

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: Adult and Community Portfolio Holder

Date: For pre-decision scrutiny by Adult and Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 25th January 2011

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Contact Officer: Rebecca Jarvis, Joint Strategic Commissioning Manager (Older People and Adults with Complex Health and Social Care Needs)
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Chief Officer: Terry Rich, Director of Adult and Community Services

Ward: Boroughwide

1. Reason for report

The contract with Kent Association for the Blind for provision of rehabilitation and support services to people with visual impairments expires on 31st March 2011 with no option to extend. The report proposes a short term contract in 2011/12 to enable the effects of the personalisation agenda on the service to be assessed.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Portfolio Holder is asked to waive the requirements for competitive bids pursuant to Contract Procedure Rule 13.1 and approve the proposal to negotiate a new contract with the current provider for the provision of services to people with visual impairments for a period of one year from 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012. The Portfolio Holder is also asked to agree to the consultation on the proposal that small items of equipment and talking books will no longer be provided free of charge to people with visual impairment.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
 2. BBB Priority: Supporting Independence.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost £114,614 p.a. excluding the cost of equipment and Talking Books
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring cost. £114,614 p.a. excluding the cost of equipment and Talking Books
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Services for People with Physical Disabilities, Kent Association for the Blind
 4. Total current budget for this head: £137,370
 5. Source of funding: LBB Adult and Community Services revenue budget
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory requirement.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 743 people were referred to KAB from July 2009 - June 2010.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

Background

- 3.1 The current contract was negotiated with Kent Association for the Blind (KAB) in 2006 and expires on 31st March 2011.
- 3.2 The value of the contract is £114,614 per year. The main element of the contract is the provision of specialist statutory assessments for people with visual impairments and to maintain the registers for people who are blind and partially sighted. These are statutory requirements which are carried out by KAB on behalf of the London Borough of Bromley. In addition, KAB provides:
- Specialist information, advice and guidance
 - Rehabilitation programmes to support people to manage their sight-loss within their home, thus preventing or delaying the need for more acute social care services
 - Emotional support
 - Mobility training to support people to get around safely
 - Information and advice about provision of low-level equipment, including demonstrations at the Sight Centre

Demand

- 3.3 From July 2009 to June 2010, 743 people accessed services provided by KAB.
- 3.4 Information from Projecting Older People Populations Information (POPPI) predicts that from 2010 to 2015 the numbers of people aged 65 and over with a moderate or severe visual impairment in Bromley will increase from 4686 to 5086 (8.5%). The Projected Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI) predicts that the number of people under 65 with a serious visual impairment in Bromley will remain fairly stable at 125.

Quality

- 3.5 KAB has a good reputation and excellent links with other organisations in the Borough. For example, the South London Healthcare Trust holds the low vision clinic on site at the KAB premises on Blyth Road (the Bromley Sight Centre) which provides a smooth pathway from diagnosis to support services and is recognised as an area of good practice. KAB also works closely with Age Concern Bromley, especially around coordinating information and benefits advice. Age Concern Bromley holds an outreach service at KAB for benefits advice.
- 3.6 A telephone survey was carried out in August and September 2010 to seek views of people who had recently had contact with KAB. 17 people were randomly selected from the list of recent service-users and contacted about their experience of KAB. The feedback was extremely positive with most people commenting on the professionalism of staff and the quality of the information they received. Many people commented that KAB has provided them with the support they need to live independently in their own homes, with no further support from statutory services.

Value for money

- 3.7 The contract with KAB is £114,614 per year. In 2010/11 KAB is contributing an additional £88k to services in Bromley.
- 3.8 The main function under the contract is to provide specialist statutory assessments and rehabilitation for people with visual impairment who meet Fair Access to Care criteria. The rehabilitation programmes can range from simple programmes of 2 to 3 visits to set up lighting

and learn how to use low vision aids, to intensive programmes of mobility training or daily living skills training over a number of weeks.

- 3.9 Over the past year, KAB carried out assessments and rehabilitation programmes for 375 people. The assessment and rehabilitation team also provide an information, advice and guidance service which was used by an additional 329 people in the past year.
- 3.10 In addition to the contracted activities, KAB provides added value in the form of a strong volunteer group which coordinates peer support, befriending services, supporting people with correspondence, transport etc.

The Local Market

- 3.11 Kent Association for the Blind is the only organisation in the Borough with the level of specialist skills and experience, infrastructure and local knowledge required to provide the wide range of support services to people with visual impairments. The organisation has demonstrated excellent value for money under the current contractual arrangements and is fully embedded in the care pathway for visual impairment.
- 3.12 In neighbouring Boroughs many of the functions provided by KAB are carried out by in-house social care teams. This means that the local market is extremely limited and there would be no advantage to be gained through a competitive procurement process.
- 3.13 The alternative would be to bring the service in-house but there would be a significant training implication for care managers to carry out the specialist assessments, and the rehabilitation elements would still need to be commissioned separately. We would also lose the specialist knowledge and expertise of the organisation, and the added value of working with a voluntary organisation.

Proposal

- 3.14 It is proposed to negotiate a new contract with Kent Association for the Blind for a period of one year. This will allow time to assess the impact of the Personalisation Agenda and the changes in care management pathways following the restructure which is due to be implemented from April 2011.
- 3.15 The Council has also previously provided equipment and talking books free of charge to people with visual impairment through the contract with KAB. It is proposed that in future small items of equipment, such as portable lamps, talking clocks and talking books will no longer be provided free but that people will be signposted to the free talking books service provided in the borough's libraries and to other providers of talking books such as the national Calibre service and to the equipment provided by the British Wireless for the Blind Fund. KAB might also wish to continue to provide small equipment and talking books on a charged for basis. It is proposed that consultation on these changes be carried out alongside the consultation on personal budgets and contributions policy reported elsewhere on this agenda and the results reported to the Portfolio Holder in March.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Support services for people with Visual Impairments support the priority outcomes in the Older People Strategy 2008-2013, Independence and Choice for Older People in Bromley. The services also support the Putting People First agenda by providing rehabilitation to people with visual impairment to maximise functioning and live independently.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The annual cost of the contract with Kent Association for the Blind is £114,614 excluding the cost of equipment and talking books. Negotiations are underway with KAB to reduce the cost of the main contract. The new contract will not exceed the current value.
- 5.2 Contract procedure rule 13.1 allows for a waiver of the requirement for competitive bids, subject to the relevant approval being obtained.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has a duty under section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act (1990) to carry out an assessment of need for community care services which includes people with sensory impairment. If this function was not provided by an external organisation, it would need to be provided for in-house.
- 6.2 The Council has a duty under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948 to maintain registers of people with disabilities. For visual impairment there are two registers: Blind and Partially Sighted. If this function was not provided by an external organisation, it would need to be provided for in-house.
- 6.2 This is a waiver of the need for competitive tendering and in accordance with contract procurement rule 13.1 the Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Director of Resources have indicated their agreement to the proposed contract negotiation as achieving best value for the Council. Given the value of the proposed contract it is necessary for the Portfolio Holder to also approve the contract. A note of the exercise of the waiver will be reported to the Audit Sub Committee. The service is a Part B service under Schedule 3 to the Public Procurement Regulations 2006 and not subject to the full EU procurement regime and we are looking at a modest award/extension to enable us to evaluate options for future procurement.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	