

Decision maker:	Director for children's wellbeing
Decision date:	17 May 2017
Title of report:	Digital multi-media advocacy
Report by:	Integrated pathway development manager

Classification

Open

Key decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To approve the implementation of a pilot digital multi-media advocacy solution for children and young people with disabilities and their families.

Recommendation

THAT:

- a) a contract to provide an online multi-media advocacy platform for children and young people with disabilities be awarded to Rix Wiki/Multi-Me for a period of 24 months at a cost of £26,951; and**
- b) by virtue of this decision an exemption to paragraph 4.6.13.2 of the council's contract procedure rules shall be granted to enable the direct award because there is no other provider in the market as described within the report.**

Alternative options

- 1 There are no digital alternatives currently developed that provide the required functions, which are secure and designed for use by people with learning disabilities and which have been used by councils, special schools and colleges. This proposal is for a combined platform providing a unique range of functions including information storage and selective sharing, circle of support, social networking, goal setting, and multi-media self-advocacy.

- 2 The alternatives to a family-owned digital option include the current paper based family records and current means of inter-agency information sharing. Neither of these empower families to share information selectively, support person-centred planning, enable use of multi-media to describe the child and family and their needs and preferences, to produce and share plans and programmes. They do not support collaborative working or facilitate communication between the circles of support.

Reasons for recommendations

- 3 The direct award pilot will run for 24 months and allow us to evaluate how effectively the integrated Multi Me / RIX Wiki platform supports collaborative, person-centred working, promotes the voice of the child and family in assessments and reviews, facilitates information holding and sharing under the control of the child, young person or family and evidences achievement. Other councils and institutions are using one of these platforms but this will be a new integrated platform combining the functions of both apps therefore a pilot is proposed initially.
- 4 The evaluation will be completed at the end of year 1 will inform future decisions regarding procuring licensing and support package for roll out to children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and potentially other populations

Key considerations

- 5 An extensive search was carried out to identify any digital options which would provide the required functions. Several local councils, schools and colleges are using one or other of these tools. Confirmation has been received from Hackney London Borough Council that in a recent open procurement process, no other providers submitted bids for products with similar functions. Nottinghamshire Council procured Rix Wiki four years ago but the contracts and commissioning manager believes there is still no product that provides the same functions.
- 6 RIX Wiki's are simple, accessible, secure, password protected and easy to build personal websites. They can be used to create multi-media person centred plans that use pictures, words, video and sound to capture the voice, skills, aspirations and needs of the individual. They give ownership of the planning process to children, young people and their families.
- 7 Multi Me is a secure social network and person centred toolkit for children, young people and their families or circles of support. It provides a range of accessible and multi-media based applications designed to empower individuals in their self-advocacy. Multi Me helps people to manage and build their own support networks, enable communication, co-operation and joined up support.
- 8 RIX Wiki and Multi Me integrated platform: The two platforms have been developed and used separately in schools, colleges and across local councils and have been cited as best practice in schools by Ofsted. The proposal is to combine them into a single integrated platform, which would provide a unique range of functions and become a single resource to securely store and share information, to promote collaboration and communication, self-advocacy and multi-disciplinary practice.
- 9 The proposal has been discussed with the information governance leads and a Suppliers Questionnaire submitted. A discussion has taken place with regards to a privacy impact assessment and it was deemed that as the council will not be responsible for holding the data that the users of the system will retain responsibility

- for their own information and this will be made clear in any user documentation that we will provide.
- 10 There was interest in using the software from the council's children's wellbeing and adults and wellbeing directorates, including special schools and post-16 providers. The pilot will involve children and young people up to the age of 25. It is anticipated that much of the learning around multi-media self-advocacy, person-centred planning, information sharing and circles of supports would be applicable particularly to adults with learning disabilities.
- 11 The proposal is attached at appendix 1 and details the approach that will be taken to implement the tool and a summary of the steps are shown below.
- a. Year 1:
 - i. Refine the system using a co-production approach to meet our specific requirements
 - ii. Provide training and support: face-to-face, online and production of training manual
 - iii. Establish champions
 - iv. Capture case studies
 - v. Evaluate and prepare project report. The design of the evaluation is part of the project and the measures will be agreed at the beginning of the project. The evaluation will include questionnaires, focus groups and case studies.
 - b. Year 2: Licenses for the pilot cohort of up to 250 users will be continued and are included within the costs set out.
- 12 The SEND reforms in the 2014 Children and Families Act place the child, young person and family at the heart of planning and decision making. Education, health care plans (EHC) need to be co-produced through person-centred practice and individuals must have full choice and control. Multi-Media Advocacy (MMA) enables an individual to produce their own portfolio, communicate their interests and preferences and to engage with planning processes.
- 13 MMA can support collaborative, person-centred planning and facilitates effective integration of inputs and implementation of programmes. All information stays with the young person and family and can be shared selectively as appropriate. Being able to store and share information securely reduces the need for families to have to re-tell their story and to update numerous care plans, reducing effort for family and professionals.
- 14 Early support was the government's recommended approach to achieving co-ordinated, family-focused service delivery for children with disabilities and is referenced by the SEND code of practice. The proposed multi-media advocacy platform supports service delivery in line with the early support principles.

Community impact

- 15 The Herefordshire Children and Young People's Partnership plan identified the need for a seamless, straightforward, integrated service to provide multi-disciplinary support to disabled children and young people and their families, which reduces duplication of effort and promotes integration.
- 16 SEND local area inspection report: MMA would contribute to addressing some of the identified findings and areas for development. These might include:

- a. EHC plans which have little evidence of co-production with parents and which do not directly reflect the views and aspirations of young people and their families. This is also evident in health and social care provisions.
- b. A 'tell it once' approach is not supported and families often have to repeat the same information to different agencies or providers.
- c. Concern that detailed information about young people is not always received by post-16 and post-19 providers.

Equality duty

- 17 The Public Sector Equality Duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying "due regard" in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
- 18 The proposal may support the advancement of opportunity of children and young people with disabilities to equality of opportunity. Measures must be taken to ensure those who do not use or have access to the internet and computers / mobile devices will not be discriminated against.

Financial implications

- 19 The cost for the two year project will be £26,951 which would be funded from the SEND grant. This includes licenses for up to 250 users. The pilot would provide the evidence for any future procurement process. The cost beyond the pilot stage depends upon the number of users and how much support and training is still required from the providers. The price range is from £99 per user per year for 50 users to £30 per user per year for 410 users.

Legal implications

- 20 The director for children's wellbeing may approve the implementation as outlined in this report under the powers set out in part 3 section 8 (3.8.5) of the council's constitution.
- 21 The council has a duty to provide collaborative, person centred services and plans, as set out in paragraphs 9.20 – 9.26 of the statutory code of practice published by the DFE in January 2015 on special educational needs and disability. The integrated platform proposed will assist in this process.
- 22 The council will not be data controller or process for the personal information contained on the integrated platform; however due diligence should be undertaken to ensure that RIX Wiki and Multi Me integrated platform comply with Principal 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998 in that it has appropriate technical and organisational measures in place to prevent unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of or damage to personal data.

Risk management

- 23 The provider will be expected to demonstrate, by completing an information security questionnaire, its commitment to storing the data securely, with data management security that meets the strictest standards as set out in legislation. The provider will be expected to have back up provision in place to ensure that data is not lost should their server become corrupted and to ensure consistent access to the data.

- 24 The chosen supplier, who will have experience of providing this type of solution, will provide a training programme to ensure that all who use the system will be able to do so appropriately and safely.
- 25 The information governance steering group is being consulted regarding managing risk. A privacy impact assessment has not been carried out as the council will not own an information storage asset or system and will not hold or process information. It is expected that a risk assessment for providing licenses to use the platform would recommend providing clear advice to users and include a disclaimer in the documentation.
- 26 If the proposal is declined, there is a risk that families and services will not share information, that services will not be collaborative and family focussed, that co-production of assessments and plans is impacted and the voice of the child and family is not heard.

Consultees

- 27 No formal consultation has taken place in relation to this pilot project. However, information and feedback events were held on 28 February 2017 for families, young people and officers from all agencies. There was an overwhelmingly positive response from these events. Informal engagement with families through Herefordshire Carers Support meetings and school events echoed this.
- 28 A recent early support principles audit indicated that:
- Only about half the respondents felt that professionals work in partnership with families.
 - Only about half the respondents felt that their knowledge of their child was used as a core part of any assessment, plan or review.
 - About 40% felt there was a process for identifying family strengths, needs and wishes.
 - About 40% thought that information was shared between practitioners, with family consent, so that the family only has to 'tell it once'.
 - Only a third thought that there was continuity of care through different stages of a child's life.
- 29 The multi-media advocacy platform is intended to address these areas. The proposal, as part of the pilot, is to formally evaluate the platform and include focus groups with children, young people and families to enable them to express their views, which will inform any future procurement decision.
- 30 Partnership considerations: Implementing this proposal will involve partnership working with health, education and social care colleagues. Health colleagues are represented in CYPP and the CWD strategy group and were also invited to the event referred to above and all of the consultees from partner agencies were supportive of the approach.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Digital multimedia advocacy 2 year proposal

Background papers

None identified.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
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