

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET**

DATE: 25 JUNE 2019

REPORT OF: MRS MARY LEWIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

LEAD OFFICER: DAVE HILL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFE LONG LEARNING AND CULTURE

COMMUNITY VISION OUTCOME: PEOPLE

SUBJECT: DYNAMIC PURCHASING SYSTEM (DPS) – INDEPENDENT EXPERT ASSESSMENTS

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Surrey County Council (SCC) must meet a range of statutory obligations to ensure that safeguarding and care planning decisions about children are made using high quality evidence suitable for the courts. A range of expert assessments are sometimes required to support this process. In 2017/18 SCC used 76 different providers of independent expert assessments and this increased to 94 different providers in 2018/19.

These assessments are usually commissioned by the Council from independent social workers (ISWs) and other expert witnesses (psychologist, psychiatrists, specialist medical professionals etc.). The current spend on spot purchasing these external assessments has reached a level that is unsustainable and in breach of the Council's Standing Orders. The quality and value for money of these external services also needs to be improved.

Assessments completed by Expert Witnesses are broken down into the following areas:

- Independent Social Workers (ISWs)
- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists
- All Other Expert Witnesses
- Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Assessments

Higher quality reports from independent witnesses will be used not only by the court in care proceedings, but can also be used by social workers to develop individualised care plans, and assist SCC to better understand and meet the needs of children and young people coming into care.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. Following consideration of the available options, the results of the procurement process, and commercially sensitive information provided in Part 2 of the report,

approval is given for the council to establish a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for the period 1 August 2019 – 31 July 2021 (with the option for extension up until, but not exceeding 31 July 2024).

2. Delegated Approval be given to the Service Manager (Gateway to Resources) to 'call off' independent expert assessments and assessments for special guardianship orders from this DPS as required.
3. Delegated approval to be given to the Director - Commissioning to add new providers onto the DPS for SCC as appropriate.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

As outlined in *Child First Commissioning Intentions for Children in Surrey 2017-22*, Surrey County Council is committed to ensuring children in Surrey get 'the right help, care and protection at the right time so they can thrive'. Expert Witnesses and providers of Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Assessments inform the County Council in its care planning decisions.

The demand for statutory and in some cases court ordered assessments has increased at a rate which the Council is unable to meet within current in-house capacity. To cope with this pressure and ensure our statutory duties are met, the Children's Social Care teams have been spot purchasing external experts to carry out SGO and expert assessments. However the spot purchasing arrangements are not sustainable and not achieving value for money. (This is unsustainable within the financial challenges that the Council is facing). The Council also acknowledges Ofsted's findings (May 2018) which highlighted that there is an over-reliance on independent social workers and other expert witnesses in Surrey, and the quality, value for money and timeliness of assessments are key areas that need improving.

The robust commissioning and contract management arrangements that will be put in place will ensure that expert assessments will be monitored more closely. Regular monitoring will have a strong focus on providers' safeguarding policies and procedures and ensure that the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults remains a priority at all times.

DETAILS:

Background

1. In 2011 the UK Government carried out an official review of the Family Justice System called the Family Justice Review (FJR) which highlighted the need for timely decision making and high quality assessments prior to the commencement of care proceedings. The review recommended wide ranging reforms intended to put children's interests back at the heart of care proceedings.
2. Under the revised section of 32(1)(a) of the Children Act 1989 (introduced by section 14 of the Children and Families Act 2014), care and supervision proceedings must be completed 'without delay, and in any event, within twenty-six weeks beginning with the day on which the application was issued' unless the case is exceptional. This places an increased emphasis on timeliness and the quality of assessments during care proceedings.
3. In response to FJR and its recommendations, the Council established an Any Qualified Provider (AQP) list of external experts for spot purchasing. This purchasing approach was

the most appropriate at this time due to the low levels of spend and demand for these types of assessments in Surrey. However, volumes have been higher than forecast and the AQP list has not been used consistently by the teams and is no longer fit for purpose.

Current Demand in Surrey

4. Surrey is experiencing a decrease in the number of children and young people being the subject of a child protection plan (CP). The rate of children on a CP plan in Surrey decreased from 40 per 10,000 children (April 2018) to 33 per 10,000 children (April 2019).

Independent Expert Assessments

5. In 2017/18, 176 of SCC's children had at least one expert assessment during the pre-legal proceedings process. In 2018/19, this number has increased to 214.
6. SCC's Children's Services and Children's Legal Services both commission expert assessments. In addition, the courts can order a local authority to commission an assessment or test even if the local authority is opposed to such an assessment taking place. In this scenario, the cost of an assessment or test is usually split between the parties (e.g. parents, Legal Aid and the local authority). The proportion owed by the council is paid for within Legal Services Children's Adults and Education external spend budget. This budget has been overspent for the last 3 years.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Assessments

7. Nationally and locally in Surrey, in line with permanency planning for children and young people there has been an increase in the number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) granted since they were first introduced in 2005. The number of SGO assessments per year in Surrey has been on an upwards trajectory. In 2016/17 there were 52 assessments carried out by external providers and this almost doubled in 2017/18 to 102 assessments. The budget for SGOs sits within fostering and the assessment is undertaken to assess the suitability of a long term placement for a child as an alternative to long-term fostering, adoption or a Child Arrangement Order.
8. In the first 5 months of 2018/19 55 assessments were carried out externally. However, only 5 SGO assessments were purchased externally. Since the arrival of the new leadership team, there has been a much more concerted effort to use social workers from across the organisation, or bank staff, to complete these assessments.

Transformation of Children's Services

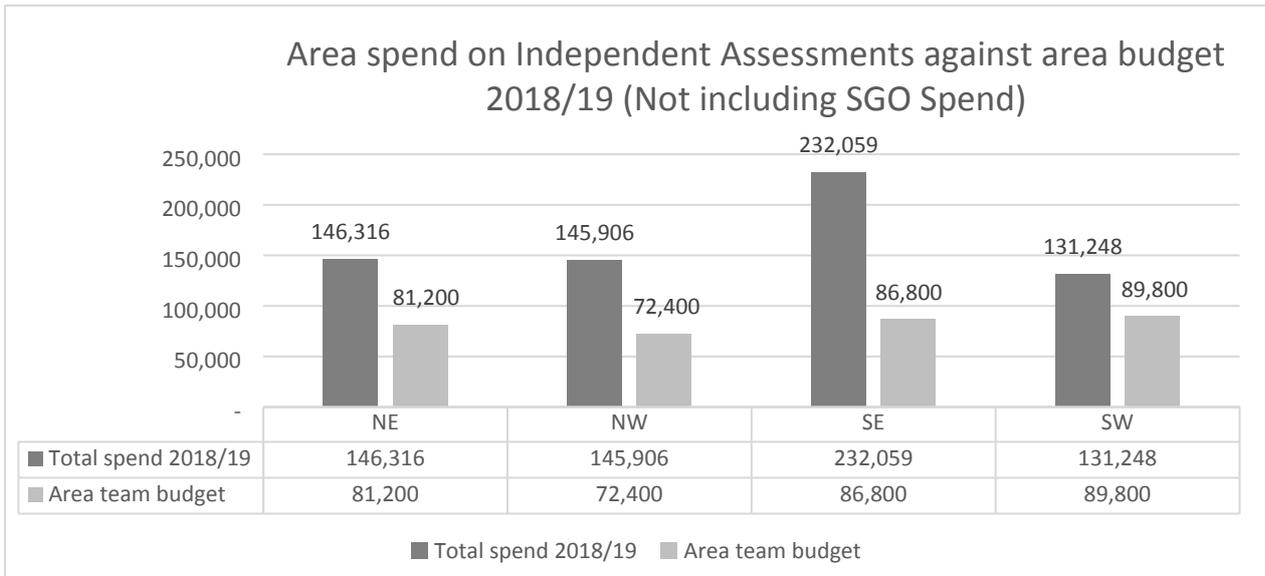
9. There are significant changes happening within Children's Services that are likely to have a positive impact on service delivery in-house, in terms of both capacity and quality, which will assist us in bringing costs down, reducing the need for purchasing from external experts and improving outcomes for children and families.
10. Within the new structure for Children's Services, the old Children in Need and Child Protection and Court teams have been deleted and replaced with 22 Family Safeguarding Teams, working to the evidence-based Family Safeguarding Model. These teams will employ larger numbers of qualified social workers and specialist adult workers.
11. Wherever compatible with the welfare of the child, the aim of these teams will be to work alongside parents to support them to change their behaviours and keep children safe within their families. Where this is not possible, (in-house) social workers will be encouraged to

undertake assessments and use their work as a basis for initiating pre-proceeding/Public Law Outline (PLO) process and care proceedings. It is important that SCC works closely with the local Court and that we build the capacity and confidence of in house social workers to deliver high quality reports to the courts, instead of using external providers.

12. On occasions where a specialist expert assessment is required (that is not available in-house), or the court has ordered that SCC seek an 'independent' assessment, purchasing will be completed centrally by the new Gateway to Resources Team rather than by individual Social Workers.

Financial Context

13. Due to different practice in the social work teams currently purchasing and recording the use of these services, an in-depth analysis of the types of assessments most commonly purchased has been extremely difficult. This information is not easily captured within the Liquidlogic LCS system, and most expert assessments are simply recorded as "specialist assessment" on the finance system – it does not distinguish what type of assessment was carried out, or by whom (Independent Social Worker, Psychologist, etc.).
14. By the time the Independent Assessment DPS goes live in August 2019, the new Gateway to Resources Team will be fully operational, and all purchasing related to Independent Assessments will be centralised. This will ensure that the appropriate approvals have been sought, decisions are made and approved at regular planning meetings, and activity/spend across the county will be tracked consistently. These new arrangements will offer the ability to better track SCC's use of external providers, ensure a consistency in practice and individual commissioning, ensure that volume discounts are being applied as appropriate, and allow for improved monitoring of spend against budget.
15. As per the budget and projections table below, the Children's Services budget for Expert Assessments (services that will fall into Lot 1) in 2018/19 was £330,200. The total spend relating to 2018/19 was £655,529, meaning the budget is overspent by £325,329. The financial pressure of £325,329 in 2018/19 was absorbed by the underspend in other areas of the Children' Service budget.



16. It is a priority that the service reduces the cost pressure of £185,310 in 2019/20 and by a further £140,000 in 2020/21, by proactively monitoring spend and reducing demand.
17. Based on the budget for 2019/20 staying the same for independent assessment (excluding SGOs) as 18/19 at £330,200 the average unit cost allows for 123 assessments per annum for the remainder of the contract term and extensions. This would mean a 40% reduction in the current numbers in order for the financial year 2020/21 and beyond, to be within budget.
18. A number of Children Services practice improvements are being implemented to bring spend in this area within budget. The process for requesting these assessments will be changing and more scrutiny will be applied through legal planning meetings. The Gateway to Resources team will be the only team commissioning these assessments for Childrens Service in the future, which will provide a clear method of oversight and scrutiny, an ability to better track Surrey's use of external providers, and improved monitoring of spend against budget.
19. The County Council will also be adopting the Depart for Education (DfE) approved Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding model which is projected to reduce legal proceedings by around 30-40%. Furthermore in-house multidisciplinary teams will be established to carrying out parenting, cognitive and psychological assessments. Therefore with the reduction of legal proceedings combined with more assessments being carried in-house, there should be a decline in the number of external assessments being purchased. However it is recognised that these changes will need time to bed in therefore the DPS will provide a compliant route to market which will offer better value for money.
20. All but 5 SGO assessments since the waiver in September 2018 have been able to be completed in-house and will continue to be as capacity allows. Once the DPS is live there will be a small proportion that will be able to be commissioned externally if needed in line with the current budget level of £140,000 per annum. Based on the current price of external assessments the budget would allow for 39 assessments per annum.
21. As in the table below, the total contract value over a two year period is expected to be £1.3m. This is based on three separate budget lines: £327,000 which sits in a separate budget for court ordered independent assessments; £280,000 which sits in a fostering budget for SGO assessments and £737,000 for all other assessments. In Year 1 of the contract due to present practice challenges, the Council is carrying a cost pressure of £77,000. It is hoped that this can be mitigated during the first 9 months of the contract as

the rate for independent assessment slows down but even with a total spend of £1.3m (inclusive of a £77,000 overspend), it would mean in real terms that based on 2018/19 spend that a £300,000 cost reduction had been achieved.

Lot	Children's Services	Children's Legal Services	Total
Lot 1 (Experts)	£737,000	£327,000	£1,064,000
Lot 2 (SGO)	£280,000		£280,000
Total over 2 yrs	£1,017,000	£327,000	£1,344,000

22. If the contract is extended by a further three years to a full five years, the total contract value will reach £3.2m, calculated as follows:

Lot	Children's Services	Legal Services	Total
Lot 1 (Experts)	£1,727,000	£777,000	£2,504,000
Lot 2 (SGO)	£700,000		£700,000
Total over 5 yrs	£2,427,000	£777,000	£3,204,000

23. The service will put measures in place to control spend and close the gap between the current demand-led expenditure and the budget allocation of £330,200 as follows:

- 30 to 40% reduction in legal proceedings through tight management grip on thresholds and timescales.
- Increase in utilisation of internal experts and appropriate challenge to court directed experts.
- Encourage system wide reliance on internal Family Safeguarding parenting assessments and intervention programmes.
- Children's Services Directors to provide gatekeeping through approvals and close monitoring of external experts and spend.
- Future purchasing of expert assessments will be managed through the Gateway to Resources team.

Options Analysis

24. Officers considered different options when establishing the best route to market for Independent Assessment services:

Options	Description
Option 1: Establish a DPS under the Light Touch Regime CHOSEN OPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DPS will be open, which means providers will be able to join at any time; this gives Surrey greater flexibility to deliver these services. • If a court instructs a specific provider Officers can encourage them to join the DPS therefore reducing repeated spot purchasing of experts. • There is no guarantee of demand, so the local authority would only be paying for the services it uses • Providers can be monitored/audited in a systematic way • Effective contract management, as providers will be required to comply with our quality standards and

	<p>minimum service standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upfront agreed costs with providers for the assessments and any other associated costs, along with volume discounts • If the demand in care proceedings does not reduce at the rate predicted SCC will be covered through the DPS.
Option 2: Establish a framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As Frameworks are normally not open all the time, new suppliers would not be able to easily join the Framework once the initial procurement activity is completed. • If the Court instructs a specific provider it would lead to spot-purchasing because new providers would be unable to join the framework in a timely manner.
Option 3: Block contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial consequences may arise from under-used capacity if the anticipated demand for the block contracted service is not realised (demand is not guaranteed) • There is a risk that the chosen provider will not be able to meet the need and/or demand to cover assessment services across Surrey • Assessments are bespoke to individual circumstance and so a block contract may not provide the flexibility required for the service.
Option 4: Continue to spot purchase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are no contracts for independent specialist assessments in place SCC would continue to spot purchase these assessments. This could negatively affect the quality of assessments as Social Workers could potentially be purchasing from providers who are not fully compliant. It could also negatively impact on care planning timeframes and even the Courts timeframes. • Spot purchasing does not ensure the best value for money and due to the level of spend is unsuitable for these services. • Breaches Surrey County Council procurement standing orders, and potentially EU Public Contracts Regulations • Spending levels could continue to rise if no intervention or formal commissioning arrangements are established. • Quality of services will vary and the council will be unable to manage poor performance.
Option 5: Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not an option as under Section 11 of the Children Act (2004) SCC must safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Commissioning Approach

25. A Light Touch Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) is proposed for all Independent Assessments and SGO Assessments. This approach will allow us to get as many experts on board as possible, providing increased choice ensuring the right expert is available for the family being assessed, at the right time, for the right price.

26. The scope of the project consists of Independent Assessments (expert assessments and SGO assessments) that supports decision making in the safeguarding of children and young people, particularly in relation to pre-proceedings and during care proceedings.
27. The Independent Assessments DPS will run initially for two years, with the option to extend for periods up to a further three years ending on 31 July 2024. The contracts will expire on 31 July 2021 unless extended. The DPS will be open continuously throughout that time to allow more providers to join.
28. In order to evaluate 'like for like' in terms of types of assessment and price, Independent Assessments will be broken down into two Lots:
 - Lot 1: Assessments completed by Expert Witnesses
 - Lot 2: Special Guardianship Order (SG) Assessments
29. Lot 1 will be further broken down into the following sub-lots:
 - Lot 1a: Assessments completed by Independent Social Workers (ISWs)
 - Lot 1b: Assessments completed by Psychologists
 - Lot 1c: Assessments completed by Psychiatrists
 - Lot 1d: Assessments completed by Other Expert Witnesses (i.e. all 'other' Experts listed in the Legal Aid Agency guidance)

Service Specification

30. The service specification draws together the key information required by organisations wishing to bid for contracts to deliver Independent Assessments in SCC. Each specification sets out our expectations of providers and the commissioned services, including:
 - Aims and objectives of the tender process
 - DPS / Framework structure overview
 - Timeframes
 - Demand and need analysis
 - Service outcomes and performance monitoring
 - Managing complaints
 - Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults (including reference to their responsibilities under Section 11 of the Children Act (2004))
 - GDPR
 - Social Value
31. For each Lot within the Service Specification, we have also provided:
 - A description of the services to be provided under that Lot
 - Service standards and expectations
 - Remuneration / Pricing expectations

Service Outcomes and Performance Monitoring

32. The outcomes framework set out below is designed to deliver a high quality service for Surrey’s children, young people, families, carers, and practitioners. These outcomes are to be embedded in the service offer and provide a clear focus for providers.

33. The overarching outcomes for these services are as follows:

	Outcomes	Indicators
1.	The Local Authority has access to a high quality, independent and timely assessment service	Providers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out assessments and submit reports within specified timescales • Communicate with, and provide regular updates to the Purchaser (and document the same clearly) • Produce high quality “ready” reports with no changes or redactions required • Receive positive feedback from court, practitioners, children and families. • Read all information necessary to understand the context and history of children
2.	Children, young people and families experience a clear and fair assessment process	Providers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive minimal valid complaints made against them • Communicate with children and families appropriately and document the same clearly • Communicate in an appropriate manner so that children and families understand the assessment processes and content. • Signpost children and families to services local to them, where possible
3.	Securing value for money and efficient use of public funds	Providers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all costs are outlined upfront, to prevent additional and unexpected charges. • Be able to evidence that individuals undertaking assessments are suitably qualified, have relevant experience and (where relevant) are currently registered as a professional expert with the appropriate professional body.

34. The monitoring process for this contract is designed to be as streamlined as possible to avoid onerous reporting procedures.

35. Providers will be required to return Performance Monitoring Forms (PMFs) to the Council on a six monthly basis or after every 10 assessments (which ever takes place first) and attend performance monitoring meetings when required.

36. In addition to the six-monthly reports, providers will be required to complete Annual reports, which will capture all activity that took place within the contractual year and confirm that they are still complying with all legal and contractual requirements – including appropriate levels

of insurance, professional registration, Enhanced DBS (safeguarding) certificate, an up to date CV, and evidence of continuous professional development (CPD).

CONSULTATION:

37. In December 2018, a market engagement event was held and attended by a mix of sole traders and slightly larger organisations who employ/engage numerous expert witnesses. The purpose of these events was to:
- a. Develop a common and shared perspective of supply and demand
 - b. Provide an overview of our vision for Independent Assessment Services
 - c. Receive provider feedback on the current offer/way of purchasing – what is working well and what are the challenges
 - d. Receive provider feedback on our proposed commissioning arrangements, provider's ability to deliver services as specified, and their feedback on how to best structure pricing schedules and conduct performance monitoring
38. Extensive consultation with Surrey's Child Protection Teams, Legal Childcare teams, Procurement and Corporate Finance has taken place throughout the project. Further work to undertake detailed process mapping with all the relevant teams took place in March and April 2019. This will further inform our approach to mobilisation of the contracts, clarify call-off procedures (in very practical terms – who will be responsible for what etc.) and help the organisation put the right systems in place to monitor and track provider performance and financial spend throughout the life of the DPS.
39. Direct engagement with children, young people and families did not take place because it was not deemed appropriate to engage with residents that are currently going through court proceedings. However, officers did review the general concerns that families have shared through Surrey's quality assurance processes and the Children's Rights and Participation Team, and established that some families reported that they often misunderstood assessment processes and content of reports and frequently disagreed with the outcomes. Therefore the key learning from this will be to help children and families better understand the reason for the assessment and improve communication with the family through the process. Officers recognise that these assessments are carried out with some of SCC's most vulnerable children and families and it is imperative that these assessments do not cause unnecessary distress.
40. SCC has engaged with other local authorities and discovered that there is an appetite to work collaboratively. With this in mind the proposed Light Touch DPS will only last two years (with the option to extend up to a further 3 years) and the intention will be for the Council to work with other local authorities on future collaborative arrangements. This may provide a stronger purchasing power to attract experts, drive down costs and secure bulk discounts, therefore further saving Surrey resident money.

COMPETITIVE TENDERING PROCESS – OUTCOME:

41. Bids were received from 3 providers, broken down under the following lots:
- Lot 1a – Independent Social Work (ISW) Assessments: 2 bids received
 - Lot 1b – Psychological Assessments: 1 bid received
 - Lot 1c – Psychiatric Assessments: 1 bid received
 - Lot 1d – All other Expert Assessments: 0 bids received

- Lot 2 – Special Guardian Order (SGO) Assessments: 2 bids received
42. Unfortunately 2 supplier's submissions were incomplete and could not be accepted.
- Meaning the complete submissions broken down under the following lots:
- Lot 1a – Independent Social Work (ISW) Assessments: 1 bid received
 - Lot 1b – Psychological Assessments: 0 bids received
 - Lot 1c – Psychiatric Assessments: 0 bids received
 - Lot 1d – All other Expert Assessments: 0 bids received
 - Lot 2 – Special Guardian Order (SGO) Assessments: 1 bid received
43. The DPS has not had a successful first window having only one provider bid for 2 lots. SCC has engaged with the market to find out why more providers did not submit and SCC is putting together a comprehensive market engagement plan based on the feedback received to help the market submit a bid for this DPS throughout the lifetime of the DPS.
44. The market for Independent Assessments has never experienced tendering before. The feedback received from providers on why they did not submit a bid showed there is a lack of understanding in the marketplace on how to submit a full bid and the tender documents.
45. Initially the next DPS evaluation window was not scheduled until August 2019 – however SCC is bringing this forward to May-June 2019 so providers will be on the DPS ready for the 1st August 2019 contract go live date.
46. For the new evaluation window the service and procurement are putting a comprehensive market engagement plan in place to support the marketplace so they are empowered and trained in tendering.
47. Surrey will be holding 4 market engagement events in June 2019 for providers. The events are being held at different times of the day as we understand the market may have court appearances in the day or urgent last minute assessments that might mean they miss an event. Therefore by having the events over 4 consecutive days this will allow providers the ability to turn up to the next day.
48. The events will take providers through the full tendering process and documentation ensuring they are aware of how to submit a compliant bid.
49. Surrey will continue to run these events throughout the lifetime of the DPS to encourage the market to join the DPS.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:
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50. Robust default and suspension clauses have been built into the contract. If the services (or any part of them) have not been carried out in accordance with the service specification and/or DPS Agreement, the Council will have sole and entire discretion to make deductions from the payment due to the provider, calculated as appropriate compensation to the Council. A provider may be suspended from delivering services under any call off contract for a fixed period or indefinite period. The suspension will last until such time as the provider is able to convince the Council that it is able to deliver the service from which it has been suspended.
51. Entry onto the DPS requires providers to pass a number of financial and quality checks. The quality criteria has been set as 'pass/fail' as officers cannot contract for services to the

Council from providers who are not suitably qualified and experienced. Once a provider passes through the quality checks and are admitted onto the DPS, providers are then ranked on price according to the fixed rates per type of assessment and volume discounts offered.

52. The following key risks and issues associated with the contract and contract award have been identified, along with mitigation activities:

Category	Risk Description	Mitigation Activity
Financial & Reputational	Providers may not want to sign up to the DPS and therefore, a level of spot purchasing off-DPS may continue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DPS will be open continuously to allow new providers to join. • The tender process has been simplified as much as possible so that sole traders will not be deterred from submitting a bid. • Additional Market Engagement events will take providers through the full tendering process and documentation ensuring they are aware of how to submit a compliant bid. • Surrey will continue to run Market Engagement events throughout the lifetime of the DPS to encourage the market to join the DPS.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

53. There currently does not seem to be a correlation between spend and the number of pre proceedings taking place due to a variation in practice within social care teams across the County. Currently, assessments are purchased by social workers within area teams, without sufficient scrutiny taking place regarding the need for these assessments or the impact on Council's budget.
54. In order to better manage and monitor costs associated with the purchasing of these services, detailed pricing schedules were issued as part of the Invitation to Tender (ITT) documentation. The pricing schedules have allowed us to agree upfront and (all inclusive) fixed costs, and seek volume discounts from providers.
55. Prices submitted at the point of tender will be fixed for at least the first two years of the contract. Any request for price increases beyond the first two years will need to be considered and approved by the project working group (made up of representatives from Children's Services, Commissioning, Procurement and Finance). Increases in the Legal Aid Authority rate will also be amended if increases during the lifetime of the DPS.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY

56. The Council is facing a very serious financial situation, whereby there are still substantial savings to be delivered to achieve a balanced budget in the current year and a sustainable budget plan for future years.
58. The section 151 officer acknowledges that the service are putting in place a number of improvements to control expenditure in this area of which the Light Touch Dynamic Purchasing System is one. The advantages in operating a Light Touch Dynamic Purchasing

System are that there is a greater transparency of unit costs; the potential for more providers so there is more choice; price inflation can be controlled. All of these advantages provide greater control over market prices and overall spend.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER

- 59. The need for these services arises from the Council’s obligations to provide social services in general and to safeguard and protect children in particular.
- 60. The procurement was fully compliant with the Public Contracts Regulation 2015. A DPS has been set up under the Light Touch Regime and a single provider has been appointed to it. Other providers may apply to join the DPS during its lifetime. The Council has secured the best value on offer in the market place.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

- 61. A copy of the EIA can be found in Annex 1 of this report. This EIA has been approved by Commissioning Leadership Team / CFLC Leadership Team / CFLC Directorate Equality Group.

CORPORATE PARENTING/LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IMPLICATIONS

- 62. A consistent and streamlined approach to purchasing the services of experts / independent assessors across Surrey should help to minimise drift and delay during the pre-proceedings and during care proceedings for children and families, and ensure a high quality, timely service is delivered.

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND ADULTS IMPLICATIONS

- 63. Using the resource of the Gateway Team to purchase services will free up social worker time, leaving social workers to get on with the job of supporting vulnerable families.
- 64. Robust and regular contract monitoring will have a strong focus on provider’s performance and ensure that the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults remains a priority at all times.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 65. The timetable for implementation is as follows:

Action	Date
Cabinet approval	25 June 2019
Contract award (allowing for standstill)	09 July 2019
Mobilisation meetings with successful providers	July 2019
Contracts to be signed and returned	July 2019
DPS commencement date (contract start date)	01 August 2019

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Consulted:

Please see paragraph 37- 40.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Equality Impact Assessment



Independent
 Assessment EIA FINA

Sources/background papers:

- Children's Commissioner (2018), *Estimating the prevalence of the toxic trio* - <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Vulnerability-Technical-Report-2-Estimating-the-prevalence-of-the-toxic-trio.pdf> (accessed 03.08.18)
- Department for Education (2018a), *Characteristics of children in need: 2017 to 2018* - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/762539/Characteristics_of_children_in_need_2017-2018_Main_tables.xlsx (accessed 15.01.19)
- Department for Education (2018b), *Children's Social Work Workforce 2017* - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-work-workforce-2017> (accessed 15.01.19)
- Department for Education (2012), *Family Justice Review: Reducing the Duration of Care Proceedings Cases* - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190167/DFE-32069-2012.pdf (accessed 11.01.19)
- Surrey-i (2017). *JSNA – Safeguarding Children* - <https://www.surreyi.gov.uk/jsna/safeguarding-children/> (accessed 17.01.19)
- ONS (2012), *Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales* - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11> (accessed 15.01.19)
- Surrey County Council (2018) (Internal Document), *Needs Analysis for Forensic Testing and Expert Assessments in Surrey*
- Surrey County Council - Finance Data
- Surrey County Council (Internal Document): *Child First: Commissioning Intentions for Children in Surrey 2017 – 2022 (a copy can be found [here](#) on S-Net)* -----
