

Report to CABINET

Parent Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS)

Portfolio Holder:

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Reason for Decision

Oldham Council currently commissions Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust to deliver the Parent Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS) as part of the Family Hubs and Best Start in Life offer. The current contract expires on 6 January 2027 and contains no option to extend.

The service is performing well and provides specialist clinical support for vulnerable families. To ensure continuity of service delivery and retain the skilled clinical workforce, it is proposed that the Council undertakes a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Process C. This is considered the most appropriate procurement route for a health-based service of this nature.

Awarding a further one-year contract will avoid disruption to families accessing the service and provide time to review and develop longer-term commissioning arrangements, taking account of the confirmation of Best Start in Life grant funding through to 2029.

Recommendations

- Approve the completion of a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Process C for the Parent Infant Mental Health Service for a period of one year from 7 January 2027 to 6 January 2028, total value of £261,000.00.
- Approve the use of Best Start in Life funding to support the contract award.
- Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children and Young People to award the contract following the successful completion of the PSR process.

Parent Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS)**1 Background**

- 1.1** Oldham Council commissions Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust to deliver the Parent Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS) as part of the Family Hubs and Best Start in Life offer. The service provides specialist support to expectant parents, parents, carers and infants where there are concerns relating to parent-infant relationships and infant mental health.
- 1.2** Approval was given for the current contract to commence on 1 April 2023, however, mobilisation was delayed due to challenges in recruiting suitably qualified clinical staff. The service subsequently commenced delivery in January 2024.
- 1.3** The current contract was awarded for a three-year period with a total contract value of £701,236.00. The contract is due to expire on 6 January 2027 and does not include an option to extend.
- 1.4** The service provides a valued and important element of the Family Hubs offer, supporting some of Oldham's most vulnerable families during the earliest stages of a child's life. Performance against the contract specification and is being monitored, and the specification is currently under review as part of wider commissioning intentions to ensure future service delivery aligns with local priorities and needs.
- 1.5** Family Hubs and Best Start in Life funding has now been confirmed through to 2029, providing an opportunity to review the commissioning arrangements for Parent Infant Mental Health Services in Oldham.

2 Current Position

- 2.1** As the service is health-related and delivered by specialist clinical practitioners, the most appropriate route to secure continuity of provision is through the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Process C.
- 2.2** The proposed approach would enable the Council to award a further one-year contract to Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust, subject to the successful completion of the PSR process. This would minimise the risk of disruption to service delivery, support retention of specialist staff and ensure continued access to support for children and families.
- 2.3** The PSR process will require the publication of an Intention to Award Notice and an assessment of the provider against the applicable key criteria, including quality, service performance, outcomes achieved, value and the provider's ability to continue meeting the requirements of the service specification. The assessment will be undertaken by officers from the service area, commissioning and procurement.
- 2.4** The proposed contract period would run from 7 January 2027 to 6 January 2028 at an annual cost of £261,000.00, funded through the Best Start in Life grant.
- 2.5** During the contract period, a review of future commissioning arrangements will be undertaken. This will include engagement with key partners and stakeholders to develop a sustainable service model and commissioning approach that continues to meet the needs of Oldham children, parents and families beyond January 2028.

3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1** **Option 1:** Approve the completion of a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Process C for the Parent Infant Mental Health Service for a period of one year from 7 January 2027 to 6 January 2028, total value of £261,000.00. Approve the use of Best Start in Life funding to support the contract award. Delegate authority to the Director to award the contract following the successful completion of the PSR process.

3.2 **Option 2:** Allow the current contract to expire on 6 January 2027 and do not consider future commissioning arrangements. This option is not recommended as it would create a gap in the provision of Parent Infant Mental Health Services for vulnerable families in Oldham. There is also a significant risk that the specialist clinical workforce currently delivering the service would be lost, along with valuable knowledge and relationships developed within the Oldham locality. Any future procurement process would require time to complete and, should a new provider be appointed, there would be a further mobilisation period to recruit and train staff, resulting in potential disruption to service delivery and reduced support for families.

3.3 **Option 3:** Undertake a full competitive tender process. This option is not recommended. Whilst a competitive procurement could test the market, it may result in disruption to a well-performing service and the loss of a skilled clinical workforce with established relationships and knowledge of the Oldham locality. Furthermore, the development of the future service specification is still underway as part of wider considerations regarding the long-term delivery model for Family Hubs and Best Start in Life services. It would therefore not be timely to undertake a full competitive procurement until this work has been completed and future commissioning intentions have been agreed.

4 **Preferred Option**

4.1 **Option 1:** Approve the completion of a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Process C for the Parent Infant Mental Health Service for a period of one year from 7 January 2027 to 6 January 2028, total value of £261,000.00. Approve the use of Best Start in Life funding to support the contract award. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children and Young People to award the contract following the successful completion of the PSR process.

5 **Consultation**

5.1 Family Hubs Parent Panels form part of the ongoing consultation and co-production process for Family Hubs services. Feedback gathered from parents and carers is used to inform service development and ensure provision continues to reflect the needs and experiences of families in Oldham.

6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 The preferred option is to approve the award of a one-year contract, having followed the procurement process outlined in section 6.5 below for the Parent Infant Mental Health Service (PIMHS) from 7 January 2027 to 6 January 2028 with an estimated total value of £261,000.00.

6.2 The cost of the contract will be funded from the Best Start in Life Grant in the relevant financial year. The report Oldham Strategy – Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life, approved by Cabinet on 23 February 2026, formally accepted the funding allocated to Oldham for the three financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29, with a total value of £5,633,300.00.

6.3 The recommended option has been fully factored into the planned expenditure associated with the delivery of the programme of work funded through the grant and can therefore be accommodated within the approved budget allocation. Consequently, there are no additional revenue pressures on the Council's General Fund and no requirement for additional budget provision.

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- 6.4 Approval of the contract award will ensure the continued delivery of a specialist clinical service supporting vulnerable children and families and will avoid the financial and operational risks associated with a break in service provision, including potential loss of skilled clinical staff, additional recruitment and mobilisation costs, and disruption to service users.
- 6.5 The proposed procurement route, through the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Direct Award Process C, provides value for money by maintaining an established, well-performing service while allowing time for the Council to review and develop longer-term commissioning arrangements in light of the confirmed Best Start in Life funding through to 2029. Any future commissioning arrangements and associated financial commitments beyond the proposed one-year contract period will be subject to separate approval and consideration through the Council's budget-setting and governance processes.
- 6.6 There are no capital implications arising from this report.

Vicki Hayes – Senior Accountant 14/8/26

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 In line with the position as outlined by Procurement below, the proposal to renew the contract by a fresh direct award is lawful and is permitted under the Contract Procedure Rule on the basis of being compliant with legislation.

Bryan Boese – solicitor 26/08/2026

8. Procurement Implications

- 8.1 PIMHS was previously awarded under a PSR Direct Award Option C, and based on its CPV (Common Procurement Vocabulary) code would have to follow PSR legislation again.

Direct award process C may be used when all the following apply:

- the relevant authority is not required to follow direct award processes A or B
- the term of an existing contract is due to expire and the relevant authority proposes a new contract to replace that existing contract at the end of its term
- the proposed contracting arrangements are not changing considerably from the existing contracting arrangements
- the relevant authority is of the view that the existing provider (or group of providers) is satisfying the existing contract and will likely satisfy the proposed contract to a sufficient standard

The authority is not required to follow processes A or B, there is an existing contract that is due to expire, the proposed arrangement are not changing considerably, and the authority is of the view that the existing provider is satisfying the existing contract and will likely satisfy the proposed contract to a sufficient standard. Based on this the proposed approach would be compliant.

James England – Procurement Manager 26/08/2026

9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

- 9.1 Equality Impact Assessment in Appendices. The Parent Infant Mental Health Service supports expectant parents, parents, carers and infants including families who may

experience disadvantage, vulnerability or additional needs. The proposed contract award will ensure continuity of a service that provides equitable access to specialist support and contributes to improving outcomes for children and families. As this proposal is to continue an existing service with no significant change to the service model or eligibility criteria, no adverse equality impacts have been identified.

10 Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 Key Decision Reference

11.1 CYP-07-26

12 Background Papers

12.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act :

File Ref : Oldham Strategy - Giving every child the best start in life
Officer Name : Ryan Rothery, Best Start in Life Programme Manager
Contact Email: Ryan.rothery@oldham.gov.uk

13 Appendices

13.1 Equality Impact Assessment.



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Signed _____ Executive Director/Deputy Chief Executive	Dated _____
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