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Contract

Norfolk Autism Adult Assessment with Navigation Service

NHS Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board

F03: Contract award notice

Notice identifier: 2024/S 000-040444

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-048456

Published 16 December 2024, 2:12pm

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

NHS Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board

County Hall, Martineau Ln

Norwich

NR1 2DH

Email

david.bailey1@nhs.net

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKH15 - Norwich and East Norfolk

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.improvinglivesnw.org.uk/about-us/our-nhs-integrated-care-board-icb/icb-contact/>

Buyer's address

<https://www.improvinglivesnw.org.uk/about-us/our-nhs-integrated-care-board-icb/icb-contact/>

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

Health

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Norfolk Autism Adult Assessment with Navigation Service

Reference number

NW2024-70

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 85100000 - Health services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

This notice is to communicate the intention to award a contract under the Provider Selection Regime (PSR) Competitive Process’.

NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board invited suitably qualified and experienced providers to express their interest in delivering a Norfolk Autism Adult Assessment with Navigation Service.

The successful Provider will be responsible for the delivery of a safe and appropriate NICE compliant assessment and navigation service with requisite levels of safety, comfort, privacy, and dignity to be fully compatible with the needs of adults suspected of having autism. It shall offer a range of ways to engage with people accessing the service, to ensure that it is autism friendly.

The service will:

- screen for autism providing written validation of difficulties associated with autism along with a reasonable adjustment letter.
- offer a Norfolk Autism Adult Navigation Service (see section 4.3 below) to reduce the drive and need for an adult autism assessment, through offering interventions in a timely manner.
- as required accurately manage and maintain an adult autism assessment waiting list.
- have a clear and transparent adult autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway for assessment

The proposed contract will be for a period of 2 years with the option to extend for up to an

additional 1 year. The annual contract value is £481,000 per annum.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.1.7) Total value of the procurement (excluding VAT)

Value excluding VAT: £1,443,000

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 85323000 - Community health services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKH1 - East Anglia

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

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The service will:

- screen for autism providing written validation of difficulties associated with autism along with a reasonable adjustment letter.
- offer a Norfolk Autism Adult Navigation Service (see section 4.3 below) to reduce the drive and need for an adult autism assessment, through offering interventions in a timely manner.
- as required accurately manage and maintain an adult autism assessment waiting list.
- have a clear and transparent adult autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway for assessment

The service will accept a historic autism assessment where there is no confirmation of autism, but only with a distinct change in presentation that builds on the original assessment with a need to further explore autism.

The Provider shall offer electronic autism and functional analysis screening.

This shall include but not limited to:

- NICE compliant electronic screening tools such as the Autism Quotient (AQ), the Empathy Quotient (EQ) and the Relatives Questionnaire (RQ) along with any background questionnaires.
- A functional analysis screening tool (such as FAST) to support identification of those most at risk and vulnerable. The screening tool should be used along with other triage methods to identify those who would benefit from an assessment to improve communication, behavioural and sensory outcomes for onward support.
- If the score indicates autism the person is provided with written validation that they experience difficulties associated with autism and offered a reasonable adjustment letter. This validation will include any rationale identified from the scoring that evidences the challenges the person is experiencing, indicating their strengths and difficulties with advice and guidance with regards to onward support from the navigation service.
- If the score is classified as non-autism the person and their GP is advised in writing. The document will include any rationale identified from the scoring for the challenges the person is experiencing, indicating their strengths and difficulties with any advice and guidance with regards to other services that might be able to support.
- The Provider shall, where appropriate, onward refer to other assessment services (e.g. ADHD). They will work with the existing ADHD service to ensure when people are referred to their service, they are slotted in from the date of referral to the ASD service and vice versa. This is to ensure that those with a dual neurodevelopment assessment need are not disadvantaged by long waits.

The service shall offer up to 12 weeks light touch support for those not on the autism assessment pathway. Light touch is defined as following the person's lead and gathering enough information to be satisfied that the self-advocacy passport is working effectively and as intended.

Coaches will use their knowledge and training to enable adults to reduce specific difficulties associated with autism, they will also support Autism Peer Support Workers. The service shall:

- offer non-judgemental support to resolve current problems adults are experiencing in their day-to-day life, to build confidence and independence that can lead to a better life. This could cover aspects of daily living, but also anger management interventions and coping skills training, and developing problem solving skills.
- offer co-development of an 'Self Advocacy Passport' a personalised plan that takes a Quality-of-Life approach to overcome specific issues. It will consider the person's strengths, skills, mental and/or physical impairment, family and social context. The plan will detail approaches the person has chosen to adopt now and in the future such as coping strategies or when to ask for help.
- work with adults and where appropriate their informal support, partners/families to understand the difficulties they are experiencing that are associated with autism to put in place strategies that help.
- offer opportunities for autistic adults to connect with other autistic adults to benefit from peer contact and support. Offered by Autism Peer Support Workers who use their

experience to support autistic adult or those who suspect they are autistic. Offering emotional support, sharing experiences, education and practical activities, one to one support such as mentoring or befriending. This could include modelling, peer feedback discussion and decision making, explicit rules and strategies for dealing with socially difficult situations.

- work with the Norfolk Autism Partnership to connect people with other social groups to develop a positive autistic self-identity and foster connections with other autistic adults and wider involvement opportunities. The Norfolk Autism Partnership coproduced accredited autism awareness e-learning programme that shall be offered to the person, their partner, family, any informal and formal carers.
- bridge to other existing services that can help (such as the living well with autism course or the Norfolk Autism Adult Support Service for those with emerging social care needs), highlight reasonable adjustments that can help and advocate where barriers exist.
- explore and understand adults' motivation for an autism assessment. What outcomes they wish to achieve, along with the opportunities and challenges of an autism confirmation.
- provide a closure summary that details the outcomes achieved from the service. It will also detail any ongoing significant challenges and difficulties to access services that result in financial, legal or health issues that cannot be resolved through reasonable adjustments, for consideration at triage.

The Provider shall only triage for assessment those who continue to experience significant challenges and difficulties to access services and will benefit from an autism assessment. It will be clinically determined that the person needs an assessment to recommend evidence-based interventions to improve communication, behavioural and sensory outcomes for onward support.

All other adults who complete their support to access things that help will be discharged back to their GP

The Provider shall deliver a fully NICE compliant formulation autism assessment service using NICE approved assessment tools, conducted by a multi-disciplinary team (MDT). Where there is insufficient evidence to recommend a definitive confirmation of autism a working hypothesis will be offered as an alternative.

For all outcomes, the Provider shall deliver a comprehensive report that will include risks and the formulation around needs that offers evidenced based recommendations for onward support. The assessment report will adhere to NICE guidance and clinical practice guidelines.

The autism assessment report shall enable another clinician to clearly see the analysis and rationale for the outcome should a second opinion be required at a later date.

Where the assessment indicates traits of other neurodevelopmental conditions, the Provider shall onward refer with the analysis and rationale from the assessment copied to the appropriate service(s) and GP.

Where autism is confirmed, an abridged report shall be provided. This will detail their

autism confirmation and any evidence-based recommendations that can be shared easily with their onward support.

For all outcomes, the Provider shall inform the GP. The GP will be sent a copy of their autism assessment report, with a request that any reasonable adjustments and if autism is confirmed coded on the GP medical record.

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: Quality and Innovation / Weighting: 35

Quality criterion - Name: Integration, Collaboration and Service Sustainability / Weighting: 20

Quality criterion - Name: Improving Access, Reducing Health Inequalities and Facilitating / Weighting: 15

Quality criterion - Name: Social Value / Weighting: 10

Cost criterion - Name: Value / Weighting: 20

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

This is a 2 year contract with the option to extend for up to an additional 1 year.

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

II.2.14) Additional information

This is a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) intention to award notice. The awarding of this contract is subject to the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023. For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 do not apply to this award. The standstill period begins on the day after the publication of this notice. Representations by providers must be made to the relevant authority by 31st December 2024. This contract has not yet formally been awarded; this notice serves as an intention to award under the PSR.'

If you have wish to make a written representation regarding this intention to award notice

please contact nwicb.enquiries@nhs.net.

The intention to award decision was made by the ICB Executive Management Team on 2nd December 2024 and the Contracts and Procurement Steering Group on 12th December 2024.

There were no declared conflicts identified during in relation to this process.

The Key Criteria weighting for this services was as follows:

Quality & Innovation - 35%

Value - 20%

Integration, Collaboration and Service Sustainability - 20%

Improving Access, Reducing - 15%

Social Value - 10%

The relative importance of the Key Criteria was deemed appropriate based on the requirements of the service

The rationale for awarding to the preferred provider was that they have passed all pass/fail questions in the basic selection questionnaire and ranked as the highest scoring provider based on their overall Key Criteria score within this Provider Selection Process.

This contract relates to an existing service and is being awarded to an new Provider. The contract is expected to commence 1st June 2025 for a period of 2 years with the option to extend for up to an additional 1 year.

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Open procedure

IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

IV.2) Administrative information

IV.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure

Notice number: [2024/S 000-030872](#)

Section V. Award of contract

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

12 December 2024

V.2.2) Information about tenders

Number of tenders received: 2

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor

ABL Health

71 Redgate Way, Farnworth, Bolton, Greater Manchester

Bolton

BL4 0JL

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UKD36 - Greater Manchester North West

The contractor is an SME

Yes

V.2.4) Information on value of contract/lot (excluding VAT)

Initial estimated total value of the contract/lot: £1,443,000

Total value of the contract/lot: £1,443,000

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.3) Additional information

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VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

NHS England

7&8 Wellington Place

Leeds

LS1 4AP

Country

United Kingdom

Internet address

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/>