

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Occupational therapy assessment support, via a six month contract variation, to the Integrated Community Equipment Service
Date of decision:	24 August 2023
Decision maker:	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>Chief Executives scheme of delegation</p> <p>CW-01</p> <p>Adult social care operation and policy provision of assessment and care management; approved mental health practitioners; deprivation of liberty functions; strategic and operational safeguarding adults policies and procedures; prevention and support services (including welfare rights, occupational therapy, financial assessments, direct payments, telecare, rapid response registered service)</p>
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	None
Decision made:	<p>A six month contract variation to the existing Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) contract is approved to enable NRS Healthcare to undertake occupational therapy (OT) assessments on behalf of the council.</p> <p>Approximately 200 OT assessments are proposed to be completed within the six months, at a cost of £66,775. However, there is provision to potentially increase this number, which would increase the overall cost.</p>
Reasons for decision:	<p>There is currently a significant shortage of directly employed Occupational Therapists at Herefordshire Council, which has contributed to a substantial backlog of statutory OT assessments.</p> <p>Currently there are 508 outstanding OT assessments within the council and in order to reduce some of the backlog, NRS has confirmed it can complete approximately 200 OT assessments in six months from 29 August 2023 to 28 February 2024.</p> <p>Failure to undertake assessments within a reasonable time would mean Herefordshire Council is not meeting its statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014, therefore this solution ensures the council's responsibilities are fully met.</p> <p>NRS currently delivers the council's Integrated Community Equipment Service and has a proven track record of prevention and helping to keep individuals healthy within our communities, which supports the Herefordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2033.</p>

	The additional OT assessments will not affect NRS' current contract delivery / obligations and is permitted within the ICES contract.
Highlight any associated risks / finance / legal / equality considerations:	<p>The contract value for the ICES contract is £9 million over five years from 1 April 2020. The proposed additional cost is within the permitted limits under procurement regulations, therefore the legal risk of a challenge is assessed as low, as the variation meets all three conditions set out in regulation 72 (1) (c) of the Public Contracts Regulations, which governs the extent to which public contracts can be amended, without triggering a new tender process.</p> <p>Failure to undertake OT assessments within a reasonable time would mean the council is not meeting its statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014.</p> <p>No other risks have been identified or are anticipated.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>Do nothing: This option is not recommended as there would be a significant gap in the provision of statutory council OT assessments. This may affect an individual's physical health and mental wellbeing with increased possibility of escalation into more formal social care services. There is a statutory function to undertake OT assessments under the Care Act 2014.</p> <p>Complete a full tender: This option is not recommended due to the time constraints and level of backlog of statutory assessments. Therefore, Herefordshire Council is currently unable to approach a different provider or start a full tender process.</p> <p>Employ additional Occupational Therapists to undertake the assessments: The recruitment of Occupational Therapists is challenging both locally and nationally. The council has tried to recruit additional OT's, but there are insufficient numbers to meet the current level of demand.</p> <p>There are no other financially viable options available.</p>
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None

Signed: Date:

Please ensure that signatures are redacted before publishing.