

Operational Decision Record

Publication Date (to be added by Governance Services) 06/10/22	Decision Reference Number 4739
Decision Title	
C-Card Condom Distribution Scheme	
Decision Value	
£62,019 (£49,615 annual cost)	
Revenue or Capital Spend?	
Revenue	
Department	
People (Public Health)	
Contact Officer (Name, job title, and contact details)	
<i>Uzmah Bhatti, Senior Public Health Manager,</i> Uzmah.bhatti@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Decision Taken	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To approve the spend of up to £62,019 on a free condom distribution service2. To approve invitation for applications for the provision of C-Card free condom distribution service via a compliant procurement process, for delivery between 1 January 2023 and 31 March 2024.	
Reasons for Decision and Background Information	
Situation to March 2022 A free condom distribution C-Card scheme was contracted with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust in 2016, the contract for this ended in March 2022. A C-Card scheme is one type of condom distribution scheme, which provides registered young people with a C-Card – a paper or credit card-style card – which entitles them to free condoms. C-Card puts into practice the knowledge we have gained about the most effective ways to promote young people’s sexual and reproductive health. C-Card schemes share three fundamental principles: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Timely information and advice: young people need access to timely information and advice about all aspects of relationships, sex and sexuality2. Easy access to condoms: the young person should be able to get condoms easily once they have been properly assessed and supported to ensure they know how to use condoms safely	

3. Trusting young people: once they have their C-Card the young person must be trusted and helped to get condoms freely and easily.

Further detail on C-Card can be found here [https://legacy.brook.org.uk/attachments/C-Card condom distribution schemes - What why and how - July 2014.pdf](https://legacy.brook.org.uk/attachments/C-Card%20condom%20distribution%20schemes%20-%20What%20why%20and%20how%20-%20July%202014.pdf)

Current position

Due to COVID-19 pandemic pressures, a full service review was not undertaken. Consequently, an interim solution was sought to ensure continuity of the supply of free condoms where they were needed. This involves:

- Relying on services to contact Nottingham City Council (NCC) so that they can arrange to have access to additional stocks of free condoms.
- Public health colleagues liaising with providers such as universities and School Nursing etc to ensure they have ongoing supplies of condoms and access to safeguarding training and safe sex messages for young people.
- NCC identifying approved condom suppliers and inform services to order and recharge NCC or ordering for them.
- Inform services where free condoms are not available to signpost service users to sexual health clinics for free condoms.
- Management of safeguarding risks by directing providers to training and awareness platforms.
- Adding free condoms opt in function to the current online STI testing service.

Issues with current arrangement

There are a number of issues with the current arrangement as detailed below:

1. Capacity within the NCC teams to build and maintain individual provider relationships to monitor and increase activity.
2. Lack of dedicated resource for this service means further developments to respond to changing behaviour are not possible. These include pharmacy pilot, digital development.
3. Mechanisms to support providers with training and safeguarding are not robust.
4. Fragmentation in approach – relies on providers who are identified by incoming enquiries or via engagement for other purposes e.g. commissioning review engagement.

Recommendations

1. Build on the current national, evidence based C-Card model to include an online function – the nationally recognised C-Card brand and model is well recognised and robust covering aspects that are vital to the safe supply of free condoms for young people such as safeguarding, RSE and condom use training. Evidence suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated a digital transformation in preference for accessing services. This includes services such as free condom schemes.
2. Invite applications for the provision of C-Card free condom distribution service via an open compliant procurement process, for delivery between 1 January 2023 and 31 March 2024 - An open procurement exercise would enable a wide range of providers to express an interest and would provide NCC with choice of providers who could best meet young people's needs within the financial envelope.
3. Make a longer term decision for the service as part of the sexual health commissioning review programme.

Other Options Considered and why these were rejected

1. Extend the service (which at the time was due to end on 31/3/22) for a further 12 months – There was insufficient assurance that this service continued to be the best and most efficient option for free condom distribution.
2. No free condom distribution service. This would give rise to risks around poor sexual health outcomes in terms of increased STIs, increase in unplanned pregnancy, increase in teenage conceptions, increase in abortions.
3. Pilot a free condom distribution scheme as part the current integrated sexual health service. This has been explored after the cessation of the previous contract. Detailed discussions have taken place with NUH around running a pilot integrated free condom distribution scheme. A number of options (appendix 1) have been considered but commissioners are not satisfied that it would be the best value option or in the best interests of the target population. The best price negotiated with the provider exceeded the financial envelope by over 100%.
4. Maintain current interim arrangements where public health colleagues liaise with providers such as universities and School Nursing etc to ensure they have ongoing supplies of condoms and access to safeguarding training and safe sex messages for young people. This is not sustainable in the long term in terms of capacity in the Public Health team and ensuring coverage for target populations in services.

Reasons why this decision is classified as operational

- Value below £150,000
- Is within recurrent sexual health budget line within the Public Health Grant spend.

Additional Information

An Equality impact assessment is not required as this is not a proposal to introduce or add to a service or to remove, reduce or alter a service.

Advice has been sought from procurement colleagues who have agreed to support this procurement

Advice is being sought from legal colleagues around matters concerning TUPE implications, any direction provided will be followed to ensure compliance of TUPE rules and regulations.

Updated Legal advice : there has been no interim cover for the services between then and now, and we did not (6m ago) anticipate the service being revived (it not being a statutory service), then we have strong arguments that TUPE would not apply.

Compliant procurement process: at least three providers who may be interested in delivering the service will need to be identified, email to invite to quotation. If three providers can't be identified to directly invite, the quotation opportunity can be advertised openly e.g.PH website.

Decision Maker (Name and Job Title)
Lucy Hubber Director of Public Health
Scheme of Delegation Reference Number
1
Date Decision Taken
27.9.2022

Appendix 1 – NUH Integrated Sexual Health Service - C-Card Delivery Pilot Options



C Card updated with revised option 3 costs