

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FROM EXECUTIVE/COUNCIL/COMMITTEE

DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN THE CONSTITUTION



DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION TAKEN BY:	Strategic Director of Children & Education (DCS)
DELEGATED BY:	Choose an item. (date of delegation)
IN CONSULTATION WITH:	Executive Member
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Children and Education

SUBJECT: Procurement to identify a provider to deliver the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service for Blackburn with Darwen

1. DECISION

The delegated officer Joanne Sidle, Strategic Director of Children & Education, in accordance with section 2.6 of the Council's Contract Procurement Procedure Rules agrees:

To approve the proposed strategy for the procurement and the commencement of a tendering and procurement activity to offer this service to the wider market, with revised contractual and commissioning arrangements to be in place from the 1st August 2024. This contract will be for a provider to offer the SENDIASS in accordance with the service specification. The contract will be awarded for 3 years with an option to extend for up to 2 year's subject to satisfactory delivery which will be monitored via robust contract review processes.

To extend the current contract to 31st July 2024 in order to allow time for a full tender process to be undertaken.

2. REASON FOR DECISION

The intention to undertake a tendering exercise on the Council's CHEST system is to identify a suitable provider to provide a SENDIASS commission.

3. BACKGROUND

The aim of the SENDIASS is to help to promote independence and self- advocacy for children, young people and parents. The service provides free impartial, confidential and accurate information, advice and support regarding education, health and social care for children, young people and their parents on matters relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability. The service promotes partnerships between parent and carers, children, education and family services, schools and other agencies. The aim of the service is to empower, enable and encourage parents to take an informed and active part in their child's education, and for young people to be involved in decisions about their own education and futures.

The service must ensure its services are accessible, with a base in Blackburn. A key element of the service will be responsive to the needs of all users and provide information on the local authority's processes for resolving disagreements, its complaints procedures and support children, young people and parents in arranging or attending early disagreement resolution meetings.

In line with national Minimum Standards, the current Blackburn with Darwen SENDIASS is an outsourced service. As the current contract ended on the 31st of March 2023, the current Provider was issued an extension letter to continue delivering the service until the 31st March 2024. Contractually there is no option to extend the contract beyond this date.

4. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is committed to commissioning high quality services which are outcome focused and deliver value for money. The Council want to work collaboratively with a provider who will deliver a service and work closely with the local Parent Carer Forum and other representative user groups (such as Youth Forums) to ensure that the views and experiences of children, young people and parents inform local policy, strategy and practice.

The tender documentation (and subsequent contract / specifications) will incorporate details to ensure that any successful provider will adhere to our quality standards and where applicable, the service will be expected to work in line with the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership, multi agency safeguarding policies, and be cooperative with all statutory bodies, partners of the council and legal representatives. All staff must be inducted and trained in safeguarding in line with the expectations set out by Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership, regulatory bodies and sector/industry standards.

The procurement process will be an Open Tender process which will be carried out via The Chest with the procurement opportunity being available to all suppliers. Due diligence checks will be carried out to ensure all providers meet the minimum accreditation and ethical requirements. The tender will be evaluated with 8 quality questions which will provide 100% of the total evaluation criteria with word limits stated within each question. In order to minimise risk, pricing will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis as this is the maximum budget available. The evaluation panel will be made up of representatives from the children's commissioning team, contracting and procurement and carers.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The allocation of funding in relation to this tender and future contract arrangements has been kept in line with budget allocations for the service.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council will pay the successful provider up to £56,000 per year, on a block contract.

Total cost for contract	1 st July 2024 to 31 st March 2025	1 st April 2025 to 31 st March 2026	1 st April 2026 to 31 st March 2027	1 st April 2027 to 31 st March 2028	1 st April 2028 to 31 st March 2029
Up to £266,000	Up to £42000	Up to £56,000	Up to £56,000	Up to £56,000	Up to £56,000

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the Children and Families Act (2014), it is a legal requirement that all Local Authorities have a SENDIASS Service to operate in accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015) and the National Quality Standards for impartial Information Advice and Support Services.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Childrens services will work in partnership with the provider to ensure the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service is delivered in Blackburn and Darwen.

8. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

This commission is required to deliver a statutory service; if the service is not recommissioned the Council will not be able to meet its statutory requirements.

9. CONSULTATIONS

The views of parent carer forums, children and young people will be central to the successful development and delivery of the commissioned service and will be invited to be part of the evaluation process for the tender.

10. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below:

VERSION: 1

CONTACT OFFICER:

DATE:

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

