

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Item No 3

EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

16 APRIL 2024

DEPUTATION REQUESTS

Subject	Deputation
3.1 In relation to Item 7.12 – Contracts and Commissioning Update	The Junction (Verbal Deputation and Written Submission)
3.2 In relation to Item 7.12 – Contracts and Commissioning Update	Tailor Ed Foundation (Verbal Deputation and Written Submission)
3.3 In relation to Item 7.12 – Contracts and Commissioning Update	Multi-cultural Family Base (Verbal Deputation)
3.4 In relation to Item 7.15 – Make Public Sexual Harassment Illegal Campaign	Edinburgh EIS (Verbal Deputation)
3.5 In relation to Item 7.3 – Early Years Cross Boundary Places	Scottish Private Nurseries Association (Verbal Deputation and Written Submission)
3.6 In relation to Item 7.4 – Early Years Partner Provider – Hourly Rate for Funded Early Learning and Childcare	Scottish Private Nurseries Association (Verbal Deputation and Written Submission)

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Deputation Briefing Paper

AGENDA ITEM - 7.11 & 7.12 Commissioning and Contract Management

Speaker: Cara Spence (Director) The Junction - Young People, Health & Wellbeing. Representing the Leith Community Mental Health Collaborative including youth work organisations (YMCA Edinburgh, Pilmeny Youth Centre, The Ripple, The Citadel Youth Centre), a specialist service for BAME families (MCFB) and a specialist young people's health project (The Junction).

Context

In 2020 Scottish Government identified that the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people was an area that requires strategic local approaches. To enable the commissioning and the provision of services, they provided funds to every local authority to be directed towards community mental health for 5- to 24-year-olds (26 if care experienced) and their families. Phase 2 of the delivery of this fund focused on 'collaborating and connecting'; this resulted in partnerships set-up to provide community mental health services across the city.

Proposed CEC Decision

All partners and organisations that deliver Community Mental Health Work for Young People have received notification from the Joint Commissioning Team, that **funding related to Community Mental Health children & young people services will end on the 10th of October 2024.**

This follows a three-year tender ending in October 2024 however, further funding was anticipated on a yearly basis on a 3 year + 1 +1 basis, with the provision that Scottish Government provided this fund to City of Edinburgh Council¹. We believe further funding has been provided by Scottish Government to City of Edinburgh Council specifically for Community Mental Health activities, following an announcement in March 2024².

¹ This was discussed at meetings. Continuation of funding is also noted in the Tender Specification document p13, with specific reference to a possible extension period within the years 2024 – 2025 and 2025 – 2026; within The Junction Contract Award letter dated 10th of October it states: the option to extend for a further 24-month period undertaken at the 'discretion of the Council'.

² <https://www.gov.scot/news/gbp-30-million-mental-health-funding/#:~:text=The%20Communities%20Mental%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Fund%20for,hav e%20been%20awarded%20%C2%A315%20million%20each%20for%202024-25.>

City of Edinburgh Council are proposing a review of these funds which the Leith Community Mental Health Partnership welcomes. However, it is important that young people, families, and the 3rd sector are involved in this review, and that vital services continue whilst this review takes place.

Potential Impacts

- Thousands of young people across the city have received support from services provided by this fund³. If services come to an end, there are very currently limited alternative referral options for young people and their families. At present there are long waiting lists at CAMHS Edinburgh and more than 1 in 5 young people experience a rejected referral across Scotland⁴. Ending services without alternatives, will have significant impacts on young people and their families. Alternative clinical support may also be more costly to provide rather than the provision of an early intervention and preventative approach⁵.
- An 'Exit Strategy' and 'TUPE arrangements' are mentioned within with the Tender Specifications document but at present there are limited services to refer young people on to, and no information on where staff be moved to (if applicable)⁶. More information is needed before an Exit Strategy and TUPE arrangements can be considered.
- This fund provides specific supports for young people with protected characteristics including young women, BAME young people and neurodiverse young people. The Council are therefore duty bound to complete an Equalities and Impact Assessment in advance of this decision, to ensure their needs have been considered.
- The current message from City of Edinburgh Council could result in staff leaving their post, this means that current service delivery is at risk. It is

³ In the first half of last year, more than 58,000 children, young people and their family members accessed service as part of the Community Mental Health Funding programme across Scotland. We will seek to gather data on behalf of the Leith Partnership prior to the planned deputation on the 16th of April.

⁴ Numbers of reject referrals are based on Scotland wide stats. They are anticipated to be higher within high populated areas. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/uk-news/23570503.scottish-government-misses-key-camhs-waiting-time-target/>

⁵ Youth work approaches and group work supports young people's wellbeing broadly and uses a preventative approach to supporting young people's mental health.

⁶ See p14 & 15 of the Community Mental Health Tender Specification document.

therefore important that communication to services and staff on the ground is swift, to limit its impact on services and wider communities.

We are aware that there are discussions are taking place that funding could be provided through the new 'Framework for Accredited Pathways and Certified Counselling and Therapies Framework'. As it stands, this framework does not align with the wider approach connected to the Community Mental Health Fund, it will only fund resources for BACP Qualified Counsellors, and the cash flow process may be unsustainable for organisations. This means, in real terms, very few third sector organisation's services will be supported by this fund, without significant changes or additions to the Framework.

We know that young adulthood is an important time for a person's mental health and most mental health conditions in adults have their onset during this stage of life⁷. Sadly, children and young people's mental health and wellbeing has declined over the past decade⁸. This has been exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. The tender for services was based on need, and it is quite clear that the need for services continues. Without ongoing investment, we may create more long-term problems that need to be addressed.

Within this context, ending Community Mental Health services for young people, without alternatives seems to be unconscionable.

Asks

- Ensure an Equalities, and Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment are completed (with evidence of mitigated impacts).
- Ensure continuation of funding for 3rd Sector Community Mental Health Services, whilst any review of services is underway.
- Ensure the young people, families, and the 3rd sector (who hold considerable expertise) are involved in the review process.
- Send out swift communication to the 3rd Sector to ensure that staff do not leave post and services can be maintained.

⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/7n464fkw>

⁸ <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/youth-mental-health-in-decline-generations-differ-on-causes-of-apparent-crisis-survey-finds>

Although we are speaking on behalf of one geographical area, impacts of this decision will be across the city. We look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,



Cara Spence (Director)

The Junction - Young People, Health and Wellbeing

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Supported by:

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From: [Jonathan Revell](#)
To: [Committee Services](#)
Subject: CMH deputation-Written statement for Elected Members
Date: 12 April 2024 11:13:58
Attachments: [Outlook-aqoxqta0.png](#)
[shield-advisory.png](#)
[chevron-light.png](#)
[shield-advisory.png](#)
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 External email >

 Contains topics of a financial nature >

Dear Clerk

Tailor Ed Foundation have requested a deputation at next weeks Education, Children and Families Committee meeting on 16th April 2024 in relation to Agenda item 7.12 Commissioning and Contract Management.

We understand that you can pass on additional information to elected members for them to review in terms of our deputation.

We would be delighted if you can pass on the following information:

In 202, following a robust tendering exercise Tailor Ed Foundation and two partners (Barnardos and Autism Initiatives) were awarded a contract of £100,000 per year to establish a city wide neurodiverse mental health support project. This was part of an annual £1.3m grant to The City of Edinburgh Council from the Scottish Government to address the growing concerns for children and young people's mental health.

Part of the challenge facing services such as CAMHS was that over 90% of the children and young people who were referred to them were neurodiverse. Furthermore, due to the impact of their neurodiversity many of these children and young people were not able to engage with CAMHS and it was acknowledge that a community based approach would be more effective.

We are delighted to inform elected members that since March 2022 when we opened our community mental health service funded by this contract we have supported more than 600 neurodiverse children and young people aged 7 to 24yrs), more than 300 parents struggling to cope with their children's needs and a further 120 siblings. We have had more than 400 self referrals and less than 80 for local schools.

The feedback from the children and young people, parents, CAMHS statutory professionals and other third sector organisation is that this new service has provided exceptional support for neurodiverse children and young people who have refused to access or engage with other offers of support which are few and far between.

On the 26th March 2024 we were informed by email from the Children & Families Commissioning team that the contract would be ending on the 10th October 2024.

Initially we assumed that the Scottish Government had not given the City of Edinburgh Council a 1 year extension as we were told during the original tendering process when we were advised this contract could be 3 years + 1 year + 1 year. However we understand that the City of Edinburgh Council has been awarded a 4th year of funding. We are unsure if this is the same level of funding as the previous 3 years.

Based on the limited information we have been given to date, whilst it has already been decided to stop the contract in October, a review of the past three years is planned to be undertaken. Tailor Ed Foundation welcome the opportunity to take part in a contract review. However we are concerned that this will take place after the decision to change the contract rather than inform it.

Tailor Ed Foundation fully support's The City of Edinburgh Council approach clearly stated in the Edinburgh Children's Services Plan 2023/26 that multi agency collaboration will be employed to make best use of the partnerships' collaborative gain and the influence that combined service provision can have to address complex social issues and that prevention and early intervention will be realised to prioritise objectives that help protect our children and young people from poor outcomes. Therefore we are concerned that this approach has not been applied in this instance.

We have not been contacted for us to explain what is happening or even to ask us as contractors what we have learnt in the past three years, what worked well, what could have been improved, what unexpected evidence has emerged.

It would also appear that no one from the Council or any statutory partners has contacted any of the families with children with poor mental health who have benefited from the city wide neurodiverse service to ask for their views, or ask them to shape the next phase of service provision.

We have been signposted to seek future funding through the Council's for the Accredited Pathways, Counselling and Therapies for

Children and Young People's Framework. Last year Council officials were promoting this framework for the potential benefits for children's attainment in school. It is now being suggested that it could be used for children and young people's mental health. None of the 600+ neurodiverse children and young people we have supported in the past three years have accessed accredited or formal counselling services and as CAMH's highlighted in 2020/21 formal counselling does not meet the needs of many neurodiverse children and young people.

Secondly the framework doesn't support neurodiverse young adults up to 24 years, parents or siblings. This suggests moving forward their needs will not be met which in the current ethos of whole family support is concerning. As far as we know purchases through this framework have to come from statutory services such as schools, which is not where most of the referrals have come from in the past three years, therefore it seems our service would not meet the criteria to access the framework.

It has been suggested by the Commissioning Team this decision has been made in order to get value for money, although our contract is for £100k per year we have actually levered in a further £80k+ each year, if we are unable to continue this service, which based on current information that we hold will be the case these additional funds will also be lost to the residents of Edinburgh we support. As far as we understand a number of the other partnerships have also secured additional funding over and above the funding from these Scottish Government funds. This means that potentially this decision could lose Edinburgh's children and families up to £1m of additional funding to support their needs.

As it stands and in our understanding, the strategic decision to change the community mental health model from the current approach to this framework approach will be setting up additional institutional barriers that will effectively prevent neurodiverse children and young people and their families get support for their growing level of poor mental health. Sadly based on the evidence we have captured over the past three years if these neurodiverse children and young people and their families are excluded from appropriate support their mental health will deteriorate which in the long term will only create further pressures on statutory services.

It would seem that a more measured approach would be to use the additional year of funding to maintain the current services and then reach out to all stakeholders so that an exit strategy for everyone is based on, and informed by, the needs of all stakeholders especially children and young people with poor mental health and their families.

Jonathan Revell
He/Him

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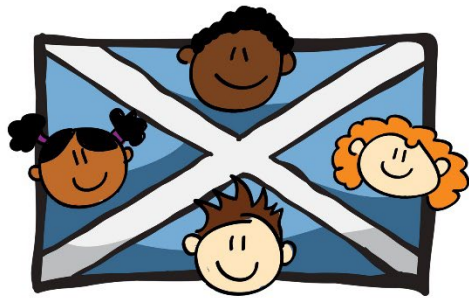
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SPNA
Scottish Private Nursery Association

7.3 Early years cross boundary places.

What consideration if any has been given to children and families for this decision to refuse cross boundary funding.

This directly contradicts Scottish Governments 11.40 funding policy of 'Funding To Follow The Child' (FTFC)

The decision has been based to deliver this 'In-House' merely as a tactic to monopolise more of the funding stays within CEC.

We appreciate the financial impact of cross boundary funding, yet why has CEC not considered reclaiming the funding as other Councils do.

Has CEC conducted a costing exercise of how many FTE staff are in situ and what the occupancy rate currently is. If a setting is not at full occupancy, has the question been raised as to why Council settings continue to staff at FTE and at 50 weeks.

If these settings are not operating at full capacity, there more than likely is a plausible reason, and as other councils are doing, reducing these settings to 39 weeks, or closing altogether.

There are more than 20 children directly being affected, including staff who work within the sector and place their own children within the private nursery they work within.

Will this decision be delayed until the additional audit has been completed and presented to the Head of Internal Audit, which is being presented to the Governance, risk and best value committee on the 7th May? If not how can a decision be based without this information.

7.4 Early Years Partner Provider Hourly Rate for Funded ELC

11,40 funding rate is not sustainable to providers, and has been retained for the benefit and use within the Local Authority (LA) settings.

Reasons and explanations are not justified, considering other sources of budgets are accessible for LA, where the private providers relies solely on the hourly rate to pay all costs.

The **additional** £16m funding was confirmed by Scottish Government ELC officials this was to be solely for the private and childminders, yet again it has been to the benefit of the Council and the detriment of the sector.

The guidance states clearly a minimum of 7.6% , meaning that 4.8% should not even come into discussion.

Have you as Council officers seen the consultation with Cosla, Resources and CYP spokes people, and where we can request a copy of this?