

Delegated Officer Report

Decision Maker:	Richard Lynch
Date of Decision:	
Subject:	Extension of 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 a short-term contract extension (until end of 2022-23 financial year) to be directly awarded to Bounce Together Ltd. for continued provision of a platform of evidence-based mental health and wellbeing measuring tools for 46 Oldham primary schools. This would be used to both deliver measurements and analyse the results. This platform is already being utilised by these schools, as well as Oldham secondary and post-16 settings (including those in the specialist sector). Extension will continue to provide a single system across our education settings, allowing comparison between settings and trusts, as well as across the borough.

The project was previously signed off for exemption from competitive tender by Helen Lockwood under Rule 21.3 (J) of the Contract Procedure Rules (Oct 2021).

This would be a partial year contract extension for £18,000 funded by the Opportunity Area year 5 programme. Licenses would need to be purchased before 31st July 2022 and will run to the end of the financial year. 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.

The initial contract and legacy exploration have been detrimentally impacted by the ongoing difficulties being faced in schools with Covid-19, staff absence and capacity. This has caused the timeline for engagement of settings, training and uptake of use to slip so we are not where we had hoped at present. It must be highlighted that this is not due to a lack of need or engagement of settings.

Bounce Together is already being utilised within Oldham settings, allowing them to effectively measure wellbeing across large cohorts, with a reduction in staff workloads from other methods. By integrating directly with school management information systems, the platform can assign, analyse and present results. There are very few direct competitors who offer the options to provide snapshot, identification and evaluation levels of measuring, and those who do are significantly more expensive. 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.

It must also be considered that this programme would be funded by the Opportunity Area, which is ending imminently. This means that a contract extension must be awarded swiftly, or else risk having no funded provision, and funding could be lost from the borough with the closure of the OA. With Bounce Together as a trusted provider with a history of working in Oldham, we can continue to monitor the contract via the Mental Health in Education Team once the OA ceases.

Summary:

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

Option 1: *Approve the awarding of a contract to Bounce Together Ltd to extend the time period of their contract to continue delivery to 46 primary settings who have been engaged in the project.*

This is the recommended option as it will enable us to build on the early successes within the settings, as well as the learning from the secondary and post-16 settings. 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: *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 would 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 need by settings through settings' self-assessments for the GM Standards for Mental Health in Education.

This option could also mean the funding could be lost from the borough as the OA is so close to ending.

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

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 approval for a short-term contract extension; 8 months from 1 August 2022 until 31st March 2023 to be directly awarded to Bounce Together Ltd. for continued provision of a platform of evidence-based mental health and wellbeing measuring tools for 46 Oldham primary schools.

The costs associated with this extension are £18,000 and in line with previous expenditure will be wholly funded from the Council's Opportunity Area Year 5 Grant.

*What are the **legal** implications?*

Vicki Hayes – Senior Accountant
Rule 21.1 of the Contract Procedure Rules 21.1 allows officers to seek an exemption from the rules in limited circumstances provided an exemption wouldn't result in a breach of procurement legislation (Rule 21.2).

Rule 21.3 details the limited circumstances in which an exemption may be sought. As detailed in the Procurement comments, Rule 21.3(c) allows an exemption where "the services or execution of works are of such a specialist nature that they can only be carried out by one person". In this matter, the instructing officers have commented that the service is a bespoke service which cannot currently be supplied by another supplier.

(Sarah Orrell, Commercial & Procurement Solicitor)

*What are the **procurement** implications?*

Commercial Unit accepts the rationale for the Council to agree to a 7month contract. There is provision in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules There is a provision within Rule 21.3 (C) for the Council to grant an exemption from the Council's CPR in exceptional circumstances where "the services or execution of works are of such a specialist nature that they can only be carried out by one person. Therefore, Commercial Procurement unit supports this recommendation in this report to directly award a contract to the Bounce Together. Mohammad Sharif 30/06/2022.

*What are the **Human Resources** implications?*

None

What are the **Children and Young People** Implications?

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. This service has been made available to all primary schools. Before extension of existing schools' contracts was explored, it was offered again to those who had not taken up offer previously.

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

None

What are the **property** implications

Risks:

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. With the ending of the OA, the Mental Health in Education Team will continue to monitor the contract as well as promoting commitment and engagement from schools.

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?

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

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

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

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- Opportunity Area Year 5 Cabinet Paper
 - Additional information on Project & Feedback
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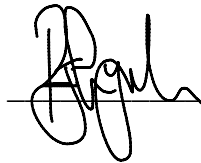
Report Author Sign-off:	Chrissy Orson
Date:	24 th June 2022

Please list and attach any appendices:-

Appendix number or letter	Description

In consultation with Director/Strategic Director Education Skills and Early Years
Richard Lynch

Signed :



Date: 11th July 2022