

## Operational Decision Record

Publication Date 04/10/23	Decision Reference Number 5031
<b>Decision Title</b>	
SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	
<b>Decision Value</b>	
£90,000	
<b>Revenue or Capital Spend?</b>	
Revenue spend	
<b>Department</b>	
Education	
<b>Contact Officer (Name, job title, and contact details)</b>	
Janine Walker, Head of SEND and Vulnerable Children	
<b>Decision Taken</b>	
To agree to fund additional costs of IASS service under current Teckel agreement	
<b>Reasons for Decision and Background Information</b>	
<p><b>Decision Request:</b> To agree to fund the additional IASS funding costs under the current Teckel agreement with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Futures should the request to the ICB for a financial contribution to the service is not agreed.</p> <p><b>BACKGROUND</b> Numbers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) have been increasing for several years and this is expected to continue, increasing demand for support. The cohorts seeing the greatest increases in numbers are children/young people with significant learning disabilities/Autism and challenging behaviour, and those with profound/complex disabilities and health needs.</p> <p>Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND and their families, as identified in the Children and Families Act 2014. Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council fulfil this obligation jointly through Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS) known as Ask Us Nottinghamshire, which provide impartial advice and support for children/young people with SEND and their families.</p> <p>The current contract for provision of IASS in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire is held by Futures Nottingham, a not-for-profit social enterprise. The contract was commissioned through a transparent tender process in 2017 and includes the IRIS magazine and engagement. Despite extensive provider engagement, Futures were the only provider to bid to deliver this service.</p>	

## **PRESENT POSITION**

Since the contract commenced in 2018, IASS services across the country have seen an unprecedented number of families seeking support for EHCP applications, tribunals and mediations. The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire IASS, which was originally tightly costed, has been operating at over 200% of their commissioned capacity since 2020. Even with changes to the services provided, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils don't have the budget envelopes available to meet this level of need.

Much of the increase in demand has been young people needing support linked to health issues - around 50% of referrals are for mental health needs alone, without consideration of other health needs. Many of the families are signposted to IASS by health professionals - Paediatricians, GPs, Mental Health Services, Speech and Language.

The national IASS Minimum Standards state that it is good practice that the service should be jointly commissioned by health, education, and social care. In April 2022 the IASS National Network reported that 50% of IASS providers now have their services jointly commissioned with health.

The current IASS contract is due to expire in 2023. Options for re-commissioning the service are being explored, including re-modelling of services to incorporate the information previously provided through IRIS magazine into the main IASS website. There is potential to directly award the contract to Futures under Teckel arrangements.

Joint commissioning with Nottinghamshire County Council supports the City's Best Value approach to the commissioning of services. This has enabled reduction in management, staffing, and premises and running costs in the current operating model.

Since 2018 the IASS has supported more than 100% of its contract specification KPI measures for people support e.g. contacts and support offered.

During Covid from early 2020 this demand soared to 211% of demand against KPI target, and currently it is working at an average of 244% against KPI for this financial year having reached a high of 287% demand during Summer 2022. Current trends show no sign of going below 200%.

The KPIs of people supported over profile for the current contract are:

- 2018/19- Av 124% against KPI
- 2019/2020 – Av 211% against KPI
- 2020/2021 -Av 212% against KPI
- 2021/ 2022 – 259% against KPI
- 2022/2023- 244% against KPI to date.

Since 2018 the team has delivered 16,170 interventions, supporting people with issues around education, health and social matters. Despite the stretch on staff in capacity the feedback from customer satisfaction of the support they receive remains at 100%, but waiting times for support are longer than is ideal.

The cost per head of population costs of running the IASS benchmarks extremely well at £1.23 per head compared to the national median cost of £1.38 per head of population.

The model demonstrates good value for money aligned with strong performance and high levels of customer satisfaction. This was recognised in the Nottingham Local Area Inspection which identified the IASS as a strength:

*“Parents of children and young people with SEND find the advice and support they receive from the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Advice Service helpful. Trained advisers work closely with families and support parents well.”*

<b>Other Options Considered and why these were rejected</b>
Not to accept the funding. However, this is an area of great need in the City and is an opportunity to test methods and develop a model of good practice. High Level Needs funding has been identified to improve transition processes and this pilot will enable us to identify best practice, value and impact before moving towards a wider service offer.
<b>Reasons why this decision is classified as operational</b>
Governance Services have identified this request as operational
<b>Additional Information</b>
<b>Decision Maker (Name and Job Title)</b>
Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People  15/3/2023
<b>Scheme of Delegation Reference Number</b>
1
<b>Date Decision Taken</b>