

Written statement of a key decision
Cabinet member children and young people

Title	Children's Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team (EDT) Service
Decision maker	Cabinet member children and young people Information about cabinet, including the names and contact details of the cabinet members, can be found here: http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=251
Date of decision	16 January 2026
Report exemption class	Open
Reason for being a key decision	This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.
A notice was served in accordance with Part 3 (Key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.	
General exception or special urgency (as defined in the constitution)	No
Purpose	To agree to the direct award, by exemption, of this contract to the incumbent service provider. The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) Service exists to provide an emergency responsive service for children and young people up to the age of 18, but in line with the Leaving Care Act 2000 the service is available to any care experienced young person aged up to 25. The service is provided when a child or young person is believed to be at risk of significant harm, and from whom delay until the next working day would be detrimental to their welfare and safety. The service ensures that they continue to be safeguarded in the immediate term. There is a statutory duty for local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in

	need. This is Section 17(1) of the Children Act 1989.
Decision	<p>That:</p> <p class="list-item-l1">a) To direct award a contract to Worcestershire County Council to deliver Herefordshire's children's social care out of hours Emergency Duty Team (EDT) service for a period of 3 years from 1 April 2026 up to 31 March 2029, with the option to extend up to a further 48 months, initially at an annual cost of £143,170; and</p> <p class="list-item-l1">b) To delegate to the Corporate Director for Children and Young People to take all operational decisions to agree terms and conditions within the contract, including managing the risk of Local Government Reorganisation that may curtail Worcestershire County Council's ability to deliver their contractual obligations by undertaking, if required, a scoping exercise on potential alternative service providers and their costings (in years 2 to 3)</p>
Reason for the decision	<p>As set out in the report. Documents relating to this decision are available at</p> <p>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=50052716</p>
Options considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Herefordshire Council could try to deliver the function from within its own social care resources. This would require children's social care to recruit additional social workers and/or change terms and conditions of current children's social workers to enable them to work the unsociable hours required to deliver an out of hours service. As of September 2025, children's social care had 15 full time equivalent (FTE) vacant social worker posts, with a further 27 FTE posts filled with agency staff. Therefore, there is a significant risk of being unable to fill the additional vacancies arising from delivering the service in house. This is not recommended. 2. Herefordshire Council could delegate the function (under S101(b) of the Local Government Act 1972) to Worcestershire County Council to deliver the service. Although this would negate the need for us to commission Worcestershire County Council directly it is not recommended as it would result in the Council having less control over the service with limited opportunity to shape provision of what is a business-critical service. 3. Competitive tender of the service to appoint an external provider. In January 2025, we asked our regional and statistical neighbours how their EDT services are delivered to understand how other authorities deliver their EDTs. Responses received suggest EDT services in other areas have only been commissioned as part of wider restructure of children's social care services therefore, this suggests there is not a market for the EDT service externally. Additionally, there is no option to extend the current contract.

Declarations of interest (see ▪ below)	
Call-in expiry date (decisions are not subject to call-in where special urgency provisions apply)	22 January 2026

Councillor:	Date 16 January 2026
Cabinet member children and young people (Councillor Ivan Powell)	

- a record of any conflict of interest declared by any executive member who is consulted by the member which relates to the decision;

and

- in respect of any declared conflict of interest, a note of dispensation granted.