

Report to CABINET

Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service – Contract Extension

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Barbara Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Officer Contact: Dr Rebecca Fletcher, Director of Public Health

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22nd September 2025

Reason for Decision

To seek approval to enact the option to extend the contract for the Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service by a period of 2 years, from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028, as per the provision made in the original award of the contract for the delivery of the service.

Executive Summary

Having a high functioning sexual health and substance misuse offer for young people is an essential component of the range of activity required to achieve better population health and reduce demand on health and social care services. As per Public Health funding conditions and mandated responsibilities, we are required to deliver drug and alcohol services and ensure access to sexual health services for young people.

In January 2021, the award for the provision of Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service was awarded to Early Break (in partnership with HCRG Care Group and The Proud Trust) for an initial period of three years (from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024) with an option to extend for a further period of two years plus two years dependent on performance, achievement of key performance indicators (KPIs), continued

funding and local need. A contract extension of two years was approved for 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2026.

The provider has been delivering the service to the requirements set out in the specification and meeting performance requirements through the contract to date. They have received positive feedback from service users and professional partners.

It is proposed that we enact the option to extend the contract with the current provider by a final two years (up until 31 March 2028) to ensure the continuation of high-quality service provision for our local young people. The total value of the proposed two-year extension would be £940,500 (£470, 250 per year).

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet agree to the proposal to enact the provision to extend the current contract for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028. This will ensure that there is continued delivery of drug and alcohol services and ensure access to sexual health services for young people in the borough, in line with our public health funding conditions and mandated responsibilities.

Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service – Contract Extension

1 Background

- 1.1 Adolescence is a crucial time for physical, emotional and social development, and good quality advice, information and support for young people on sexual health and substance misuse has an important contribution to make to health, wellbeing, education and wider social outcomes. Having a high functioning sexual health and substance misuse offer for young people is an essential component of the range of activity required to achieve better population health and reduce demand on health and social care services. As per Public Health funding conditions and mandated responsibilities, we are required to deliver drug and alcohol services and ensure access to sexual health services for young people.
- 1.2 There is a relationship between sexual health behaviour and drug and alcohol use among young people. Research has shown that alcohol consumption can result in lowered inhibitions and poor judgements regarding sexual activity and risky sexual behaviours in young people. It was also found that young people want to understand the influence of alcohol on sexual behaviours and where to get confidential support to manage their emotions if they make a bad decision as a result of drinking. We, therefore, recognised the need for the implementation of a more holistic approach to sexual health and drugs and alcohol through an integrated service.
- 1.3 Oldham has poor outcomes in relation to sexual health and substance misuse and remains consistently worse than GM, NW and England rates for under 18 conceptions, abortion rates, LARC uptake, STI diagnosis (including Chlamydia detection rates) and hospital admissions due to substance misuse and alcohol (15-24 year olds).
- 1.4 In January 2021, the Director of Public Health (in her delegated capacity as approved by Cabinet) agreed to award the contract for the provision of Oldham's Young People's Integrated Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service to Early Break (in partnership with HCRG Care Group and The Proud Trust) from 1 April 2021 for an initial period of three years up until 31 March 2024, with an option to extend for a further period of two years plus two years dependent on performance, achievement of key performance indicators (KPIs), continued funding and local need.
- 1.5 The Meeting Your Needs Oldham (MYNO) service, delivered by Early Break (in partnership with HCRG Care Group and The Proud Trust), offers specialist support for sexual health, contraception, and the prevention and treatment of substance misuse for young people. This enables young people to access high-quality information, advice and treatment for both their sexual health and substance use in a single location and transaction.
- 1.6 MYNO is an integrated offer for young people aged under 19 (or aged 19-25 if they are a child looked after by the local authority or care leaver, or SEND), providing a holistic service addressing young people's health and wellbeing, specifically providing advice, information and treatment for both sexual health and substance misuse. The service:

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- Provides support to the wider Oldham system (including schools, youth services, and children's social care) to deliver Tier 1 substance misuse interventions, information and advice, and relationship and sex education.
 - Provides information, advice and guidance for young people attending the service, through outreach activities, and to a wider audience through digital channels, including a website which aims to improve knowledge and understanding of sexual and reproductive health and drugs and alcohol among young people living in Oldham.
 - Supports young people in contact with the service to develop their knowledge and understanding of sex and relationships, skills and confidence to protect or improve their sexual health.
 - Provides Tier 2 and Tier 3 substance misuse services for young people who misuse substances (including psychoactive substances, illicit or prescribed drugs and/or alcohol).
 - Provides support for young people who misuse substances to access Tier 4 services, where their needs cannot be met in the community (provision of tier 4 services is out of scope for this contract)
 - Provides support to young people whose parents misuse substances, including young people who act as carers for parents with substance misuse issues.
 - Helps address offending and anti-social behaviour in young people linked to substance misuse in young people through effective interventions.
 - Supports and work with other agencies to provide intensive interventions to families where parental and/or young people's substance misuse is identified as problematic.
 - Works with adult services, specialist drug and alcohol, and sexual health services and universal services such as primary care, to ensure a seamless transition for young people who are approaching the age limit for the service.
 - Provides clinical contraception and sexual health services through clinic-based and outreach (community based) activities.

1.7 The Service is expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Increased access to contraception, including LARC.
- Reduction in under-18 conception rates
- Reduction in under-18 abortion rate
- Controlling the transmission of STIs/HIV
- Reducing the prevalence of STI, including HIV via improved diagnosis rates
- Reduction in number of alcohol and drug misuse related admissions to hospital and deaths
- Improved recovery rates and increased number of successful completions
- Reduced harm and improved resilience amongst young people, including vulnerable groups.

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- 1.8 The original contract value for the delivery of the service was £600,000 per annum, funded by the Public Health core budget. As part of the ongoing corporate budget challenge, it was agreed in February 2023 to reduce the budget for the provision of the service by £150,000 (over two years, to be achieved by end of financial year 2024/25). In applying the budget reductions, the provider worked to minimise the impact on front line delivery and service deliverables. The provider primarily focused on creating efficiencies in back office and running costs, and in the sexual health element of the service, with due regard being made to avoid any reduction in investment in substance misuse service delivery in line with OHID substance misuse grant conditions. The contract value was then increased in line with uplifts across public health commissioning, to £470,250. The revised contract value remains in line with other neighbouring and comparable authorities for the delivery of this type of service and presents good value for money.

2 **Current Position**

- 2.1 Early Break (in partnership with HCRG Care Group and The Proud Trust) has been delivering the service since April 2021, under the service name Meeting Your Needs Oldham (MYNO), and is meeting the majority of the key performance indicators, and in some instances exceeding them, especially in relation to numbers in substance misuse treatment where Oldham has been identified by the Office of Health Improvements and Disparities as an exemplar and area of good practice
- 2.2 Last year, the service engaged 315 young people in structured Tier 2 and 3 substance misuse treatment per year, primarily supporting around cannabis and alcohol use but is seeing small numbers of young people using other substances such cocaine and ketamine. This was an increase in engagement from the previous year, and the service continues to increase its rate of engagement. The service has achieved successful discharges (clients reporting as drug free or occasional users) in 84% of Tier 3 clients and 97% of Tier 2 clients.
- 2.3 The substance misuse service works closely with schools and education settings and the outreach team works closely with the youth service and detached youth team to provide assertive outreach and brief interventions, advice and support to young people in our communities, based on local intelligence. The service flexes its delivery and approach to meet the needs of the young people they are working with, recognising that there are differing needs, stigma and complexities within different groups and communities.
- 2.4. Last year, 52 families a year access the innovative Holding Families programme provided by the service, which provides whole family support for children and family members affected by parental substance use. The service works with parents and carers at any stage of their recovery from drugs and alcohol use.
- 2.5. There have been recent data collection system issues for the specialist sexual health provision, which has posed a challenge in assessing contemporaneous performance in this area. Data up to December 2024 shows good achievement of targets, and client feedback has since remained positive.
- 2.6. A recent service evaluation (August 2025) demonstrated that the service is performing to a high standard, meeting or exceeding a broad range of targets across both sexual health and substance misuse provision. Two areas for improvement were identified; a need to increase the number of clients taking up repeat chlamydia test 3 months after testing positive, and to improve timely access to long acting reversible contraception (LARC) following client request. This is something that we will support the service to address for the remainder of the existing term, and will continue to do so if the contract extension is enacted.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 *Option 1: Enact the provision to extend the current contract for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028 (to complete a total contract length of 7 years)*

This is the preferred option. This will ensure that there is continued delivery of drug and alcohol services and ensure access to sexual health services for young people in the borough, in line with our public health funding conditions and mandated responsibilities.

The provider has embedded themselves within the local system in the time since contract award and has built effective pathways and strong working relationships with partners with both Early Break and HCRG Care Group acting as system leaders and change catalysts within their respective fields, playing fundamental roles locally, regionally, and nationally in strategic forums and influencing system and policy change.

The provider is delivering well against KPIs and achieving outcomes as set out in the specification and has been flexible in responding to emerging issues and working with commissioners throughout the contract term to date. The provider has also responded well to the agreed budget reduction and has been innovative and resident focused in their approach by focusing on different ways of working which has resulted in minimal impact on service delivery, quality and experience for our residents and what is available for our young people locally.

3.2 *Option 2: Extend the current contract by 3 months from 1 April 2026 to 30 June 2026 to allow for a competitive tendering process to be undertaken.*

In order to undertake a full competitive open-market tendering process and allow sufficient time for there to be an effective mobilisation and implementation period (in the event there was a change of provider) then we would need to allow a period of 6 months, with activity commencing in January 2026.

This option is not recommended as the current provider is delivering the service to a good standard and meeting performance indicators. Feedback from service users is positive and the service has been recognised nationally as a centre for good practice. There is still demand for the service and we are mandated to provide drug and alcohol services and access to sexual health services for young people.

There is a risk to de-stablisng the system, affecting staff morale and there being an impact of the young people accessing the provision, if there were to be a change of provider, as they may need to access provision differently and there could be changes to staffing which could mean any relationships that have been built between the young people and a trusted professional are affected.

There is also a risk that a new provider would not be able to deliver the same as the current provider for the revised budget as there would be potential start-up costs, plus we would not benefit from the economies of scale we currently do as a result of the same provider delivering both the young people's and all-age sexual health service.

3.3 *Option 3: Do not extend the current contract or conduct a further tendering exercise and no longer have a specific young people's sexual health and substance misuse service but instead combine these elements into existing adults'/all age provision.*

This option is not recommended. As per Public Health funding conditions and mandated responsibilities, we would still be required to deliver drug and alcohol services and ensure access to sexual health services for young people so would need to alter the specification and budget of our commissioned adult/all age sexual health and substance misuse services to ensure provision and not risk poorer health outcomes.

There is also a risk that young people seek sexual health support from young people's specific sexual health services from outside of the borough, which the local authority would be charged for, at a higher cost per intervention than the cost of delivering these services as part of the current local contract. This could result in a budget pressure.

4 **Preferred Option**

- 4.1 Option 1: Enact the provision to extend the current contract for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028.

5 **Consultation**

- 5.1 The Director of Public Health, in her statutory capacity, and Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care have been consulted and fully briefed on the performance of the service, the proposed contract extension and next steps.

6 **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The preferred option, as outlined in paragraph 4.1, is to seek approval to extend the contract with Early Break (in partnership with HCRG Care Group and The Proud Trust) for the delivery of the Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service for a further two years, from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028. This extension is in line with the provisions included in the original contract award in January 2021.
- 6.2 The total value of the proposed two-year extension is £940,500 (£470,250 per annum).
- 6.3 Provision exists within the Public Health base budget to fund the annual contract cost of £470,250.

(Matthew Kearns – Finance Manager)

7 **Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The extension is permitted under Regulation 72(1)(a) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, as it was clearly provided for in the original procurement documents by way of an extension option. In addition, under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, extensions are lawful, provided they were included in the original procurement and contract award and do not materially alter the scope or overall nature of the contract (CPR Rule 17.1(a)–(c)). In this case, the extension is within the maximum seven-year term originally advertised and awarded, and it does not change the service specification. It is therefore a compliant

modification and does not require a new procurement process. The required notices and extension process set out in the contract should be followed to effect the extension.

(Pamela Nsofor- Commercial and Procurement Solicitor)

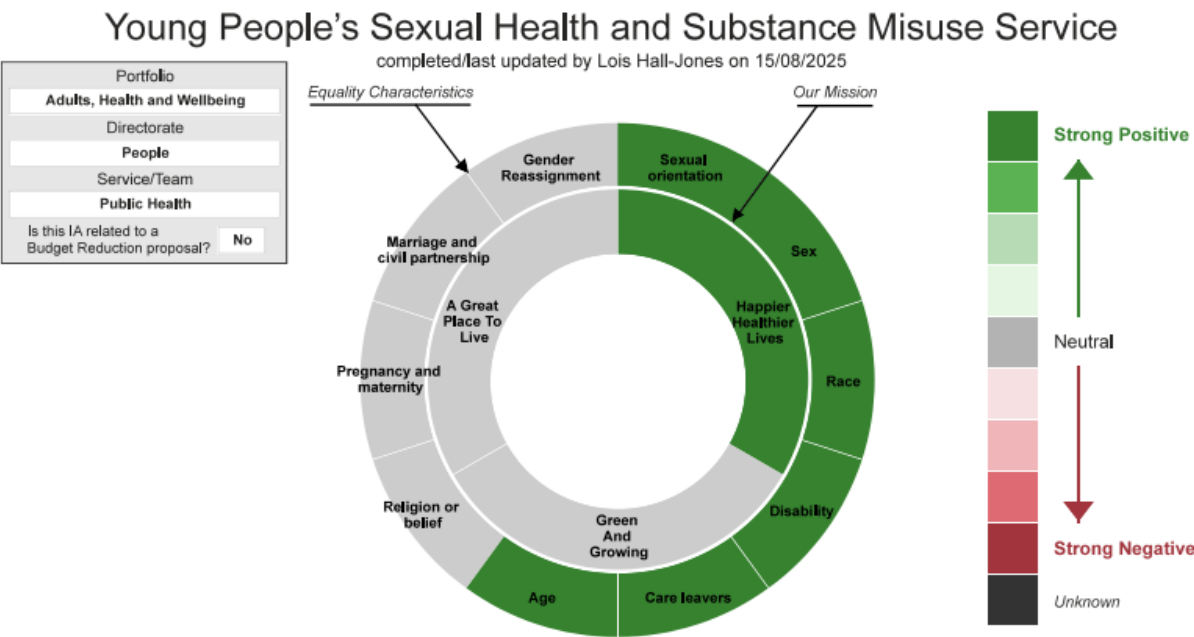
8 **Procurement Implications**

8.1 The service was originally tendered in 2020 through PCR2015 legislation. This was for 3 years initial term, with the option to extend for up to 2 years at a time, with a maximum term of 7 years. There was an extension of 2 years to take this from ending in March 2024 to March 2026. This means there is the option to extend by a further 2 years, up to end of March 2028, by providing the provider with six months written notice. It should be noted that this will be the final option to extend, so a new tender process should be planned for 2027 if services will still be required after March 2028.

(James England – Procurement Manager)

9 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

9.1 Yes/



10 **Key Decision**

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 HSC-12-25

12 **Background Papers**

12.1 To Extend the Contract for the Delivery of the Young People's Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service

11th December 2023

Decision and report available at:

<https://committees.oldham.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=5020>

13 **Appendices**

13.1 none