

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/bulletins/alcoholrelateddeathsintheunitedkingdom/registeredin2020>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest>

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/761123/Vulnerability_and_Drug_Use_Report_04_Dec_.pdf

6. Implications

<p>Policy</p>	<p>The delivery of a drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service supports the vision of our Corporate Plan 2023 – 2026 by tackling inequalities and achieving value for money.</p> <p>A raft of national policies, strategies and good practice guidelines shape the delivery of services.</p>
<p>Finance and value for money</p>	<p>The contract price for the service is £3,356,709 per annum and £21,818,608 in total (maximum period of 6.5 years – see Procurement section below for detail).</p> <p>There is no financial implication for the Council as the service is fully funded via the Public Health Grant.</p> <p>Drug and alcohol services are evidenced as being cost effective. They improve health and wellbeing and reduce crime.</p> <p>It is estimated that, in England, treatment creates an annual saving of £2.4bn based on the reduced costs to linked to social care, health and crime. This equates to a social return of £4 for every £1 invested in treatment⁸.</p>
<p>Legal</p>	<p>The provision of drug and alcohol services as described in this report meet the responsibilities conferred by section 18 of the Health and Social Care Act (2012).</p> <p>The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council</p>
<p>Procurement</p>	<p>The existing contract for our drug and alcohol service expires at the end of September 2023. A re-commissioning exercise is currently being delivered. The length of the contract will be 4.5 years with the option of extending for a further 2 years. Maximum contract period: October 2023 – March 2030.</p>
<p>Human Resources</p>	<p>In the event of the incumbent organisation(s) not being awarded the contract, TUPE considerations for current service staff will be the responsibility of the new provider and will be built into the contract arrangement.</p>
<p>Property</p>	<p>This is the responsibility of the provider organisation and will be built into the contract arrangement.</p>
<p>Equalities</p>	<p>A drug and alcohol health needs assessment was completed in 2020 and examined the needs of minority and underserved</p>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest>

(Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	patient cohorts. This will be built into the service specification and contract to ensure equity of service access and provision.
Risk Assessment	Included as part of standard Local Authority commissioning and procurement practice. The Local Authority is required to ensure commissioning of services is competitively tendered. If this tender is agreed by Cabinet, the risk of challenge will be mitigated.
Crime Disorder &	Drug and alcohol misuse is intrinsically linked to offending and criminal behaviour. Treatment is evidenced as being able to reduce the number of people who offend by 44% and decrease the number of offences committed by 33% ⁹ . Within Northumberland, up to a quarter of all referrals to treatment come via the criminal justice system, and over a third of service users have a criminal conviction.
Customer Consideration	The current service conducts a quarterly patient feedback survey. Results are shared at contract meetings with Public Health and show a high level of satisfaction with the service A health needs assessment was undertaken in 2020 and surveyed opinions from current and former service users. The results of the needs assessment will be used to develop the new service specification.
Carbon reduction	During the covid lockdown periods, the service introduced various digital and on-line treatment interventions which reduced the need to travel to services. These interventions will be retained and further developed within the new service specification and will contribute towards the Council's climate change and carbon footprint goals.
Health and Wellbeing	The delivery of an effective drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service supports the aims of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018 – 2028 by reducing the number of alcohol related hospital admissions, improving mental wellbeing and creating better outcomes for those living in our most disadvantaged communities.
Wards	All.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674858/PE-MoJ-experimental-MoJ-publication-version.pdf

7. Background papers:

An evidence review of the outcomes that can be expected of drug misuse treatment in England.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/586111/PHE_Evidence_review_of_drug_treatment_outcomes.pdf

Office for National Statistics. Deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales: 2021 registrations.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsrelatedtodrugpoisoninginenglandandwales/2021registrations#:~:text=3%2C060%20drug%20poisoning%20deaths%20registered,aged%2045%20to%2049%20years>

Office for National Statistics. Alcohol-specific deaths in the UK: registered in 2020.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/bulletins/alcoholrelateddeathsintheunitedkingdom/registeredin2020>

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. What are the risk factors that make people susceptible to substance use problems and harm?

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/761123/Vulnerability_and_Drug_Use_Report_04_Dec_.pdf

Independent review of drugs by Professor Dame Carol Black. Part 1 & 2.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-review-of-drugs-by-professor-dame-carol-black>

UK Drug Strategy – ‘From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives’.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives>

The impact of community-based drug and alcohol treatment on re-offending – A joint experimental statistical report from the Ministry of Justice and Public Health England.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674858/PHE-MoJ-experimental-MoJ-publication-version.pdf

8. Report sign off

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

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