

**CABINET – 19 DECEMBER 2023****EXCEPTION TO CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES – REQUEST TO
DIRECT AWARD TO INTUITIVE THINKING SKILLS TO ENABLE
UTILISATION OF GRANT SPEND****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to request approval for an exception to the Council's Contract Procedures Rules to enable a direct award to Intuitive Thinking Skills (ITS) to provide an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service. This would be in accordance with the stipulations and grant agreement made available by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID).

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet approves a direct award for up to 2 years, for the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026, to Intuitive Thinking Skills (ITS) to provide the Individual Placement and Support service for Leicestershire and Rutland.

Reasons for Recommendation

3. The Council's Constitution (Contract Procedure Rule 6 (b)(ii)) provides that exceptions to the Contract Procedure Rules may be made by the Cabinet where it is satisfied that an exception is justified on its merits and that in urgent cases the Chief Executive (after consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader save where this is not practicable) may direct that an exception be made subject to it being reported to the Cabinet.
4. A grant award for an Individual Placement and Support service to the Council was made by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) in November 2023. As part of the process, the Council was required to state which provider would be awarded the work and the exact mechanism for delivery. This process and the associated timescales prohibited the Authority from carrying out a competitive tender. The two-year award starting from April 2024 also restricts the time available to procure, recruit and implement a new service. The award from OHID has been made subject to the Cabinet approving a direct award to ITS.

5. The direct award of contract to ITS will allow progress in line with the grant conditions and will enable Leicestershire residents to benefit from the additional funding.
6. Intuitive Thinking Skills has been leading on this area for the last two years and has local experience and relationships already in place, thereby strengthening the implementation process.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

7. If approved, activity required to direct award will commence shortly after the Cabinet decision with the service commencing on 1 April 2024.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. In 2021, the UK Government published its 10-year drugs strategy, 'From Harm to Hope', following Dame Carol Black's Independent Review of Drugs. One of the priorities set out by the strategy is to deliver a world class treatment and recovery system.
9. The exception to the Contract Procedure Rules follows the Council's Constitution (Contract Procedure Rule 6 (b) (ii)).

Resource Implications

10. There are no additional resource implications arising from the recommendation as the service will be grant funded. The OHID has assigned £414,000 over a 2-year period for the delivery of the contract outlined within the report.
11. The grant funding is being used to complement existing substance misuse service provision across Leicestershire and Rutland.
12. The value of the contract is below the relevant procurement threshold as it is classed as a "Light Touch Regime" services under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
13. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

14. None

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PART B

Background

15. Individuals with drug and/or alcohol dependence may struggle to find and maintain stable employment which is a key part of an individual's recovery journey. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an evidence-based approach that supports people to gain employment.
16. The national drug strategy, 'From Harm to Hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives' was published in December 2021 and commits to ensuring that IPS will be available in all local authorities by 2024/25.
17. Leicestershire County Council is part of the final tranche of local authorities to receive this grant funding from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) via the OHID. The grant is for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 with a total value of £414,000.
18. The grant will enhance the existing offer for individuals receiving support from the Substance Misuse Treatment Service, in that they will be supported to gain and sustain employment whilst accessing the treatment service.
19. It is intended that the Council will oversee delivery of the services provided under the grant funding and will regularly update OHID on progress.
20. Alternative procurement routes were considered with a procurement specialist and direct award was deemed to be the most sensible given the timescales and specific nature of the grant conditions.
21. The Council was required to name the service provider(s) in order to receive the additional funding from the OHID.
22. The Individual Placement Support is a well-evidenced approach that aims for sustained employment through mainstream, competitive jobs.

Equality Implications

23. Awarding the contract allows for additional support for individuals with drug and/or alcohol dependence to gain employment, and it complements the current Integrated Substance Misuse Treatment Service.
24. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

25. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Background Papers

None.

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