

Report to: Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Date of meeting: 23 May 2024

By: Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Title: Permitted Extension - Supported Accommodation Approved Provider List

Purpose: Request for Permitted Extension (24 months) - Accommodation-based Care and Support and Housing Support for Working Age Adults (“Supported Living”)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Note the quality of the process that is in place and that it is efficient, drives value for money and meets current needs demand; and**
 - 2) Agree the extension of the Supported Living Approved Provider List for 24 months until 31 May 2026.**
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1. Background

1.1 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) have a joint procurement framework and application process for organisations to become a contracted approved provider. The care groups this supports are; Learning Disabilities, Physical Health and Mental Health, working age adults who are residents of East Sussex.

1.2 The application is completed via a dedicated online portal administrated by ESCC procurement. It sets out quality benchmarks required by an organisation before it can be considered as an approved provider. Initial quality screening is established focusing on company structure, finance, professional registration (if required) and insurances. This part of the selection stage consists of pass or fail questions before moving into an evaluation process. (Appendices 1, and 2)

1.3 The process ensures ESCC establishes overarching quality and support requirements in the support being delivered. Commissioners also set out provisions for specialist requirements for specific care groups.

1.4 This has been in place for 4 years since 1 June 2020 and has enabled required growth in supported living market. It has a permitted extension period of 24 months from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2026.

1.5 An issue identified in the current process, it that it allows providers to successfully apply who have not yet established accommodation, or not in a position to deliver services. This has resulted in a growing number of providers that are inactive and dormant on the approved list.

1.6 To strengthen the application stage and avoid unnecessary impact on procurement and commissioning resources, variation to the screening requirements is proposed to be inserted so that the approved provider list reflects ‘active’ provision across East Sussex. Variation will stipulate for the screening process, ESCC will require providers to have access to accommodation or a mobilisation plan and timeline in place.

2. Supporting Information

The procurement process specification

2.1 The purpose of the process is to have a fluid tender response for the Approved Provider List; The provision of supported living services for working age adults service and enabling the growth of provision where required.

2.2 The process is focused on driving quality. Initial quality screening is established focusing on company structure, finance, professional registration (if required) and insurances. This part of the selection stage consists of pass or fail questions. Many of these elements are assessed by Finance and Procurement officers.

2.3 If the bidder passes this stage, the application moves into an evaluation process led by commissioners (Evaluation Panel). This requires bidders to complete a quality questionnaire aligned to the service specification and forms the basis of expertise and knowledge from providers (bidders) and evaluated at each stage of the process.

2.4 Application responses are reviewed to ascertain which organisations have the necessary technical ability and skill as well as financial standing to undertake the contract and do not have any grounds for exclusion. (Appendix 1- blank application form)

2.5 The evaluation of the quality questionnaire assesses the responses against the evaluation criteria and focus points, as communicated to bidders in the portal, and panel member will allocate a score between 0 and 5.

2.6 Any question that scores below 3 does not pass the quality threshold to access the approved provider list. Bidding organisations meeting these requirements are awarded as contract providers on the Approved Provider List.

2.7 Further variation to the specification (Appendix 2 -Schedule 2) will set out the requirements for bidders to have available properties or a mobilisation plan. This will ensure only providers that are positioned to implement a service in reasonable time can progress. This is due to time spent processing applications for providers who don't possess property to deliver their provision.

Current expenditure on Supported Accommodation

2.8 The annual ESCC expenditure (based on 2022-23) for supported living was £31million in 2023-24.

Learning Disability	£19,576,102
Mental Health	£7,803,378
Physical Disability	£3,934,548
Total	£31,314,027

2.9 Although the funding levels are estimated to be similar, the current service demand is expected to grow (differently across care groups) to meet statutory requirements, ensuring services are available. This process delivers value for money as all providers on the list are expected to deliver care at the rate range published by ESCC.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The current arrangements to commission new providers are efficient and do not require full scale commissioning programmes that would otherwise require significant co-ordination and staffing resource.

3.2 The current application process is working, it sets out well designed quality benchmarks for service provision and ensures a fluid growth in the provider market.

3.3 Extending for 2 years will enable time for commissioners and partners to fully scope out the future priorities, further consider opportunities to develop the specification focusing on clients with complex needs where there are currently limited services in county.

3.4 The current procurement arrangement supports small and medium size providers to design and develop care where there are significant needs for growth (e.g. Wealden and Rural Rother) and minimises growth in other areas where provision is at reasonable capacity.

3.5 The incremental growth of the provider market is a priority across all care groups and the provider market can expand and support pressures in the system. A recent Mental Health audit

highlights that the level of service to meet demand requires a 10% increase with a focus on complex needs.

3.6 There is a continued demand for high quality supported living services (and accommodation) for people with a learning disability in East Sussex. Increasing settled accommodation options continues to be a key priority and there is a demand for growth within this service area.

3.7 It is recommended to support the extension of the current Approved List contracts, invoking the 2-year allowed for extension option until 31st May 2026.

3.8 It is recommended to agree the modification for providers to have accommodation available or mobilisation plans in place for requirements to be included on the approved list application process.

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Local Members

All Members