

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Commissioning Strategy for Learning Disabilities Community Support (AH/2025/01)	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Cabinet	DATE 26 th February 2025
STRATEGIC CONTEXT People with learning disabilities are historically a marginalised group, who experience poorer health and social care outcomes compared to the general population. Learning Disabilities Community Support (LDCS) addresses this by enabling people with Learning Disabilities to live independently in their own homes and thrive in their communities. The model takes a strengths-based approach which is in line with the commitments in the “Supporting People, Connecting Communities” strategy and “We Make Camden”. We Make Camden is the Council’s vision to create a fairer, more equal borough through partnership working. It highlights the ten big issues facing Camden and sets out what we want collectively to achieve through four “Missions” and six “Challenges” to make change together. The revised and improved Learning Disabilities and Community Support offer will contribute to realising these aspirations, and further address the structural inequalities this group experience. The offer seeks to improve social inclusion and reduce inequalities, with an emphasis on facilitating friendships, access to employment and further education, and promoting healthy lives for people with Learning Disabilities.	
SUMMARY OF REPORT This report sets out the proposed approach to the re-commissioning of the Learning Disability Community Support (LDCS) service for an initial term of four-and-a-half-years, with a three-year extension option. An estimated 125 people with complex health and social care needs are in scope of the new contract, for an estimated contract value of £16,347,078. To meet the diverse needs of this cohort, officers are proposing a phased approach to implementing the new Community Support service, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commissioning two specialist providers to deliver a locality model for adults over 18 years of age (North and South), to commence 1 October 2025. 2. Implementation of a bespoke offer for 14-25 year olds to support young people prior to their transition to Camden Learning Disability Service (CLDS), with a planned implementation of April 2026. 	

The service contributes to the meeting of the Council's statutory duties under the Care Act and Section 117 of the Mental Health Act. Extending support to people aged 14-17 will support the 'Closer to Camden' Commissioning Strategy for Children with Complex Needs, which cites the importance of an early intervention approach in reducing the need for residential placements and improving transition outcomes for young people.

To tackle the structural inequalities this group experience, officers are recommending a locality model to align with Camden's neighbourhood approach, allowing strong links across key stakeholders such as housing, community safety, General Practitioners (GPs) and other health and social care services.

Additionally, the strategy responds to seven key priorities identified as part of extensive stakeholder engagement in 2023/24, including with residents who draw on Learning Disability Community Support and their families/carers.

This report is being submitted to Cabinet for approval as Contract Standing Orders requires this for contracts with an estimated value of over 5 million.

Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information

No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report

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RECOMMENDATIONS

That, having considered the results of the extensive engagement with key stakeholders, the result of the Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 1) and having due regard to the obligations set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Cabinet agrees:

1. The procurement strategy as set out in this report, which includes a 40% price / 60% quality split and initial term of four-and-a-half-years, with a three-year extension option, for an estimated value of £16,347,078.
2. To delegate authority to make the contract award decisions resulting from 1 above to the Executive Director Adults and Health following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care.

Signed:



Date: 14.02.2025

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Learning Disability Community Support (LDCS) offers flexible, strengths-based and person-centred support for people with Learning Disabilities in one-to-one and group settings. The key objective is supporting people to live independently in their own home. This includes developing practical living skills, taking part in their local community, and accessing education and employment opportunities.
- 1.2. People with Learning Disabilities face significant inequalities compared to other groups in society. For example, they face many unfair, avoidable and systemic barriers to having their own homes, meaningful employment, social connection and good health. Learning Disability Community Support is an equity approach to improving these outcomes and ensuring people with Learning Disabilities, as far as possible, can live healthy lives in their own homes and contribute to, and be safe in, their local communities.
- 1.3. The service is also preventative in nature, as the support prevents, reduces and delays the need for more intensive accommodation-based support, such as supported living or residential care.
- 1.4. The service was previously commissioned in 2019 as a locality model with two providers: Centre 404 in North Camden and The Camden Society (London) (TCSL) in South Camden. However, in September 2023, TCSL ceased trading due to the wider financial position of the organisation across London. Centre 404's contract was then varied to allow them to deliver LDCS for the whole borough from 1st February 2024 and their latest contract expires on 30th September 2025.
- 1.5. Officers are recommending a new procurement strategy to secure these services for a further four-and-a-half years, with an optional three-year extension.
- 1.6. This report is being submitted to Cabinet for approval, as required by Contract Standing Orders for contracts with an estimated value of over 5 million.

2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS

- 2.1. The proposed Learning Disability Community Support service model aims to promote the inclusion and independence of people with Learning Disabilities in Camden and prevent, reduce and delay the demand for more restrictive social care services. It will take a strengths-based approach, in line with the commitments in Supporting People, Connecting Communities, the 'Closer to Camden' Commissioning Strategy for Children with Complex Needs, and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 2.2. Supporting adults in this way contributes to the meeting of the Council's statutory duties under the Care Act and Section 117 of the Mental Health Act. Extending support to individuals aged 14-17 will support the 'Closer to Camden' Commissioning Strategy for Children with Complex Needs, which

cites the potential of an early intervention approach in reducing the need for residential placements and improving transition outcomes for young people.

- 2.3. There are approximately 125 residents in scope for this provision. The cohort in scope includes a combination of people drawing on the existing service and people supported by other 'spot purchased' services, such as younger people transitioning to adult services and wanting to keep their existing arrangements.
- 2.4. Officers are recommending a locality model that is flexible enough to adapt to changing demand and increased complexity of need over time. The localities will align with Camden's neighbourhood footprints, allowing strong links across key stakeholders such as housing, community safety, General Practitioners (GPs) and other health and social care services.
- 2.5. This model is considered the most conducive to the sustainability of the service and the delivery of key outcomes, such as increasing the uptake of annual health checks and cancer screenings, tackling obesity and reducing social isolation by supporting people to make friends, find meaningful occupation and have a social life.
- 2.6. A central priority for the contract will be to deliver culturally competent support that puts identity at the heart of practice and addresses intersectional discrimination. This requires implementing the learning from the 'Identity Matters' work led by Adult Social Care.
- 2.7. This strategy has interdependencies with the Supporting People at Home programme, due to the commissioning of a new model of homecare and an in-house floating support pilot. The Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy will be a key interdependency for promoting staff wellbeing and tackling challenges with recruitment and retention, which will inform the tender questions asked of prospective providers.

3. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 3.1. Officers considered the following procurement options:

Options	Recommended option (x)
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<p>Option 1a – Outsourcing in two lots (a contract length of 4.5 years, with a 3-year extension option) To outsource the community support provision in two geographic Lots (North/South), with at least two lead providers (recommended).</p>	<p>x</p>
<p>Option 1b – Outsourcing with one lot (a contract length of 4.5 years, with a 3-year extension option) To outsource the community support provision as a single Lot with one lead provider working across both localities (North/South).</p>	
<p>Option 2a – Insourcing (whole) To insource the whole community support provision.</p>	
<p>Option 2b – Insourcing (hybrid) To hybrid source the community support provision (part insource/ part outsource), as an equity approach (see insourcing section below).</p>	
<p>Option 3 – Do Nothing Do not re-commission a new service and spot purchase support from 30th September 2025 to meet the needs of those eligible for support as per the Care Act.</p>	

- 3.2. Having appraised all options, officers are seeking to re-commission another locality model (**option 1a**). This would secure access to more than one specialist provider, offering additional expertise and insight, as well as contingency and capacity in the event of disruption to provision or provider failure. The Council would also continue to have access to the resources of specialist organisations that have committed themselves to best practice and innovations to support people with Learning Disabilities. The locality approach aligns with Camden’s neighbourhood geography and creates opportunities for collaboration with other local services, for example with commissioned homecare providers, Voluntary and Community Sector networks and emerging Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.
- 3.3. There are potential risks to this approach that officers plan to mitigate, such as the potential for geographic lots to create variance in quality, which has been a challenge in previous contracts. Officers will collaborate with providers to develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure a shared understanding and ownership of the service outcomes across localities. There will also be a requirement for providers to work in partnership and share good practice to deliver these outcomes, which will be laid out in the service specification. Delivery of the service outcomes and standards will be monitored as part of quarterly contract monitoring meetings, including direct feedback from people drawing on support.
- 3.4. Officers are proposing a phased approach to deliver the strategy, with the 18+ service commissioned initially, with a longer lead-in time for the offer to younger people (aged 14-25). This latter stage requires a more complex implementation, as services are currently not available until someone turns 18

and will require commissioning across Children and Young People and Adult services. Officers must also work closely with family members/carers, young people and CYPDS to build trust in the new model. This is especially important with young people and their families who historically prefer to access culturally appropriate community support from specific 'spot purchased' providers. Embedding the new model for adults (18+) will help build this trust, before a second phase is implemented.

3.5. Officers are proposing the retention of an activity-based contract to allow the Council to respond to fluctuating needs and demand over time, and to maximise the person-centred approach of commissioning support for each resident as needed. This is preferable to a 'block' arrangement in which the Council would be limited to commissioning a specific number of hours, based on need or historical spend, with limited scope to flex in response to fluctuating needs or demand.

3.6. There has been a growing demand for Community Support since the pandemic and complexity of need is increasing, a trend seen across Adult Social Care services. This rising demand, alongside significant inflationary pressures for providers (for example, increases in the London Living Wage), has resulted in budget pressure. It is expected that the most profound growth in demand will come from two age groups:

- The number of people aged 55+ with a moderate or severe learning disability are predicted to increase by 43% by 2030 compared with 15% for the 18-54 age group. This may increase demand for LDCS as people living in the community need increasing levels of care and support to stay well and prevent or delay the need for accommodation-based care and support (such as residential care).
- More young people with complex needs are also surviving into adulthood. It is anticipated that around 20 young people with learning disabilities will transition to adult services and need LDCS support each year. Camden Young People Disability Service (CYPDS), the team supporting this cohort with their health and social care needs, are observing increasingly profound needs, which will require the LDCS service to adapt to.

3.7. Officers are proposing a series of measures to manage demand over the contract period. This includes:

- Reviewing the current cohort of people drawing on support to determine what provision people will need in the new contract, including any potential over-provision and ensuring that people receive the level of support appropriate to their needs. This will apply the learning from the LDCS contract implementation in 2019, where people were reviewed for the same purpose and were, in some instances, able to reduce their reliance on paid support.
- Improving the use of Assistive Technology to maximise independence.
- Commissioners attending the Quality Assurance Panel, where decisions on support packages are made, to promote alternative support options and better understand emerging trends. This will

include, on a quarterly basis, conducting an audit of how many low-cost support packages are in place and what they look like.

- Improving access to an offer for people drawing on the service to share their hours. For example, ensuring support plans explore whether the individual needs one-to-one support, or can have shared support to meet their outcomes and encourage friendships.
- Embedding closer connections with community groups and mainstream services in neighbourhoods, so there is less reliance on formal commissioned support. Additionally, explore the potential to commission a joint Community Support and Supported Living service via a neighbourhood approach at the end of the initial contract term, to provide further economies of scale.

3.8. Officers are also exploring the feasibility of, in the future, embedding a hybrid 'equity' approach where more complex needs can be met by in-house provision (option 2b in the options appraisal). This aspiration sits outside of the current procurement strategy and the scope of this report. Please see 'Appendix 2: Commissioning Options Table' for more information on the scoped 'hybrid' equity approach.

3.9. The tender will be advertised shortly after the implementation of the new Procurement Act 2023. As the market is small and known it is proposed that the open procedure is used.

4. WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

4.1. The key risks identified in the procurement are as follows:

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation
Commissioners can only award contract for one locality	Second procurement round required	Medium	Although the uptake of the market testing was low, it showed that multiple providers were interested in bidding for the new model.
The unit cost is not sustainable	Providers hand back the contract or fail	Medium	As part of the tender process officers will seek assurance from suppliers that they can deliver the contract within price. Additionally, relevant checks will be run to ensure suppliers are financially stable, and this will be monitored as part of quarterly contract monitoring.
Staff may not want to TUPE to new provider	Delayed start, or lack of capacity	Low	TUPE information to be requested before going out to tender and to be shared with bidders at an early stage.
Risk of rising costs due to activity-based contract	Cost pressure on Adult Social Care budgets	High	A range of measures have been developed to manage demand, including a focus on sharing hours between residents for more efficient use of resources, reducing the need for formal paid support amongst the cohort and use of Assistive Technology.

Residents do not want to change, e.g. those receiving support from culturally specific services.	Fidelity to the new model is undermined, or people complain	Medium	Carefully managed communications with current service users, reinforcing the message that the service will offer culturally appropriate support. Direct payment options explored where appropriate. Providers understand our position clearly and are monitored on their implementation of culturally appropriate services.
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5. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1. A service review was conducted during 2023/24, whereby a broad range of key stakeholders were engaged including Camden Learning Disabilities Service (CLDS), Children's and Young People Disability Service (CYPDS), family members/carers, adults with Learning Disabilities, Camden commissioned and non-commissioned providers, and council officers. The methods included face-to-face meetings, online engagement events and online surveys. Between 80-100 people were engaged.
- 5.2. The engagement found that providers were generally performing well against agreed outcomes and performance indicators. Recurring challenges related to workforce availability and performance, for example poor timekeeping, delays in the allocation of referrals and missed appointments. Since the pandemic, the recruitment and retention of staff has become more challenging. Additionally, there were disparities between the two providers' performance, causing some residents to experience variability in the quality of the services received depending on the locality they were in.
- 5.3. Seven coproduced priority areas were agreed for the new model and will be central to the outcomes providers are asked to deliver on. These are:
- Structured support that promotes independence, choice and control
 - Culturally competent and person-centred support
 - Reducing social isolation and support to make friends through employment and shared activities
 - Improving health outcomes through the uptake of Annual Health Checks, cancer screening and healthy living choices, for example in addressing obesity
 - Support to improve outcomes for young people transitioning from children to adult services
 - Support that can flex and respond to the diverse needs of the people eligible for the service
 - The support to be delivered by consistent and regular staff
- 5.4. These co-produced priority areas were re-presented at the Learning Disability Partnership Board, 'Planning Together', in October 2024 for reassurance that they remain a priority for residents, family carers and other key stakeholders. The consensus was that these areas should remain a priority and advice was given on how to best deliver improved outcomes.

- 5.5. Equalities issues have been considered and will be vetted as part of the process (see Appendix 1: Equalities Impact Assessment). Tenderers will have to respond to the standard selection question on demonstrating their organisation's active awareness of equality, diversity and intersectional issues surrounding the activities of their business.
- 5.6. The EQIA from the previous contract highlighted inconsistencies in the delivery of culturally competent support. To address this, tenderers will be required to demonstrate an understanding of intersectional discrimination and how they would deliver a culturally competent service to different groups, especially with a focus on ethnicity, religion and age.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Legal Services have reviewed this report in light of the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSOs), the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, as amended (PCR) and Procurement Act 2023 (PA23).
- 6.2. The report requests that Cabinet approves the procurement strategy as set out in this report, which includes a 40% price / 60% quality split and contract term of seven and a half years for an estimated value of £16,347,078.
- 6.3. Legal Services consider that the consultation is not a direct statutory requirement but the engagement with the community and key stakeholders which has been performed on the basis that it was good practice to do so.
- 6.4. Legal Services have assessed the strategy set out in this report and believe the recommended options are in compliance with the CSOs (provided there is adequate budget available), the PCR and PA23.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. This report is recommending a new procurement strategy for the Learning disabilities floating support service for four-and-a-half years, with an optional three-year extension. Based on the agreed model of service delivery it is estimated that this contract will deliver approximately 70,790 hours of floating support to the Learning Disability funded clients and a further 12,211 hours for CYPDS Clients on an annual basis. This will result in an aggregated contract value of over the 7.5 year period of the contract of £16,347,078 and this will not produce any further pressures on the budget, as this equates to the minimum provision which can be procured given the current budget constraints.
- 7.2. Over time it is expected that the service will put considerable efforts into maintaining and where possible mitigating increases in demand to enable the contract to be delivered within the budget available. However, any increase in demand beyond agreed hours stated will lead to budget pressures which will need to be funded by the service across Children's and Adults budgets.

- 7.3. As floating support is driven by demand, there is an implied assumption that the maximum hours deliverable by the provider will be commissioned. However, demand within this service has been known to fluctuate and actual delivered hours can vary from commissioned hours, and commissioned hours has exceeded delivered hours. Should the demand for the service and delivered hours exceed commissioned within the framework of the proposed contract, the service has proposed options to mitigate the impact, stated in paragraph 3.7.
- 7.4. Finally, the contract does not currently account for inflationary increases. It is expected that inflation-related factors, such as cost of living and the London Living Wage, will need to be reviewed annually and adjusted accordingly.
- 7.5. There are no Medium Term Financial Strategy savings attached to this budget for 25/26.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Support will be provided to people within their homes and in the community. It is expected that staff will travel by public transport, bike or on foot to meet with residents, which will reduce air pollution. Energy will be used for cooking sessions, which are required to support residents to become/ maintain their independence. The provider will be expected to host events to help residents make friends and reduce loneliness, and they will be expected to ensure that the materials/resources used are plastic free or recycled where possible.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Key milestones	Indicative Date (or range)
Procurement strategy report – (<i>Cabinet</i>)	26 th February 2025
Tender advert	6 th March 2025
Invitations to tender issued	6 th March 2025
Deadline for submission of tenders	18 th April 2025
Tender evaluation and clarification period	28 th April – 19 th May 2025
Contract Award (TG2) – CPB	June 2025
Contract Award Report – executive Director	June 2025
Winning Tenderer's Social Value Delivery Plan logged	Early July 2025
Alcatel (10-day standstill procedure)	Early July 2025
Contract signature / sealing	August 2025
Transition to the new arrangements	Early July – 30 th September 2025
Contract start date	1 st October 2025

10. APPENDICES

10.1. Equalities Impact Assessment

10.2. Commissioning Options Table

REPORT ENDS