Report for: Cabinet **- 10 November 2026**

Title: **Substance Misuse Services for Children and Young People.**

Item number: 21

Title: Substance Misuse Services for Children and Young People.

Report authorised by: Sara Sutton, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health

Lead Officer: Donna Walker, Public Health Officer, Early Intervention Substance Use and Sexual Health (Donna1.walker@haringey.gov.uk)

Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/ Non Key Decision: **Key Decision**

1. Describe the issue under consideration.

1.1. Haringey council is responsible for the commissioning of specialist substance misuse service for children and young people. The current contract expires on 30 November 2026. This report seeks approval to extend the existing contract for 12 months and to commence procurement of a new contract to secure future service delivery.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction.

2.1. Children and young people's substance misuse is both a public health and safeguarding issue that can have a profound impact on health, wellbeing, educational attainment and future life chances. While most young people do not develop problematic substance use, those who do often face multiple and complex challenges, including poor mental health, exclusion from education, family adversity and exploitation. Early intervention is critical to preventing harm and supporting young people to achieve their full potential.

2.2. I am proud of the support that Haringey provides to vulnerable children and young people affected by substance misuse. Through the current service, delivered by Waythrough, young people can access prevention, early intervention and treatment support in schools, community settings and alongside wider children's services. The service has delivered strong outcomes and helped many young people make positive and lasting changes to their lives.

2.3. I support the recommendation to extend the current contract for a further year while the Council undertakes a comprehensive procurement process for a future service model. This approach will ensure that young people and families continue to receive uninterrupted support while allowing sufficient time to design and procure a service that reflects local need, emerging evidence and the ambitions of our borough.

2.4. The proposed procurement presents an opportunity to build on the strengths of the current service, strengthen our prevention offer and ensure that support continues to reach those young people who need it most. By investing in effective early intervention and treatment services, we can help reduce health inequalities, improve wellbeing and life chances, and ensure that children and young people in Haringey have the best possible opportunity to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

3. Recommendations.

For Cabinet, to approve the following:

3.1. The extension to the current contract for the Children, Young People and Families Drug and Alcohol Service (Insight Platform), delivered by Waythrough for a period of 12 months from 1st December 2026 to 30th November 2027 at a total cost of £315,997.33, in accordance with Contract Standing Order (CSO) 18.02.1

3.2. A variation to the terms of the contract for the same period and include costs of £75,936, to cover additional grant awarded for the service, including Young People's DATRIG posts, as permitted under CSO 18.03.1. The total value of the extension and variation is £391,933.33.

3.3. Commencement of a competitive procurement process for a new contract for Substance Misuse Services for Children and Young People, for a period of three (3) years with an option to extend for a further two years, in accordance with Contract Standing Order 2.01(b). The estimated total value of the new 5-year contract is £1,872,246.65.

4. Reasons for decision.

4.1. The current contract, awarded by Cabinet in July 2021, commenced on 1 December 2021 for an initial four-year term to 30 November 2025, with an option to extend for a further three years. The contract is currently extended until 30th November 2026.

4.2. The proposed extension will allow sufficient time for a full competitive re-tender to be completed, and a new contract mobilised from 1 December 2027, reflecting the updated needs and gaps analysis, local priorities and current best practice. An indicative timetable for the procurement is outlined at paragraph 6.6 of this report.

4.3. Since the 2021 award, the service has continued to deliver universal, targeted and treatment-level support to children, young people and families affected by substance misuse. Performance is monitored quarterly against key performance indicators, including RAG-rated performance reporting. National and local strategies continue to emphasise prevention, early intervention, whole-family approaches and improved pathways into specialist treatment.

4.4. Insight Platform delivers against these principles, and the extension period will enable learning from current delivery, contract monitoring, and the updated needs and gaps analysis to inform the specification and performance framework for the re-tendered contract.

5. Alternative options considered.

5.1. Do nothing / allow the contract to lapse.

The Council could allow the current contract to expire without extension. However, this would risk a gap in valued specialist provision before a re-tendered service could be awarded and mobilised. There is no identified alternative programme in place that could provide equivalent specialist support during any gap.

5.2. In-house provision.

As considered at the point of the original award, the specialist nature of this service means it is better delivered by a specialist substance misuse provider than through an in-house model. A competitive re-tender will allow the Council to test the market and determine the most appropriate future delivery model.

5.3. Other options.

A hybrid in-house/external provider model has been discussed internally with Children's Services. However, the Director of Children's services that expertise in substance and alcohol use is best delivered independently by specialist providers to local young residents, where ongoing innovation is needed to consistently grow and develop such specialist knowledge and services.

6. Background information.

6.1. Substance misuse among children and young people remains an important public health, safeguarding and health inequalities issue. While overall rates of alcohol and drug use amongst young people have reduced over the longer term, there remains a significant cohort of vulnerable young people who experience harm from substance use and require specialist support. Nationally, 14,352 children and young people accessed specialist drug and alcohol treatment services in 2023/24, an increase of 16% on the previous year. Cannabis remains the primary substance of concern, accounting for 87% of treatment presentations. Almost half (49%) of young people entering treatment report an identified mental health treatment need and 80% report first using substances before the age of 15, demonstrating the importance of early intervention and prevention.

6.2. The harms associated with substance misuse extend far beyond drug and alcohol use itself. Young people affected by substance misuse are more likely to experience poor mental health, exclusion from education, family instability, exploitation and involvement with the criminal justice system. Substance misuse is recognised as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and can have a lasting impact on health, wellbeing and life chances if not addressed early. Investment in effective prevention and treatment services can therefore make a significant difference to a young person's future outcomes.

6.3. Haringey continues to face significant challenges associated with deprivation and health inequalities, which can increase vulnerability to substance misuse and related harms. The service supports some of the borough's most vulnerable young residents, including those experiencing mental health difficulties, safeguarding concerns, school exclusion, family adversity and exploitation. Local demand remains strong, with around 150 young people accessing treatment and structured support each year.

6.4. Since December 2021, the Insight Platform, Haringey's specialist substance misuse service for children and young people, has been delivered by Waythrough. The service has consistently demonstrated strong performance and positive outcomes for children, young people and families across the borough. Access to support is timely, with 100% of young people receiving an assessment within three weeks of referral and the majority being seen within seven days. Treatment outcomes are strong, with 84% of young people successfully completing treatment having reduced or stopped their substance use, while 80% report improvements in their wellbeing when leaving the service. The service is highly valued by partner agencies, with 100% of professionals reporting high levels of satisfaction. Alongside specialist treatment provision, the service delivers a significant programme of prevention and early intervention activity, including 2,269 brief interventions with children and young people, 163 hidden harm interventions supporting children affected by parental substance use, training for 447 professionals to increase confidence and skills in identifying and addressing substance misuse, and regular partnership working with 14 schools across the borough. These outcomes demonstrate that the Insight Platform is an effective, well-integrated service that delivers positive impacts for children and young people, supports wider safeguarding objectives, and contributes to the prevention of future substance misuse-related harm

6.5. A comprehensive Needs and Gaps Analysis, together with wider engagement and market testing, has confirmed the continuing need for a specialist substance misuse service for children and young people in Haringey. Extending the current arrangements will ensure continuity of support for vulnerable young people while the Council undertakes a full procurement process to secure a future service model that reflects current evidence, local need and the Council's ambitions to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

6.6. Should re procurement be agreed it is our intention to involve young people in all aspects of the re procurement, below is an indicative timetable for the new procurement.

Activity	**Timescales**
Pre – procurement approval	Nov - 2026
Stakeholder Consultation	Dec - 2026
Pre -market engagement and document preparation (Specification and other tender documents)	Jan - 2027
Tender	Feb - Mar 2027
Evaluations (Includes training for Young People)	Apr - May 2027
Cabinet Approval for Award of contract	Jul - 2027
Notification of tender outcome	Aug - 2027
Mobilisation	Sep - Nov 2027
Contract start	Dec - 2027

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan — High Level Strategic Outcomes.

7.1. The provision of an effective substance misuse service for children and young people contributes directly to the priorities set out in the Haringey Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026, particularly the Council's ambition for children and young people to have the best start in life and to be safe, healthy and able to thrive. The service supports early intervention and prevention, improves health and wellbeing outcomes, reduces the risk of exploitation and other forms of harm, and strengthens partnership working across

education, health, social care and community services. By providing timely specialist support and preventative interventions, the service contributes to the Council's wider objectives of reducing inequalities, supporting vulnerable residents and enabling children and young people to achieve positive outcomes.

8. Carbon and Climate Change.

8.1. This proposal supports the Council's wider commitment to responding to the climate emergency by contributing to a more resilient, sustainable, and community-based service model. While the primary purpose of the contract is to support residents affected by substance misuse, several operational practices within the service help reduce environmental impact.

8.2. The delivery model has moved from using a stand-alone building to co-location and outreach. This means services are delivered closer to where residents live reducing travel. It also minimises energy usage associated with dedicated buildings.

9. Statutory Officers comments Finance, Procurement, Legal and Equalities

9.1. Finance.

9.1.1. Public Health has a grant allocation for substance misuse Services for Children and young people, which comprises of the public health grant and the Young people element of the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant (DATRIG).

9.1.2. This report seeks an extension and variation to the current contract for the Children, Young People and Families Drug and Alcohol Service (Insight Platform), delivered by Waythrough for a period of 12 months from 1st December 2026 to 30th November 2027 at a total cost of £315,997.33 and an additional costs for the service, including Young People's DATRIG posts £75,936. The total value of the extension and variation is £391,933.33.

9.1.3. It further seeks approval to commence a competitive procurement process for the new contract for Substance Misuse Services for Children and Young People, for a period of three (3) years at an initial cost of £1,123,347.99 with an option to extend for a further two years, for an additional value £748,898.66. Estimated 5-year new contract (3 + 2 optional) £1,872,246.65

9.1.4. As Public Health has an allocation for substance misuse Services for Children and young people and the cost of the extension and variation will be met within the Public Health grant allocation.

9.1.5. Public Health have also received their indicative financial settlement for three years (2026-29), and the cost of this estimated 5-year new contract is forecasted to be met within the indicative grant envelope awarded to Haringey. Any change in grant will be subject to review to ensure that the cost of this contract is met in future years.

9.2. Procurement

9.2.1. The Insight Platform Children and Young People's Substance Misuse Service contract with Waythrough was awarded following a competitive procurement process under the

Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for an initial term of four years commencing on 1 December 2021, with options to extend for a further period of up to three years.

9.2.2. Since the award of the contract, the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 came into force. As the service falls within the scope of the Provider Selection Regime, the proposed extension and variation are permissible under Regulation 13(1)(a), where the modification was expressly provided for within the original contractual arrangements, and Regulation 13(1)(d), where the value of the modification does not exceed £500,000 and does not represent a material change to the overall nature of the contract. The original four-year contract value was approximately £1.26m and the proposed additional funding of £76,121.33 is well within the permitted modification thresholds. The proposed changes do not alter the fundamental nature or scope of the service being delivered.

9.2.3. The proposed extension and variation comply with the requirements of the Council's Contract Standing Orders, specifically CSO 18.02 (extension in accordance with existing contractual provisions), CSO 18.03 (contract variations), and CSO 2.01(d) (Cabinet approval for contract variations where the aggregate value is £500,000 or above).

9.2.4. Approval is also sought to commence a competitive procurement exercise for a replacement contract for a period of three years, with an option to extend for a further two years, with an estimated total contract value of £1.87m. This is in accordance with CSO 2.01(b). Undertaking a competitive procurement process will help ensure continued value for money, compliance with the Provider Selection Regime, and the delivery of services that reflect current local need, strategic priorities, and best practice.

9.2.5. Contract management records indicate that the current provider continues to deliver the service in accordance with the agreed performance framework and contractual outcomes. The proposed extension will ensure continuity of this important service whilst allowing sufficient time to undertake a robust procurement process, including stakeholder engagement, market engagement, service review, and development of the future service model. The proposed involvement of children and young people in the design and co-production of the new service is welcomed and will help strengthen service user engagement and future service delivery.

9.2.6. Cabinet may therefore approve the recommendations set out in Section 3 of this report.

9.3. Legal and Governance

9.3.1. The Director of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9.3.2. The services were originally procured under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. As they are health services, the extension is governed by the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023. Reg 13 (1) (a) provides for a modification of the contract where the modification has been clearly and unambiguously provided for in the contract documents. This would apply to the proposed extension of the contract.

9.3.3. The variation to cover additional costs falls within Reg 13 (1) (d) which allows for a variation where:

(a)the modification does not render the contract or framework agreement materially different in character, and

(b)the cumulative change in the lifetime value of the contract or framework agreement since it was entered into or concluded is below £500,000;

9.3.4. Cabinet has power to approve the extension and variation of contract under CSOs 2.01 (d) (Cabinet power to approve variations),18.02 and 18.03 (Contract variations and extensions).

9.3.5. Cabinet also has power to approve the commencement of a procurement exercise under CSO 2.01 b).

9.3.6. The Director of Legal and Governance confirms that there are no legal reasons preventing Cabinet from approving the recommendations in this report.

9.4. **Equality**

9.4.1. The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination;
- Harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

9.4.2. The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

9.4.3. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a protected characteristic.

9.4.4. Haringey is one of London's most diverse boroughs and children and young people may experience different patterns of need, access and outcomes based on their individual characteristics and circumstances. It is therefore important that the Council understands how services are accessed and experienced by different groups, so that any inequalities can be identified and addressed.

9.4.5. The service currently routinely collects, analyses and reports data across all protected characteristics where lawful and appropriate to do so. This information is used alongside service user feedback, engagement activity and outcome data to identify patterns of access, retention, experience and outcomes for different groups. The provider is expected to use this intelligence proactively to identify and address inequalities, take action where disparities emerge, and demonstrate continuous improvement in ensuring equitable access to support and positive outcomes for all children, young people and families

9.4.6. According to the national data-base (NDTMS), Insight Platform's Young People's Activity Report for Q4 2026 shows a broad range of referral routes, education remains the primary referral route (40% year to date). The service continues to work in partnership with community and targeted youth organisations to reach all communities of young people.

9.4.7. In the quarterly monitoring meetings data is explored across all protected characteristics. The characteristics set out below are presented as examples of the equality monitoring undertaken by the service and illustrate how data is used to understand service reach.

Measure	Haringey	National
Gender split	45% female / 55% male	40% female / 60% male
Age 13–15 share of caseload	61%	Consistent with national pattern
Ethnicity — Black Caribbean	14%	—
Ethnicity — Other White	24%	—
Ethnicity — African	9%	—
Ethnicity — White British (national comparator)	—	68%
Cannabis presentations	83%	88%
Nicotine use	44%	23%
Alcohol	36%	39%
Solvent use	9%	5%
NPS presentations	0%	3%

Table – NDTMS Insight Platform Q4 2026

9.4.8. The Haringey figures indicate proportionally more girls in treatment than the national picture, with a caseload broadly consistent with national age patterns. Ethnicity data reflects Haringey's diverse population and reinforces the need for culturally competent service delivery.

9.4.9. If the extension is agreed, the Provider will be obliged to have due regard for the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. They will collect and report to NDTMS monthly on the protective characteristics. Quarterly contract management arrangements will continue to review the data and ensure that the delivery of the service does not result in any preventable or disproportionate inequality and to identify how we can continuously improve services.

9.4.10. If the re procurement is agreed, the Council will ensure that equality considerations are embedded throughout the re-procurement process and that its Public Sector Equality Duty is actively discharged. This will include engagement and consultation with a diverse range of Haringey children, young people, parents, carers and stakeholders to shape the service specification and identify any barriers to access or engagement experienced by protected groups. The service specification will set out clear expectations regarding equality, diversity and inclusion, including requirements to deliver culturally competent, trauma-informed and accessible services that meet the needs of all communities. Bidders will be required to demonstrate how they will address inequalities in access, experience and outcomes through a specific method statement question, which will form a meaningful element of the quality evaluation and be appropriately weighted within the overall scoring methodology. The Council will evaluate bidders' proposals against these

requirements and will continue to monitor performance against equality objectives throughout the life of the contract to ensure services remain responsive to the needs of Haringey's diverse population.

10. Use of Appendices

None