

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment v3 - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA593496664

Submitted: 19 March 2024 08:51 AM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: To agree to the Direct award of the contract for the All-Age Recovery Co-ordination Service

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Decision

Overview of policy / decision: To seek Cabinet approval for the direct award of the contract for the All-Age Recovery Co-ordination Service to the current providers.

In 2017, ECC commissioned the countywide All-Age Recovery Co-ordination Service (AARCS), providing open access and delivery of evidence-based interventions to engage both young people and adults in treatment to address their alcohol and drug dependence, together with ongoing support to promote recovery and ultimately, where possible/appropriate, abstinence.

In summary, the service provides:

- All age recovery co ordination and specialist harm reduction and psychosocial interventions for substance misuse
- Pharmacy needle and syringe exchange provision
- Young people drug and alcohol interventions including advice and mentoring support
- Support with onward referrals to other specialist treatment services

AARCS is an integral part of the wider Essex treatment and recovery system, and as such, provides referral routes into other specialist provision where appropriate, preventing people from falling through gaps in treatment, as well as support to access wider services, ensuring they receive timely and appropriate support to address underlying/co existing issues, such as mental ill health, unemployment and contact with the criminal justice system (including criminal exploitation by others).

It should be noted that the service contributes to a number of commitments within ECC's four-year plan, Everyone's Essex, in particular, support healthy lifestyles and level up health, and strengthening family resilience and stability.

AARCS also makes a significant contribution to ECC's commitment to safety, for example, delivering advice and education to children and young people, as well as other preventative approaches to break the cycle of inter-generational dependency, thereby interrupting the supply and demand for drugs, and in turn reducing the risk of those being drawn into offending behaviour and/ or criminal exploitation. Importantly, the Drug Rehabilitation Requirements (DRRs), a community treatment order for drug misusing offenders is delivered by this service and provides an important element of both community safety and the effective rehabilitation of offenders.

In addition, the model for delivery of the service also supports the Council's commitment to place based working. Providing peripatetic support, from satellite and co located settings across the County to deliver community-based interventions which can be adapted and flexed to meet the specific needs of individuals/groups within the local area.

The current contract is due to expire on 31 March 2024. On 1 January 2024, the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) came into force, and is applicable to this contract. Therefore, ECC is required to adhere to the PSR process, which includes provision to direct award a contract to an existing provider, when there is limited or no reason to seek to change from the existing provider; or to assess providers against one another, because: the existing provider is satisfying the existing contract; will likely satisfy the new contract to a sufficient standard, and the proposed contracting arrangements are not changing considerably (direct award process C).

There is comprehensive and robust evidence to satisfy each element of both the key and basic selection criteria as specified by PSR. As such, the intention is to seek approval of Cabinet to direct award the new contract for delivery of AARCS to the incumbent provider, namely the Children's Society in partnership with Open Road.

The proposed contract would be for an initial five years, with the potential then to extend the contract for a further two years.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: As part of Everyone's Essex, ECC is committed to improving the health of Essex residents. Alcohol and drugs are amongst the leading risk factors for overall burden of disease in the UK. Individuals who misuse substances are not only at risk of developing conditions such as cancer and cirrhosis, but also at greater risk of developing /compounding underlying health issues, and premature death.

Many individuals who experience drug and alcohol misuse also have, or become vulnerable to developing a range of other multiple and complex needs the longer their substance misuse remains untreated, ie/for example, contact with the criminal justice system/offending, homelessness, domestic abuse/ relationship and family breakdown, and which of themselves are likely to escalate if not addressed.

In addition, children whose parents/carers misuse drugs and alcohol, are also impacted, with often multiple and cumulative consequences for them across the whole of their life course, for example, impaired foetal development, potential increased exposure to neglect, domestic abuse, poor educational attainment, and risk of substance misuse themselves. This in turn, has a direct knock on effect on the wider community.

It is therefore imperative to identify and engage those most at risk at the earliest possible opportunity, preventing them from transitioning into adulthood with unmet escalating health needs, thereby reducing future demand on both adult drug and alcohol treatment services, and moreover alleviating the burden on costly and overstretched public health services.

AARCS provides a range of evidence-based, semi-structured and low-threshold psychosocial interventions to support service users to reduce and or abstain from use, as well as connect them to meaningful activities and opportunities to help them maintain their recovery and enjoy improved health and wellbeing more generally, while also providing ongoing support for individuals who have exited the service/ treatment system but may experience instances of need for acute recovery support.

The decision sought aims to ensure that both children/young people and adults in Essex who experience substance misuse, can access the help and support they need, as well as families/carers impacted by the substance misuse of others. The direct award of the contract to the incumbent provider will ensure a seamless continuation of service for those in need of support, and in turn reduce the burden on public health services as well as the impact on wider communities affected by the supply and demand of drugs.

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Tom Walker (Economy, Investment and Public Health)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Cllr John Spence (Health, Adult Social Care and ICS Integration)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: New policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: As noted elsewhere, there has already been an extensive review of the performance data which has been gathered and monitored during the life

of the current contract. As stated, PSR requires evidence that the relevant criteria are satisfied, ie each element of the basic selection criteria and the key criteria.

The key criteria comprises five elements namely, quality and innovation; value; integration, collaboration and service sustainability; improving access, reducing health inequalities and facilitating choice; and social value.

Under the terms of the new contract, the provider will be required to demonstrate, including through ongoing performance and monitoring requirements that it is continuing to achieve those outcomes as referred to above, and thereby able to satisfy the new contract. This will be supported/managed through quarterly contract monitoring meetings with the provider (or more frequently if required).

In addition, to ensure absolute transparency, PSR requires ECC to evidence their decision-making, including record keeping and the publication of transparency notices.

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: Yes

Employees: No

Wider community or groups of people: Yes

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Healthy lifestyles, Promoting independence, Place based working, Levelling up health

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Family resilience and stability, Safety, Outcomes for vulnerable children, Levelling up outcomes for families

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: All Essex

Digital accessibility

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: None

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: None

Sex

Nature of impact: None

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: None

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: None

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: None

Race

Nature of impact: None

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: None

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: AARCS provides open access to both children/young people and adults. The figures below represent the number of clients (Children and Young People - CYP and adults) engaging in structured treatment with the service each year since the current contract commenced in 2017:

17/18 18/19 19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23
CYP 312 328 345 167 306 315

Adults 2836 2921 2548 2456 2557 2495

There is a wealth of published research/studies regarding the relationship between alcohol and drug misuse, and the effect on/compounding of both mental ill health and physical impairment/conditions, eg alcohol alone contributes to more than 60 diseases and health conditions and represents 10% of the burden of disease and death in the UK; research indicates that mental health problems are experienced by the majority of drug (70%) and alcohol (86%) of alcohol users in community substance misuse treatment. Individuals who misuse substances are not only at risk of developing conditions such as cancer and cirrhosis, but also at greater risk of developing /compounding underlying health issues. For example, the 2022/23 year, 72.7% of adult clients being supported through the service had a mental health treatment need identified.

By supporting people into treatment and recovery at the earliest opportunity, the risk and or impact of physical and mental ill health /conditions can be avoided and or reduced. The Service also makes and supports with onward referrals to other specialist treatment services where required and works in a multi agency way with partners to address the 'whole person's' needs.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no existing or foreseen negative impacts. The current service and the approach applied to supporting individuals with substance misuse needs contributes to a number of commitments within Everyone's Essex, in particular, support healthy lifestyles and level up health.

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: The service already and will continue to forge strong relationships with partners to address a whole person's needs including eg contact with the criminal justice system, unemployment/education needs and homelessness, thereby helping to tackle multiple disadvantages and in turn help to reduce health inequalities.

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: None

Working families

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Harlow

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Harwich

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Canvey Island

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: While there is no specific data available/captured for service users with SEND, LD and or mental health, the service works with vulnerable adults and young people. The service provides targeted engagement with schools and education settings, including provision of harm reduction advice, as well as targeted engagement with vulnerable who are likely to be experiencing other forms of multiple disadvantage. The service works in partnership with other agencies including ECC's Education Directorate to deliver innovative approaches to provide targeted engagement for children and young people who are not in education, training or employment.

The provider is also a member of the Multi Agency Transitional Enablement meetings which is a partnership established by ECC Adult Safeguarding and is established to support 18-25 year olds who have often been known to Children and Families Social Care/Leaving and Aftercare, often have underlying LD and or neurodiverse conditions.

Similarly, while there is no direct data captured in relation to working families, parents/carers of children/young people misusing drugs and alcohol will be impacted. The service also runs a dedicated Family Support Group which offers support, guidance, and advice for families and strategies to look after themselves whilst also supporting their children/family members.

The Service also operates county wide and works co located with a broad range of services across the County, as well as targeted out reach support.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no known existing or foreseen negative impacts

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: ECC Public Health have commissioned a needs assessment around multiple and complex needs. The assessment may highlight areas for focus /development for this service given that many of the individuals accessing support will have a range of multiple and complex needs

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

People who experience drug and alcohol dependence

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Victims of modern slavery

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Carers

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Looked after children / care leavers

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

The armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, veterans, reservists and cadets)

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

People on low income

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Sex workers

Nature of impact: None

Ethnic minorities

Nature of impact: None

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

People with multiple complex needs or multi-morbidities

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: As detailed elsewhere, the service users accessing the AARCS invariably have a range of multiple and complex needs including homelessness, unemployment and contact with the criminal justice system. The service works with partners in a multi agency way to address the whole person's needs and makes /supports onward referrals to specialist services where appropriate.

The service has forged strong relationships with wider partners including attending multi-agency forums for reducing re-offending focusing on issues such as gangs, and sharing information to help reduce crime, as well as partnership working with Probation teams to provide support to clients/servants who are subject to Drugs Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR), as well as Youth Offending Teams to identify and engage young people in contact with the criminal justice system who would benefit from support from the AARCS, as well as wider partnership working with criminal justice agencies to formulate approaches to divert young people away from the criminal justice system where appropriate.

The service has good links with children and families social care, including attendance at events to support eg care leavers, as well as regular attendance at a multi agency forum which seeks to identify and engage young people, including care leavers, who are particularly vulnerable and need support with a range of issues including substance misuse.

The AARCS also provides dedicated support to families/carers affected by the substance misuse of others including one to one and group support.

As also noted elsewhere, the AARCS also works co located with a number of partners including the Drug and Alcohol Street Support service (DASS) which provides dedicated support to adults who are rough sleeping (or at risk of rough sleeping) in Essex and whom have a substance misuse support need. Close partnership working including co located working ensures there is seamless support for clients, including onward referrals to relevant services where appropriate.

Similarly, the AARCS also works closely with partners/services providing dedicated employment support including the Individual Placement Support (IPS) programme which is overseen by Open Road in Essex. To date, 343 clients have engaged in the employment service (IPS) and to date just over 100 have secured employment in Essex businesses.

With regard to Gypsy Roma and Traveller Communities, work is currently underway to look at how ECC Public Health can improve support available for individuals from these communities, which may impact service delivery of the AARCS going forwards but at this time is too early to say.

As demonstrated from the broad range of agencies which the AARCS works with, invariably almost all clients will experience a range of multiple and complex needs which they require support with including but not exclusively eg combinations of substance misuse, contact with the criminal justice system, homelessness, domestic abuse, unemployment etc. AARCS is therefore embedded within the wider Essex system to respond to a range of multiple and complex needs which can impact individuals.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no known or foreseen

negative impacts

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: ECC Public Health have commissioned a needs assessment around multiple and complex needs. The assessment may highlight areas for focus /development for this service given that many of the individuals accessing support will have a range of multiple and complex needs

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in urban areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: While there is no specific data on numbers, the service operates county wide and as detailed elsewhere works from co located offices with partners as well as targeted outreach support in specific settings/locations.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no known or foreseen negative impacts

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: As noted elsewhere, ECC Public Health have commissioned a needs assessment around multiple and complex needs. The assessment may highlight areas for focus /development for this service given that many of the individuals accessing support will have a range of multiple and complex needs, and may therefore highlight specific districts/areas requiring focus and or development.

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: None

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition

Nature of impact: None

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: None

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: As noted elsewhere, the service also offers to support families/carers of those impacted by alcohol and drug misuse.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no known or foreseen negative impacts

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: The service already and will continue to provide specific support to families/carers as well as children/young people who may be impacted by substance misuse

Crime & Disorder

Crime and disorder

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: High

Re-offending

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Serious violence

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:

As noted above, the Service also makes a significant contribution to ECC's commitment to safety, for example, delivering advice and education to children and young people, as well as other preventative approaches to break the cycle of inter-generational dependency, thereby interrupting the supply and demand for drugs, and in turn reducing the risk of those being drawn into offending behaviour and/ or criminal exploitation. Importantly, the Drug Rehabilitation Requirements (DRRs), a community treatment order for drug misusing offenders is delivered by this service and provides an important element of both community safety and the effective rehabilitation of

offenders. They also work with wider criminal justice agencies to look at different approaches to for example diverting young people away from the criminal justice system, for example attendance at Out of Court Disposal Panels and working closely with Essex Police to ensure young people who may enter the criminal justice system are supported to engage with the service and the drug treatment system where appropriate, as well as other alternative methods of disposal/diversion from the criminal justice system where appropriate.

The Service also delivers a specific project which supports children and young adults who are being exploited, or who are at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation, and as part of which works in close collaboration with ECC Safeguarding, children and families/leaving and aftercare social work teams, and the Police.

As also noted elsewhere the AARCS has strong partnerships with a range of criminal justice agencies including Police, Probation and the Youth Offending Services including a range of initiatives and approaches to help reduce offending/ reoffending and related activity such as criminal exploitation by gangs etc.

(If negative impact assessed) What actions will be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts, including timescales:

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

As also noted elsewhere, the figures below represent the number of clients engaging in structured treatment with the service each year:

17/18 18/19 19/20 20/21 21/22 22/23
Childrens Society 312 328 345 167 306 315

Open Road 2836 2921 2548 2456 2557 2495

AARCS provides a range of evidence-based, semi-structured and low-threshold psychosocial interventions which include face to face, one to one, group and virtual support/online tools which can be accessed outside of core business hours. Taking a person-centred holistic approach, treatment and recovery planning are tailored to meet the needs of individual service users, including onward referrals to treatment/specialist treatment services where appropriate, including detox /and inpatient rehabilitation placements, as well as facilitating access to other agencies to address additional needs, for example mental ill health issues, including dual diagnosis provision, offending and homelessness etc.

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

The service does and will continue to look on developing innovative ways of working

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve development or re-development of buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy take place in, or make use of, existing buildings or infrastructure?: Yes

The use of existing buildings will always have a climate impact because it requires energy consumption.

Please outline how you will mitigate against this impact: The Service has appointed an organisation to help build upon reducing carbon to a net zero standing who produce an annual carbon mapping on all services with recommendations to improve. There are champions in each of service location who help lead and support the staff to make the necessary changes to continue to reduce carbon footprint.

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to transport, travel or vehicles? This includes travel needs / requirements of both service users and staff (including staff you're planning to recruit): Yes

Where are staff or service users coming from and how are they travelling?: All staff are based in Essex. The Service actively encourages use of public transport, shared car journeys, as well as co-ordinating route planning and delivery schedules to reduce fuel consumption and lower exhaust emissions.

As noted above, the service has appointed an organisation to help build upon reducing carbon to a net zero standing who produce an annual carbon mapping on all services with recommendations to improve. There are champions in each of service location who help lead and support the staff to make the necessary changes to continue to reduce carbon footprint.

If car travel is unavoidable, are you specifying electric cars and vehicles?: No

What is your transition plan to introduce electric vehicles?: Please see above

Are you undertaking a procurement exercise?: Yes

Please confirm for purchase over £100k that you have a carbon reduction plan as part of your procurement: N/A

Please list which climate TOMS (Themes, outcomes & measures) you have included in your procurement and the weighting these have been given: The intention is to direct award the new contract to the incumbent provider under the Provider Selection Regime. One of the key criteria is social value including carbon reduction, which as detailed above, the service has appointed an organisation to help build upon reducing carbon to a net zero standing who produce an annual carbon mapping on all services with recommendations to improve, and as also detailed elsewhere, there are champions in each of service location who help lead and support the staff to make the necessary changes to continue to reduce carbon footprint.

Does your decision / policy involve the purchase of goods or materials?: No

Will any waste be generated by this decision? This includes waste from construction, waste generated by service users / staff, and waste generated by replacing existing products / materials with new: No

Nature of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Positive

Sustainable Transport / Travel: Positive

Waste: None

Extent of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Low

Sustainable Transport / Travel: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: As detailed above, an element of travel is required. However, the service provider is committed to supporting and directly contributing towards the carbon neutral agenda.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: Please refer to above

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC

guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 08/03/2024

Name of person completing the ECIA: Claire Bartoli

Email address of person completing the ECIA: claire.bartoli@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Economy, Investment and Public Health

Your service area: Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities

Your team: Wellbeing and Public Health

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: ben.hughes@essex.gov.uk