

Delegated Officer Report

Decision Maker:	Helen Lockwood
Date of Decision:	13 October 2021
Subject:	Bounce Together Wellbeing Measurement Platform for Primary Settings
Report Author:	Chrissy Orson
Ward (s):	N/A

Reason for the decision: A decision is sought to request approval for an exemption under Rule 21.3 (j) of the Contract Procedure Rules where an extension for a time-limited period can be justified where there is intention to co-terminate contracts within a reasonable period. Then to agree for a one-year contract to be directly awarded to Bounce Together Ltd. for provision of a platform for of evidence-based mental health and wellbeing measuring tools for Oldham primary schools. This would be used to both deliver measurements and analyse the results. This platform is already being utilised within Oldham secondary and post-16 settings (including those in the specialist sector) and extension to primary settings will provide a single system across our education settings, allowing comparison between settings and trusts, as well as across the borough.

This would be a single year contract for a maximum of £50,000 funded by the Opportunity Area year 5 programme, up to 31st August 2022. There is no financial commitment from Council funds as the project would be funded by the Opportunity Area. During the contract period, there will be exploration into project legacy, including how settings can be supported to continue effectively measuring the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff beyond OA

funding, and linking in with the priorities of Oldham Learning.

Bounce Together is already being utilised within Oldham settings, allowing them to effectively measure wellbeing in large cohorts, with a reduced impact on staff workloads from other methods, by integrating directly with school management information systems to assign, analyse and present results. There are very few direct competitors who offer the options to provide snapshot, identification and evaluation levels of measuring. Having two systems within the sector would be detrimental due the additional training needs, and capacity required to ensure data sets are compatible for system-level analysis.

Summary:

Within the Opportunity Area Priority 3 we are committed to enable all children and young people to be ready for life, learning and work. The self-assessments completed by education settings for the Greater Manchester Standards for Mental Health in Education, continue to identify effectively measuring the wellbeing of pupils and staff as a key area for development across the borough. By providing primary schools with a platform which is pre-loaded with evidence-based measuring tools, more settings will be able to:

- Take snapshot measurements of wellbeing across their cohort, thereby enabling them to effectively plan and implement universal offers of support which directly meet the needs of their pupils.
- Use evidence-based measures to identify areas of concern with particular pupils, which can form part of a wider picture of information about the child and what support may be needed for them. This will support schools in the early identification of mental health needs and early intervention to prevent escalation.
- Evaluate the outcomes of interventions with children and young people, providing evidence for what works well and what is not having the desired impact. This may support schools in financial planning for their wellbeing offer to pupils.

It should also be noted that the platform offers surveys for staff as well. Staff wellbeing is also key area of concern across many settings. Poor mental health within the sector can impact on staffs' ability to work effectively with children, particularly those who have complex and challenging needs; a group which have been disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

By using the Bounce Together platform, settings will be able to effectively measure and monitor staff wellbeing in a truly anonymous way. It would also be possible for settings to choose to share results with the LA, where they could be used to plan support and intervention to improve staff retention and increase recruitment to the sector.

Following continued consultation with schools, support with measuring wellbeing was felt to be an area where they would particularly benefit from support. Some settings have tried utilising alternative methods and surveys, however the impact on workload was simply too great for a measuring strategy to be consistently applied. The Bounce Together platform integrates directly with settings' management information systems to support the allocation of evidence-based questionnaires to the appropriate students, as well as performing analysis which can be broken down by key indicators such as year group, gender, SEND and pupil premium. We believe that this will support schools greatly in planning their provision as well as with referrals for external support.

The use of the platform within the secondary and post-16 sectors is in its early days (this was funded via a different stream than the OA), however initial feedback has been positive, particularly around the ease of use and reduction in staff time required to perform a survey, undertake effective analysis and provide actionable results which can influence changes in practice. With only a year of OA funding remaining, and limited capacity in both settings and the local authority to analyse and compare different data sets, it would be most beneficial to extend provision with the current supplier to reduce the impact on staff time and overall outcomes from spending upon this priority.

During the contract period, there will be exploration into project legacy, including how settings can be supported to continue effectively measuring the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff beyond OA funding, and linking in with the priorities of Oldham Learning.

What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):

Option 1: Approve an exemption under rule 21.3 (j) of the Contract Procedure Rules and directly award a contract to Bounce Together Ltd. to extend their service delivery to primary settings.

This is the recommended option as it will enable us to build on the early successes with the secondary and post-16 work. It will also prevent the production of multiple data sets which cannot be compared either within multi-academy trusts or by the local authority. A level of consistency

is required for the production of data in order for it to be meaningful across the sector. With the platform already being in use within the borough, with positive feedback, it would be of most benefit to extend the same provision into primary settings

With school staff currently facing higher levels of pressure due to the ongoing impact of covid-19, the benefits of reducing staff workload for the implementation of effective measurement cannot be overstated. Neither can the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of individuals: for effective support and early intervention to be provided, we must understand the concerns facing young people via the use of evidence-based universal measures. This platform enables this type of measure without impacting on staff workload.

Option 2: *Proceed to market to procure the provision of a wellbeing measurement platform for primary settings, for a new service to be contracted until 31st August 2022 with an ASAP start.*

This is not a recommended option due to the time-limited nature of the Opportunity Area funding. All activity must be completed and paid for by 31st August 2022 and it is unlikely that a new provider would be able to fulfil all aspects of the contract by this date.

This option would also result in the creation of multiple, potentially incompatible datasets. This would reduce the impact of the service at a strategic level as there is not the capacity within either multi-academy trusts or the local authority to facilitate effective data comparison across multiple platforms. This could lessen the longer-term impact of the project at a strategic level.

Option 3: *To not proceed with the commission and award of contract, putting the funding back into the DfE Opportunity Area (OA) programme*

This is not a recommended option as it result in no support being provided for effective measurement of mental health and wellbeing within the primary sector, supporting the early identification of mental health concerns. This principle has been identified as a key area of

Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.

need by settings through settings' self-assessments for the GM Standards for Mental Health in Education.

Consultation has taken place with Cllr Mushtaq via the OA Partnership Board, The OA year 5 cabinet paper and through direct briefings.

Implications:

What are the **financial** implications?

This report seeks to approve an exemption under rule 21.3 (j) of the Contract Procedure Rules and directly award a contract to Bounce Together Ltd. to extend their service delivery to primary settings.

The total value of this 1-year contract is **£50,000** and will be wholly funded from the Council's Opportunity Area Year 5 Grant.

The contract will run across the academic year 2021-22 which encompasses two financial years (2021/22 and 2022/23) as presented in the table below:

	Financial Year		
	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Contract (Sep21 - Aug22)	29,167	20,833	50,000

Therefore, it is expected that £29,167 will be spent in 2021/22 with the balance remaining of £20,833 carried forward as an earmarked reserve into the financial year 2022-23 to finance the expenditure from 1 April to 31 August 2022.

Oldham's Year 5 Grant allocation is **£1.639m**.

Vicki Hayes – Senior Accountant

Legal Services acknowledges the comments provided by the Procurement Unit and in view of these comments supports the recommendation.

Sukie Kaur 12/10/21

Commercial Unit accepts the rationale for the Council to agree to a 12month contract. There is provision in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to grant an exemption from the Rules Where an extension for a particular period can be justified, for example where a service review includes the intention to co-terminate relevant Contracts within a reasonable period (Rule 21.3

What are the **legal** implications?

What are the **procurement** implications?

j). This will ensure continued provision of services for Oldham council and to align future commissioning activity. On this basis, Commercial Unit acknowledges the requirement. (Mohammad Sharif) 12/10/2021.

What are the **Human Resources** implications?
What are the **Children and Young People** Implications?

None

By supporting with the use and analysis of evidence-based measures for mental health and wellbeing at a universal level, the Bounce Together platform can enable schools to better understand the needs of their pupils, allowing them to effectively plan and implement universal offers of support which directly meet the needs of their cohort.

By using measuring tools to identify specific pupils who require support, more early intervention will be possible to prevent the escalation of mental health concerns, and programmes of work within settings can be evaluated to demonstrate their efficacy and impact. The results will also be of use at a sector-level, informing Oldham's future strategy and priorities for mental health and education. These services will be made available for all schools who wish to take part in the project.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment attached or not required because (please give reason)

What are the **property** implications
Risks:

None

To mitigate against delivery risk there will be regular service calls, a shared data sheet to track progress, termly reports and other regular updates from the provider. The Mental Health in Education Team will also support in ensuring engagement from settings.

Co-operative agenda

All Opportunity Area projects fully support and adopt the Council's cooperative values as they promote the active engagement of Oldham residents in the life of the community. This contract particularly promotes fairness and openness by providing a service which can measure mental health and wellbeing at the universal level, ensuring the settings' offers to promote positive mental health is meeting the needs of their cohorts.

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?

Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No

List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Opportunity Area Year 5 Cabinet Paper

Report Author Sign-off:	Chrissy Orson
Date:	13 th October 2021

Please list and attach any appendices:-

Appendix number or letter	Description

In consultation with Deputy Chief Executive

Signed: 

Date: 13 October 2021