

CABINET
23rd JUNE 2009

**RE-COMMISSIONING OF THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICE
IN WILTSHIRE**

Executive Summary

John Bercow MP led an independent national review of services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) which reported in July 2008. The report identifies the importance of: early identification; a continuum of services designed around the family; and joint working. But it notes great variability and lack of equity in current provision around the country.

The Bercow report has put services to meet speech, language and communication needs under the spotlight nationally and makes wide-ranging recommendations about how they should be developed.

Wiltshire was fortunately well placed to respond as the Children's Trust Board Executive had already set in motion a local review of services for children & young people with additional communication needs and, following widespread consultation, a final report from this local review was presented to the Children's Trust Board Executive in October 2008.

This final report "Speech Language and Communication Needs (SCLN) Within Wiltshire" (Appendix 2) recommends re-commissioning of the Speech and Language Therapy service from the three existing providers to a single service provider by the 1st April 2010. The Children's Trust Board Executive decision to endorse this piece of work is captured in Appendix 1 – (Note ii).

The resulting Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) service will align with relevant national, regional and local plans. The key outcome is the sustainable delivery of an equitable service to every child and young person in need of SLT support and intervention across Wiltshire.

The service will work with all ages from 0-19 and dovetail with the transition into adult SLT services as required.

Wiltshire's Corporate Procurement have advised that the method of procurement will be an Open Invitation to Tender as the value of the service is in excess of £1m revenue per year. The annual funding available amounts to circa £2m.

The funding split is £536k LA funding this financial year and circa £1.3m from the PCT.

The specification that is in development will scope the Speech and Language Therapy service across Wiltshire. It will jointly specify a range of services that meet the needs of children & young people.

Proposal

- (i) That Cabinet notes the agreement of the Children's Trust Board Executive to re-commission the Speech and Language Therapy service across Wiltshire
- (ii) That Cabinet notes that this is a Joint Procurement exercise between Wiltshire Council and the Commissioning Arm of the PCT
- (iii) That Cabinet notes that the costing of the joint Commissioning will amount to £2m for the financial year 2010/11
- (iv) That Cabinet notes that this will be achieved through a competitive tendering process to secure Best Value for money.

Reason for Proposal

Historically this service had been separately commissioned by Wiltshire County Council and Wiltshire PCT from three different service providers offering different levels of service to children & young people in different parts of Wiltshire.

The Children's Trust Board Executive have commissioned a review of additional communication needs , and in line with the Bercow recommendations we wish to re-commission an integrated county wide single provider Speech and Language service offering improved economies of scale and more consistent quality of service.

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Re-commissioning of The Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Service in Wiltshire**Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to inform the Cabinet of the background and rationale underlying the re-commissioning and associated re-procurement of the SLT service across Wiltshire. Cabinet are asked to note that the contract is in excess of £1m. This report is to notify Cabinet of the requirement to put this service out to tender through a one stage open tendering procedure in line with the Council's Contract Regulations.

Background

Historically this service had been separately commissioned by Wiltshire County Council and Wiltshire PCT from three different service providers. Specifically Wiltshire Community Health Service, Salsbury Foundation Trust and Swindon PCT.

The result has been that differing levels of service have been offered to children & young people in different parts of Wiltshire.

The Children's Trust Board Executive have commissioned a review of additional communication needs locally and, in line with National Berrow recommendations, wish to re-commission an integrated county wide single provider service offering improved economies of scale and more consistent quality of service.

Having considered its own report alongside the key findings of the Berrow report the Trust Board Executive has agreed the following recommendations:

- i) The outline service model and commissioning specification in the Wiltshire report¹ should be adopted as the basis for further development, including a geographic model of multi-disciplinary provision.
- ii) A single commissioning lead should be jointly appointed by the Primary Care Trust and Local Authority - to be line managed within the Local Authority as lead agency – with a view to re-commissioning the service from a single service provider.
- iii) The Department for Children & Education and Primary Care Trust should set up a joint contract monitoring, data collection and performance management process for 2009/10.

¹ To view the report go to www.WiltshirePathways.org > Document library > SLCN

Main Considerations for the Council

i) The main consideration for the council is that Council resources are being committed jointly with the PCT to draft a specification, engage with stakeholders and ensure that best practice is adhered to.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

This proposal will provide more services closer to children and young people receiving SLT and their families. The impact will therefore be a reduced amount of travelling for children and young people and their families.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

The proposal is for a more equitable service to be made available to all Children and Young People requiring Speech and Language Therapy in all community areas across Wiltshire.

Risk Assessment

A detailed risk assessment of the project is being undertaken as part of the project planning and will inform the Implementation Group's actions up until the point of contract award over the next 3-6 months.

Financial Implications

There needs to be a commitment from both the Council and the PCT to commit to fund the service for the duration of the contract. Based on present annual expenditure the Council Contribution to this will be £536k for up to 5 yrs (based on a 3year contract with an optional 2year extension).

Legal Implications

The Council's legal section has been providing advice in relation to potential employment issues, specifically TUPE and also in respect of the Participation Agreement between the PCT and the Council.

The legal section is also providing advice on the contract for services that will be required to attach to the invitation to tender.

If the PCT bids for the service, care must be taken by the Council that the relevant 'bidding section' of the PCT is not involved in the assessment process, owing to the risk of a conflict of interests.

Options Considered

The option to do nothing has been considered and rejected as this would not be meeting the needs of Children and Young People who have SLT needs.

Conclusions

The conclusion is to re-commission the Speech & Language Therapy Service across Wiltshire in order more effectively to meet the needs of children and young people and their families who have a Speech and Language Therapy requirement.

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Date of report: 2nd June 2009

Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1

Wiltshire Children & Young People's Trust Board - Meeting the speech, language and communication needs of children & young people in Wiltshire

Appendix 2

Wiltshire Children & Young People's Trust Board - Report on Speech Language and Communication Needs (SCLN) within Wiltshire

APPENDIX ONE

Wiltshire Children & Young People's Trust Board

Meeting the speech, language and communication needs of children & young people in Wiltshire

The Bercow Report

"The ability to communicate is an essential life skill for all children and young people and it underpins a child's social, emotional and educational development."

John Bercow MP led an independent review of services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) which reported in July. The report identifies the importance of: early identification; a continuum of services designed around the family; and joint working. But it notes great variability and lack of equity in current Service Provision around the country.

The Bercow report has put services to meet speech, language and communication needs under the spotlight nationally and makes wide-ranging recommendations about how they should be developed.

Wiltshire is fortunately well placed to respond because the Trust Board Executive had already set in motion a local review of services for children & young people with additional communication needs and, following widespread consultation, a final report from this local review was presented to the Trust Board Executive in October.

What the Trust Board Executive has decided

Having considered its own report alongside the key findings of the Bercow report, the Trust Board Executive has agreed the following recommendations:

- i) The outline service model and commissioning specification in the Wiltshire report² should be adopted as the basis for further development, including a geographic model of multi-disciplinary provision.
- ii) A single commissioning lead should be jointly appointed by the Primary Care Trust and Local Authority - to be line managed within the Local Authority as lead agency – with a view to re-commissioning the service from a single service provider.
- iii) The Department for Children & Education and Primary Care Trust should set up a joint contract monitoring, data collection and performance management process for 2009/10.

Next steps

An implementation group will be set up to engage with stakeholders and begin work on re-shaping the service in the short term pending appointment of a commissioning lead. A commissioning lead will be jointly appointed by the Department for Children & Education and the Primary Care Trust. She/he will have responsibility for further consultation with stakeholders in relation to the detail of the model of service and commissioning specification.

² To view the report go to www.WiltshirePathways.org > Document library > SLCN

APPENDIX TWO

Wiltshire Children & Young People's Trust Board

October 2008.

REPORT ON SPEECH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS (SLCN) WITHIN WILTSHIRE

For consistency with the Bercow Review of Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) this area of work is now referred to as SLCN rather than ACN (Additional Communication Needs).

A glossary of abbreviations used is provided (Appendix 9)

1. Background

At its meeting on 23rd April 2008, the CYP Executive adopted a report establishing the principles and aims that should inform the development of a new SLCN service in Wiltshire. The Executive also;

- Authorised further discussions and information gathering with stakeholders (section 3 and Appendices 1 and 2)
- Authorised initial work required to implement the new service.(Appendix 1)

This report summarises the actions taken and recommends the next steps needed to finalise the implementation.

2. The Bercow Report.

Whilst this work has been underway, an extensive review has been taking place at national level commissioned by the DoH and DfCSF. Led by John Bercow MP, the final report (July 2008) clearly sets out the crucial importance of communication to the welfare of children and young people.

“The ability to communicate is an essential life skill for all children and young people and it underpins a child’s social, emotional and educational development.” Bercow Report Page 6.

The main findings and recommendations (in so far as they relate to PCTs and Local Authorities and the views and expectations of families) are extremely similar to those raised in the joint work in Wiltshire. The report is highly critical of existing arrangements. The full report may be accessed at; <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/bercowreview/>

The recommendations from the report are gathered under five main themes which are reflected in this report.

- Communication is crucial;
- Early identification and intervention are essential;
- A continuum of services designed around the family is needed;
- Joint working is critical; and
- The high variability and a lack of equity of the current services

The report proposes a “whole workforce” approach to SLCN and this has major implications for workforce structure and training. These are reflected in the outline commissioning specification (Appendix 4)

The report strongly supports a joint commissioning approach between PCTs and LAs. However, it notes 3 particular issues in regard to this approach;

- There is no nationally agreed analysis of levels of need.
- There is no nationally agreed model of best or even described good practice in this field.
- Levels of joint working and joint funding vary widely, however one suggestion giving high levels of integration is of teams of Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and specialist teachers working across groups of schools.

3. Main Points from Discussions and Survey in Wiltshire

- There is broad agreement with the proposals in the report to the Executive in April 2008.
- Current SLT providers believe they already operate, broadly, along the lines of the new model.
- There is concern amongst current providers that the cost of the new service might require additional investment.
- That the service would be best delivered using a multi disciplinary /multi-agency team that provides SLCN support across a defined geographical area.
- The scope of organisational and structural change required is very large.
- The LA is currently reviewing how support is offered to Primary Schools and the outcome of this has implications for the organisation of the SLCN service.
- That early years and school settings provide, in principle, a very appropriate venue for the delivery of services, however they are not open all year and some have limited space available for focused work with CYP with SLCN.
- Given the lack of current national information it is essential that new (or reconfigured) services in Wiltshire has built in a capacity for flexibility and development in the light of emerging information on needs and best practice.
- There are some issues of detail (e.g. Wiltshire children attending school in other authorities and vice-versa) that require further work and agreement.
- Parents are a major and currently under-utilised resource.

- Parents and Carers overall believe priority should be given to “More training for school staff to identify and meet additional communication needs”.
- SLC should be seen as part of normal development and should therefore not be pathologised (medicalised) unnecessarily.

A full report of the questionnaire sent to parents is available (Appendix 2). A full report of the health based staff consultations is available on request.

In addition, it has been requested that the service specification when agreed by the Executive should be subject to further formal consultation (Appendix 4 and 5)

4. Commissioning, Procurement , Transitional Arrangements and Evaluation of the service.

Lead Agency

SLCN is a service that cuts across both health and education responsibilities. However, it is necessary to determine a lead agency to ensure robust management of the service and of the changes required.

The ability to communicate is an essential life skill and whilst clinical input is important for those CYP with need (and very much valued by parents and professionals alike), early years settings and schools are critical parts of identification, assessment and delivery for children and their families.

It is therefore proposed that the LA should act as the lead agency.

Commissioning

Funding/activity/need. (Appendix 3) The cost of services for CYP with SLCN has been investigated further by both LA and PCT and although complex it appears that the total cost is as described in the first report to the CYP Trust Executive Board i.e. just over £2m.

The cost of SLT services (£1,376,096) and the analysis of the skill mix of the two larger services (value approx £1,007,382 and £368,714) indicates that in terms of best value for money that a single service model (rather than a 3 service model as at present) would provide a more cost efficient way of delivering the service as well as supporting consistent and equitable development, management as well as increasing clinical flexibility across the county for low incidence SLCN and CYP with specialist needs.

In terms of equitable provision a pooled fund with a single service model will equalise the level of Service Provision as well as the model of provision (Appendix 3). Currently the funding is inequitable with the south Wiltshire area having 25% of the 0-19 population but 36% of the SLT team, compared to Kennet, north and west Wiltshire having 75% of the 0-19 population and 63% of the SLT team

Wiltshire has 112,000 CYP with 5,000 starting school each year, indicating that approximately 2,500 new CYP per annum will require SLT assessment and intervention. The current service provides approximately 2,187 first contacts per annum, with 200-300 children on waiting lists.

Level of need has been difficult to ascertain (especially in south Wiltshire where activity data is not available) however it appears that the range of need is similar to that suggested in the Bercow review and by ICAN. i.e. that 50% of CYP in some socio-economic disadvantaged populations have impoverished language, that 7% of children starting school each year have significant language difficulties and 1% have severe or complex difficulties.

Analysis of the home post codes of children attending the four primary language centres in Wiltshire indicates that although the centres do not take solely from their immediate catchment area some parts of Wiltshire have poor take up of these specialist facilities. In addition the centres are not (with the exception of Studley Green Primary in Trowbridge) in areas of high deprivation (a known indicator for high levels of impoverished language).

In order to meet the need indicated above it is calculated that 400 additional CYP per annum need to be supported and could be by using a combination of the 3 actions described below:

1. Change in approach and culture. A move away from a one-to-one approach to one of collaboration. This is particularly effective for CYP with impoverished language.
2. Change in skill mix. Appendix 8 demonstrates how a shift in skill mix with a single service model could expand the SLT team at no extra cost.
3. Re-alignment of budgets so that all CYP have access to services based on need rather than access to specialist centres.

It is recommended that a single service model be developed by current service providers in order to maximise cost efficiencies and provide value for money.

It is recommended that a geographic model of multi-agency and multi-disciplinary provision be adopted in Wiltshire.

Procurement

To provide a single managed service implies that the existing contracts cannot be maintained in the long run. There are two main options for the Executive.

Option 1 To maintain the service with the current providers but to develop them into one single service working to a common commissioning specification and contract.

Pros; Retains continuity of some personnel and Service Provision, ensuring that skills are retained and used to inform and support the new service model.

Cons; Involves a deal of re-organisation within existing provider services.

Option 2 To put the service immediately to open tender.

Pros; Enables “fresh start” with service working to new model and ethos.

Cons; There is insufficient information available currently on activity, funding and levels of need and practice to develop a precise specification for tendering.

Delay whilst the specification is refined and tendering process takes place.

The service needs to fit with other LA support services to schools. These services are currently being reviewed but as yet no decisions on the future pattern of provision has been made.

There are three other considerations.

- The size of the budget for this contract would normally require that it be tendered for openly.
- When the Local Authority (LA) investigated this option 2 years ago, it was found that neighbouring LAs used their local PCT and did not wish go out to tender or provide to other authorities. However, the extension of commissioning and the influence of the Bercow report may mean that this should now be reconsidered.
- The school community in Wiltshire has waited a long time for an improvement to this service and the delays involved in tendering would only add to this.

The recommendation is that option 1 should be adopted with Option 2 being considered again in due course.

Transitional Arrangements

Assuming option 1 is adopted, the following immediate actions are recommended.

- **The appointment of a single manager jointly between the PCT and LA. The manager to be line managed within the Local Authority as lead agency.**
- **The DCE and PCT to set up a joint contract monitoring, data collection and performance management process for 2009/10.**
- **The establishment of an Implementation Group (proposed membership set out in Appendix 6).**
- **The establishment of a multi-agency training sub-group reporting to the Implementation Group to devise suitable programmes for the new model of service.**
- **The establishment of a multi agency project group to oversee the work of the implementation group and ensure timescales are met.**

Finally, schools have waited some time for changes and so it is additionally recommended that;

- **The training element within the current LA contracts is defined, and, with the advice of the training sub-group, a common training programme is delivered to staff and settings with the priority to be determined by the implementation group.**

Evaluation.

The Bercow Report contains proposed Outcome Measures and these are listed in Appendix 7.

It is recommended that the proposed implementation Group refines these outcome measures so that they become the quality indicators for SLCN services in Wiltshire.

5. Implications for the PCT and LA

It is recommended that the PCT and LA note the following implications of the recommendations.

- The service would be expected to conform to the commissioning specification for Speech and language Therapy for Children and Young people (Appendix 4)
- Some children with the most severe needs require more than one type of therapy. The service would therefore need to work alongside other therapies (e.g. OT) to ensure services are delivered in the most coherent and family friendly way possible, functioning as multi-disciplinary team around the child.
- In partnership with the Schools Forum the LA ensures its funding arrangements for any specialist centres in the service model include the role these centres would be expected to carry out in the new service and that these expectations are included in Service Level Agreements with the schools involved.
- Through its school support and monitoring role the LA ensures that the effectiveness of the training programmes delivered are monitored and included in the schools practice.
- The geographical clusters (of early years settings and school settings) need to be agreed across the two commissioning agencies and preferably based on the 20 community areas of Wiltshire.
- Consideration be given to the idea of early years and school settings as 52/52 week a year community resources, especially for those in the community with SLCN.
- Any currently existing unidentified and any additional future funding for SLCN should be included within the overall service

6. Recommendations.

The Wiltshire Children and Young People's Trust Executive are recommended to agree that;

- i) The outline service model and commissioning specification in this report should be adopted as the basis for further development (Appendix 4).
- ii) That a geographic model of multi-agency and multi-disciplinary provision be adopted in Wiltshire.
- iii) The speech and language therapy service should be jointly commissioned with the Local Authority acting as the Lead Agency.
- iv) The service should be maintained with the current providers but they should be developed in to a single service working to a common specification, contract and service model .

- v) A single manager should be jointly appointed by the PCT and LA. The manager to be line managed within the Local Authority as lead agency.
- vi) The DCE and PCT should set up a joint contract monitoring, data collection and performance management process for 2009/10.
- vii) An Implementation Group should be established (proposed membership set out in Appendix 6).
- viii) A multi-agency training sub-group reporting to the Implementation Group should be established to develop suitable programmes for the new model of service.
- ix) As an interim arrangement the training element within the current LA contracts should be defined, and, with the advice of the training sub-group, a common training programme delivered to staff and settings in 2009/10 with the priority to be determined by the implementation group.
- x) A multi agency project group should be established to oversee the implementation groups work and ensure timescales are met
- xi) The implementation Group should refine and develop the outline commissioning specification including quality indicators based on the outcome measures provided in the Bercow Report (Appendix 7).
- xii) The LA and PCT should note the further implications for their organisations of these recommendations.