****



**Document 2: Specification For:**

**Integrated Youth Service Offer**

**Lot 1** **– Detached and Holistic Health & Wellbeing Support for Young People (THinK)**

**Lot 2 – Targeted 1:1 Service**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Knowsley is situated in the North West of England. Its superb motorway and rail connections place it just 15 minutes from Liverpool City Centre and 30 minutes from Manchester. The Borough has three distinct town centres - Prescot, Kirkby and Huyton and boasts outstanding green spaces.

It is one of six districts that make up the Liverpool City Region, a functional economic area with an economy worth £28bn. This makes City Region partnerships vital and Knowsley plays an active role working with the Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver large-scale strategies on transport, housing, economic development and skills.

The Borough is fully engaged in the on-going discussions with government to implement the City Region’s devolution agreement: this has unlocked additional funding of over £1bn to promote growth and development locally and will enable decisions in key areas to be taken locally by those best placed to do so.

Challenges do however remain that continue to impact on individual lives and our communities. People are living longer with complex care needs increasing demands and costs on health and care services. With reducing resources, the focus must be on intervening early and helping to delay and, where possible, prevent people’s wellbeing deteriorating.

**Deprivation**

Knowsley is the 2nd most deprived local authority in England, based on the 2019 Indices of Deprivation (IoD). Updated figures are not expected until late 2025.

The Indices of Deprivation allow councils in England to benchmark against other areas. The measure is of relative deprivation, not affluence; not every person in a highly deprived area will themselves be deprived, and vice versa. The Indices ranks each Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) in England from most deprived to least deprived. Decile 1 being the most deprived and decile 10 the least deprived.

63% of LSOA in Knowsley were in the most deprived 20% of areas. No LSOA were in the least deprived 20%. 60.6% of LSOA in Knowsley were in the 20% most deprived based on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index.



**Population**

Knowsley population was estimated to be 159,243 in 2023 (Office for National Statistics mid-year 2023 population estimates).

Knowsley has 15 wards that are split between the townships of Huyton, Kirkby, Halewood, Prescot, Whiston and Cronton.

The 2022 estimated townships populations are:

* Huyton – 60,524 (39%)
* Kirkby – 43,991 (28.4%)
* Halewood – 20,716 (13.3%)
* Prescot, Whiston and Cronton – 29,747(19.3%)

The 2021 Census highlighted that Knowsley’s population had grown by almost 6% since 2011. This has almost reversed two decades of population decline in the last 10-years, back to levels seen in the 1990’s.

Growth was seen across the borough, particularly in wards with a greater proportion of families with children (Northwood, Page Moss, Stockbridge). This demonstrates that people are choosing to move into and stay in Knowsley.

Population growth since the 2011 census was mainly in areas with:

* Higher deprivation, driven in part by new housing
* Higher proportions of social housing,
* Higher proportions of younger children
* Higher proportions of lone parent families
* Lower proportions of over 65s

Two low growth areas in Knowsley (Whiston and Halewood South) currently have large, planned developments and this is likely to change their size and demography.

Population growth has been driven by two main things:

* People living longer, with the 65+ population increasing by 13.8% (3,186 people); and,
* More working age people (especially those in their 20’s and 30’s).

Knowsley’s population of teenagers/younger adults is slightly lower than other age groups in the borough. For example, 11 years and under 22,931, 12 years to 23 years 20,380, 24 years to 25 years 26,531 (2021 Census).

The number of households in Knowsley has increased by 7.7% to 66,073 households, an increase of 4,750 households since 2011.

**Child Population**

Knowsley’s 0-19 population was estimated to be 38,703 in 2023, around a quarter of Knowsley’s total population (24.3%). This is a similar proportion to the England average (23.1%).

The gender split of 0-19 year olds was slightly different to the overall Knowsley population with more males (51.3%) than females (48.7%). A mirror image of the total population of Knowsley, 47.8% male and 52.2% females.

The 0-19 population has remained stable between the 2011 and 2021 census, with no real change in size. This is due to a reduction in older children.

The 0 – 4 population grew by 33% (2,463) and 5 – 9 year olds by 14.2% (1,177). The population of 10 – 15 year olds saw a small reduction of (239 children) and 16 to 19 years olds a 18.9% reduction (1,532 people), compared to the 2011 census.

**Ethnic Diversity**

Knowsley does not have an ethnically diverse population, but this is changing slowly. In 2021 95.3% of Knowsley’s population were from a White ethnic group. Despite only 4.7% of Knowsley population being from an Asian, Black, Mixed or Other ethnic group, there has been significant growth in the ten years from 2011 to 2021. An increase of 81% (3,249 people).

The 0–19-year-old population is more ethnically diverse, than Knowsley’s population overall. 7% are from an Asian, Black, Mixed or Other ethnic group background.

Ethnic diversity is not evenly spread throughout the borough. In Prescot South ward 92% of residents are from white ethnic groups compared to 97% in Whitefield.

Residents from Asian, Black, Mixed ethnicities are younger and much more present in child & younger working age population.

**Children’s Health**

The latest highlights include:

* A significant increase in breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth, from 17.1% in 2021/22 to 31.3% in 2023/24. Knowsley’s rate is still significantly below the England average, but positive progress is being made.
* Obesity rates in Reception and Year 6 are significantly higher than the North West and England averages.
* Reception age children in Knowsley have the highest obesity prevalence in England, at 14.1% (North West 10.1% & England 9.2%).
* Knowsley children in Year 6 have the second highest prevalence in England, with almost a third living with obesity, 30.7% (North West 23.8% and England 22.7%).
* The rate of Under 18 Conceptions (for Knowsley is 16.9 (2022/23 quarter 2), compared to 16.9 North West and England 13.9.
* Childhood immunisations take up presents a significant challenge in Knowsley, which has not always been the case. For example, only a quarter (26.1%) of 2-3 year old’s received the flu vaccination (2023/24), compared to 44.4% across England. Only 76.5% of children in Knowsley had received two MMR doses by their 5th birthday, compared to an 84.5% England average.

**Education**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Performance Indicators for 2023/24*** | ***Knowsley*** | ***North West*** | ***England*** |
| Foundation Stage - % achieving a good level of development | 63.2% | 64.4% | 67.7% |
| Key Stage 1 – Reading expected standard | 71% | 74% | 75% |
| Key Stage 1 – Writing expected standard | 65% | 68% | 70% |
| Key Stage 1 – Mathematics expected standard | 72% | 75% | 76% |
| Year 1 phonics decoding | 76.5% | 78.9% | 80.3% |
| Key Stage 2 – reading, writing & mathematics – expected standard | 58.8% | 59% | 60.4% |
| Key Stage 4 – Average progress 8 score per pupil | -0.9 | -0.20 | -0.02 |
| Key Stage 4 – Average attainment 8 score per pupil | 33.2 | 44.6 | 46.5 |

**Vulnerable Children**

There is more than one child poverty measure but, all indicate that a significant proportion of children in Knowsley are experiencing poverty.

Knowsley has a high proportion of children under 16 living in relative low-income families, 27.8% (2022/23). This is higher than the average proportion in both the North West (26.7%) and England (19.8%).

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) shows the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. Income deprivation affecting children is concentrated in North Huyton and most of Kirkby, including Northwood.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation and its associated indexes were published in 2019 and are built from data before that time. Since 2019, the UK has been subject to the Covid-19 pandemic and a Cost of Living Crisis, which has left people in a worsened financial position.

Local Child Poverty Statistics, produced for The End Child Poverty Coalition, calculate that 40.5% of children in Knowsley are living in poverty. Unlike the previous measure, housing costs are now factored in (2022/23).

Knowsley had the third highest proportion of lone parent households with dependent children in England and Wales, 2021 (11.1%). This is important as almost one in two children in single parent families live in poverty, compared with one in four children in two-parent families.

**Knowsley has the fourth highest rate of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.**

Knowsley has a high rate of children educated in the Borough who are identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, with 22.5% of the school population with an Education, Health and Care Plan or receiving SEN Support. There are more than 1,400 children who live in Knowsley with an EHC Plan, and 1,530 children and young people are eligible for disability living allowance, at a higher rate than national eligibility.

**Free School Meals eligibility**

Knowsley has the highest rate of secondary school age children who are eligible for free school meals (48.9% of children educated in secondary schools), and one of the highest rates of primary school children eligible for free school meals (36.7%). Both secondary and primary rates of free school meals in Knowsley are more than double the average for England.

**Social Care**

Knowsley has a lower rate of children in need than statistical neighbours (526 per 10,000), and North West average (387 per 10,000). Rates of open cases have increased recently (346 as of March 2024), however, remain in line with national average (342).

Cared for children (CFC) numbers slightly increased in 2023/24. Current numbers are in line with North West (96 per 10,000), and significantly lower than statistical neighbours (136 per 10,000). As of March 2024, 336 children are currently looked after (97 per 10,000).

Children subject to a child protection plan increased to 198, 57 per 10,000, in March 2024, after a drop in numbers in 2022/23 (48 per 10,000). Rates of child protection plans are in line with North West (49 per 10,000), and below statistical neighbour (78 per 10,000). Child Protection is the primary route into CFC – of the cared for children cohort, 71% have been previously subject to a child protection plan.

**2 SCOPE**

This specification outlines the requirements for a service to support Children and Young people in Knowsley. The contract is commissioned by Knowsley Council. The contract duration is 01 February 2026 to 31 January 2030 with an option to extend for a further two, twelve-month periods until 31 January 2032.

The Service Provider/s will be responsible for delivering a range of youth service activities for young people aged 11-18 including young people aged up to 25 with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Activities must be for the improvement of young people’s well-being and will connect young people with their communities; champion them to have a voice; offer opportunities to build skills for life and work; and raise young people’s aspirations.

In addition, the Provider/s will work collaboratively with other groups and organisations to promote equality of access for disadvantaged and marginalised communities and individuals. The Provider/s will also ensure they seek additional external funding to maximise service delivery.

The successful Provider of Lot 1: Detached and Holistic Health & Wellbeing Support for Young People (THinK) will have included within the Contract, the maintenance of the Our Place building on Longview Drive, Huyton. The anticipated costs associated with the running of this building have also been included as part of the Contract’s budget. Please be aware that no equipment or assets currently in the building will transfer as part of the contract but may be agreed by way of separate negotiations with the incumbent Provider.

It is anticipated that TUPE will apply for both Lot 1: Detached and Holistic Health & Wellbeing Support for Young People (THinK) and Lot 2: Targeted 1:1 Service.

**3 BACKGROUND TO THE REQUIREMENT**

**3.1 National Context**

Nationally there are several key issues reported to have a significant impact on young people, including mental health concerns, financial instability and the cost of living, and the impact of social media and online safety. Additionally, issues like peer pressure, substance abuse, and the effects of the pandemic continue to affect many young people.

Through the 2024 Make Your Mark survey, children and young people reported their top 4 priorities as being:

1. **Mental Health Support:** Increased access to mental health services, reducing stigma, and providing better support in schools.
2. **Climate Change:** Urgent action on reducing carbon emissions, promoting renewable energy, and protecting natural habitats.
3. **Cost of Living**: Affordable housing, fair wages, and support for families struggling with rising costs.
4. **Education Reform:** Curriculum changes to include life skills, better funding for schools, and more support for teachers.

Over recent years, the national context for youth services in the UK has been characterized by a combination of renewed government investment and ongoing concerns about funding cuts and declining youth provision.  While the government has pledged to provide all young people with access to out-of-school activities and volunteering opportunities, significant cuts to funding over the past decade have led to closures of youth centre's and a reduction in professional youth work positions.

Renewed Government investment includes the:

* **National Youth Guarantee:** The government announced a National Youth Guarantee in 2022, aimed at providing every young person in England with regular out-of-school activities, adventures away from home, and volunteering opportunities.
* **Youth Investment Fund (YIF):** The YIF provides funding, primarily for capital projects, to rebuild and develop youth facilities in specific areas.
* **Reformed National Citizen Service:** A reformed National Citizen Service is part of the National Youth Guarantee.
* **#iwill Fund:** This fund supports social action opportunities for young people.
* **Other Programs:** Various other funding programs, including the Million Hours Fund, Adventures away from home fund, and the Building Futures Programme, also support youth work

More recently, the government has announced the National Youth Strategy which has been introduced as part of the UK government's commitment to better support young people. It seeks to put young people at the centre of decision-making processes affecting their lives. A key initiative of which is the National Youth Survey, aimed at gathering the opinions and needs of young people to help shape the new National Youth Strategy in the UK.

The National Youth Strategy is a crucial development aiming to tackle the unique challenges facing today's youth, focusing on empowerment, funding, and improved access to services. Through genuine engagement and co-production with young people, the government seeks to create a sustainable and responsive youth sector capable of meeting future needs.

**3.2 Local Context**

The data below, albeit stark, shows the real need for continued and effective youth services. These statistics should be considered by any prospective provider as there will be a desire for the provider to plan and evidence how they expect to narrow these gaps and improve the overall outcomes for children and young people across the Borough.

* More than one in four children in Knowsley are living in low-income households (28.7%), a 9.4% increase since 2015.
* Knowsley has the sixth highest rate of pupils eligible for free school meals, nationally (not accounting for the recently announced expansion of free school meals).
* GCSE results show a slight increase in Grade 4 achievements but a decrease in Grade 5 or above, with Knowsley’s attainment and progress scores remaining significantly lower than national.
* Knowsley schools have the highest level of absence in England, including persistent absence, with more than one quarter of pupils persistently absent.
* Knowsley has a higher rate of children with SEND than England, seeing the highest proportion of pupils with an EHC Plan nationally (7.6%) in 2024/25. The number of pupils with EHC Plans in Knowsley has increased by 30% over the last three years.
* Knowsley has the highest rates of childhood obesity in England.
* Mental health is also a challenge in Knowsley. In Knowsley, 3,075 children and young people (0 to 25) were supported by mental health services in 2023/24, equating to 6,364 per 100,000, which is over double the national average.
* Knowsley has a higher rate of children looked after than England, more than one in three children looked after are aged 10 to 15. The most common reason for children being looked after is because of abuse or neglect (63%), followed by family dysfunction (15%) and family in acute stress (13%).
* Knowsley’s Youth Offending rate (children cautioned or sentenced) has significantly declined over the last 10-years, and continues the downward trend with a lower youth reoffending rate than the Merseyside average of 37%.
* Girls accounted for 15% of children cautioned or sentence in Knowsley (where sex was known) in the year ending March 2024.
* In the year ending March 2024, drug offences accounted for 28% of all proven offences committed by children, followed closely by violence against a person at 25%.

**Knowsley 2030 Strategy**

Knowsley has developed the 2030 long-term partnership strategy for the Borough.  The people who live and work in Knowsley have contributed to the development of the strategy to ensure that it will meet the needs of the communities in which Knowsley serves.  Knowsley’s ambition is to respond to the following challenges, many of which can be addressed through the contributions from the Youth Services:

* Ensure that all Knowsley children get the best start in life and that everyone can achieve their own aspirations
* Ensure that residents of all ages have the right skills to take advantage of current and future opportunities
* Ensure that all Knowsley residents can maintain positive mental wellbeing throughout their lives
* Ensure that Knowsley residents can access the places and services that are important to them

Knowsley are committed to working “Better Together” which is a simple principal and based the ethos that more can be achieved if people work together.  This working principal recognises the fact that by sharing resources, skills, ideas and experience, people and organisation can make a bigger and more positive impact on everyone who lives, works and invests in Knowsley.

**Knowsley Council Plan 2025 - 2030**

The newly published Knowsley Council Plan 2025 – 2030 sets out the Council’s role in supporting residents to thrive and helping people overcome inequality. The Plan, developed with partners and building on Knowsley Better Together principles, supports those who need it most to ensure that they can live their best life. The three priorities, which will underpin work over the next five years are: -

* Delivering effective, high-quality services and support for residents, by getting the basics right, transforming services and improving organisational resilience;
* Encouraging growth that benefits everyone; and,
* Delivering targeted support to encourage fairness and opportunity for all, by prioritising early intervention and prevention, building stronger communities and tackling inequalities.

As part of the Council’s overriding priority to tackle inequalities, there is a specific action outlined in the Plan to improve Knowsley’s Youth Offer.

**Knowsley Children and Families Plan 2025 - 2028 (draft)**

A new Children and Families Plan is currently in development and is being co-produced with children and young people in Knowsley. The Plan is intended to compliment delivery of the new Council Plan and Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan, with its primary aim being to set out the strategic direction for delivery of universal and targeted children’s services.

Initial consultation with children, young people and families across the borough highlighted the “Youth Offer” as a key area of interest and importance. Feedback consistently indicates that access to high-quality, inclusive and engaging youth services is seen as an essential resource for children and young people growing up in Knowsley. In recognition of this, the Council is undertaking further, more in-depth consultation that will help shape the Youth Offer and wider Children and Families Plan.

**Knowsley Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025**

The new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025 sets out two priorities:

* Reducing Health Inequalities
* Mental Health, Wellbeing and Social Isolation

These priorities have been identified as crucial in tackling the significant long-lasting health and wellbeing challenges that exist in the borough, whilst also addressing the current and emerging impacts of COVID-19. Working together as partners across the local health and wellbeing system on these priorities will aid recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which is expected to have long lasting negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of Knowsley residents.

**[Knowsley Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/knowsleyinfo/files/send_and_inclusion_strategy_2022_0.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**

In Knowsley, our vision is for all children and young people to have the best start in life, thrive, aim high and achieve their potential. Naturally, we want the same for those children and young people who experience special educational needs and / or disabilities. The SEND and Inclusion Strategy sets out how we intend to achieve this by working in partnership with our children, young people and their families. A link to the strategy can be found [here](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/sites/knowsleyinfo/files/send_and_inclusion_strategy_2022_0.pdf).

**Knowsley** [**Cared for Children Strategy**](https://councillors.knowsley.gov.uk/documents/s80270/Appendix%20A%20-%20Cared%20for%20Children%20Strategy%202023-2026.pdf) **2023-2026 and Knowsley** [**Care Experienced People Strategy**](https://councillors.knowsley.gov.uk/documents/s80271/Appendix%20B%20-%20Care%20Experienced%20People%20Strategy%202023-2026.pdf) **2023-2026**

The Knowsley Cared for Children Strategy was developed concurrently with the Knowsley Care Experienced People Strategy. Significant engagement and consultation work took place with children, young people, and young adults during the development of the strategies, as well as with partner agencies and the Council workforce.  Following the consultation, the decision was taken to separate Knowsley’s strategies for Cared for Children and Care Experienced People into two individual strategies with their own sets of priorities. The focus of the Strategies now recognises how the needs of children and young people change throughout their journeys in care and when they leave care, and also what this means for the support which is provided to them.

**Knowsley Cared For Children Strategy**

* Priority One – Children are healthy and happy throughout childhood and into early adulthood;
* Priority Two – Children are provided with opportunities and support to achieve their aspirations; and,
* Priority Three – Children are in settled homes with the right support and care.

**Knowsley** [**Care Experienced People Strategy**](https://councillors.knowsley.gov.uk/documents/s80271/Appendix%20B%20-%20Care%20Experienced%20People%20Strategy%202023-2026.pdf)

* Priority One – Young people are healthy, happy, and equipped with the skills and knowledge to live independently;
* Priority Two – Young people have access to the right educational and training progression pathways to fulfil their aspirations;
* Priority Three – Young people are empowered and able to make positive connections and forge positive relationships; and,
* Priority Four – Young people are central to the decision making for their lives and futures.

Both strategies feed into the wider strategic landscape across the Knowsley Better Together Partnership.

**3.4 Youth Community Fund**

Following the re-commission of the Youth Service in 2022, the Council launched a Youth Community Fund. ​ The Youth Community Fund is an annual grant application programme which forms part of the overall Integrated Youth Service offer aimed at supporting third sector local organisations to offer new provision, bolster existing provision and provide an equal level of access to good quality activities focussed on the needs and aspirations of young people.​ The annual community and needs led grant programmes are aligned to the Knowsley Better Together principles, and is aimed at supporting new, start-up community-led projects to become, over time, self-sustaining, and to enhance the wider local offer.

To date, the Youth Community Fund has awarded over £0.220m to local groups and organisations to provide a range of youth activities across the Borough including: sports, computers, outdoor adventures, creative, health and wellbeing projects and many others.

**3a PRELIMINERY MARKET ENGAGEMENT**

Over the last few years, several consultation exercises have been conducted to capture residents and young peoples wishes, views and opinions on living in the Borough and what they would like to see improved to better meet their needs. Their views can be summarised below:

**The Knowsley Offer 2022:**

* The survey asked residents what they would improve in the area, 23% said “activities for children and young people”.
* The perception of young people is that there is “nothing for them to do”, with the rising cost of living parents are searching for free activities for their children.
* The accessibility of transport to spaces was important for young people to access provision.
* Young people feel the lingering effect of COVID-19 on their lives and mental health
* Crime and criminality is a big threat to young people. They also highlighted the prominence of online bullying.

**Serious Violence Reduction 2023:**

* There is a consensus that there is nothing for young people to do or go, and when there are activities to engage in, the types of activities are limited and often come with a cost.
* Parks and green spaces are perceived as being dangerous and so often young people result to playing on the streets.
* Young people engage in anti-social behaviour (ASB) for a variety of reasons including parents, homelife, friendship groups, peer pressure, mental health, money boredom or attempting to escape reality. Engaging in ASB is also seen as a rite of passage in some groups.

**Family Hubs 2023:**

* Primary aged children who enjoyed spending time in their homes, being with their family and friends. They also enjoyed using the green spaces, being able to play football and felt connected to the useful places.
* They highlighted that they are concerned about racism, and many feel unsafe from the crime that occurs around them.
* The children would like to see more green spaces, more things to do such as shops and entertainment and more organised activities.
* They would also like people to be kinder to improve the community and make the area safer.

**Prescot Town Centre 2023:**

* Younger people would prefer to see more leisure and evening entertainment within their town centre.
* Many respondents of all ages wanted to see the youth offer improved for leisure and entertainment.
* 68% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that more children's spaces were needed in Prescot and 71% agreed or strongly agreed that more community and education spaces were needed.

**Rights to Succeed Report on Youth Consultation 2023**

* Young people want a clean, safe, place suitable for them to be in.
* Young people want access to sports, arts, and cultural opportunities.
* Respondents wanted to see better parks and green spaces in their area
* There was a theme in the responses that there is little to do for young people, and that young people would like more youth clubs/ activities. However, 68% of young people surveyed stated that they have not attended a youth club in the last 6 months.

**Make Your Mark Survey (Knowsley) 2024**

The national findings from the survey are set out at section 3.1. The findings are broken down to local authority level, with 2,688 young people in Knowsley, aged 11-18, participating.

* The top priority for young people in Knowsley was identified as **'health and wellbeing'** with 632 votes, followed closely by the second most voted for issue, **'crime and safety'** with 511 votes. “**Culture, media and sport”** was the third most voted for issue, with 507 votes.

This insight was used as a starting point for a significant engagement exercise with children and young people across the borough, to develop the evidence base for the recommissioning of the youth offer and the development of the Children and Families Plan.

**Children and Families Plan 2024/25**

Findings from the Knowsley Young Voices: Your Ideas, Your Future survey highlighted:

* **The most common forms of engagement with youth services** were through **school holiday activities** (58%) and **regular youth groups** (55%) such as football, dance, cadets, or guides.
* **Awareness is the most reported barrier to accessing youth services,** with around **1 in 3 respondents** saying they don’t know what’s available or how to get involved.
* **Perceptions are also a significant barrier**, with **1 in 4 respondents** expressing concern about what others might think if they got involved in youth services.
* Responses suggest an average satisfaction score of 5.55 out of 10 in relation to youth services.
* Responses to *"What is most important to you about Youth Services?"* highlight that youth services are most valued as **social spaces**, where young people can meet with friends outside of school and where young people can make new friends.

**Professional Stakeholder survey**

A professional stakeholder survey was conducted with key stakeholders and frontline practitioners working with young people to gather feedback on our current Youth Offer. They survey was live from Monday 28th April 2025 until Monday 30th June 2025 and was distributed across a range of internal and external services such as Childrens Social Care teams, Schools and Youth Justice Service.

Analysis of the responses indicated inconsistent awareness of the youth offer across services suggesting a clear need for a coordinated communications strategy to enhance visibility and engagement. Of those professionals familiar with the service and who had made referrals for young people, outcomes and experiences were largely positive. While no negative feedback was received, respondents provided constructive recommendations for service enhancement such as the need for increased one to one support at the initial stages of intervention. One operational barrier identified was the inability of youth workers to provide transport for young people which may limit access for some service users.

**Soft Market Test**

In preparation for the recommissioning of the Youth Service, a soft market test was conducted to assess current market interest. Providers were able to submit an expression of interest from 13th June until 20th June. The aim was to gather insight on proposed service requirements and focused on understanding how the market could respond to a commissioned youth service that is inclusive, outcome focused and responsive to the needs of local young people.

A total of 5 providers with experience of delivering youth services responded. Analysis of their feedback indicated strong alignment with local priorities and a clear understanding of risks associated with delivering youth provision. Key themes included engaging vulnerable young people, recruiting and engaging youth workers and rising complexity of need such as mental health. Providers were asked to demonstrate what added value they could offer in the market. Responses received included trauma informed and inclusive practice, strong community links, youth led design and the reinvestment of surpluses into frontline delivery. They also demonstrated innovative approaches such as accredited learning pathways, extended monitoring and evidenced based models alongside a clear focus on social value, partnership working and the importance of co-production with young people in Knowsley.

**4 THE REQUIREMENTS**

Knowsley Council wish to commission a Provider/s who can deliver a range of youth services for young people aged 11-18 (25 with SEND) in Knowsley.

The aim is to procure a range of youth services for young people that supports the Council to fulfil its statutory duties under Section 507B of the Education act 1996, by providing, so far as reasonably practicable, secure access for young people to a sufficient quantity of ‘youth services,’ namely:

* a sufficient quantity of educational leisure-time activities and
* a sufficient quantity of recreational leisure-time activities

Both types of activities must be for the improvement of young people’s well-being and there must be sufficient facilities for such activities. Well-being, as defined in the act, relates to:

* physical and mental health and emotional well-being
* protection from harm and neglect
* education, training and recreation
* the contribution made by young people to society social and economic well-being

 These types of Youth Service activities aim to:

* connect young people with their communities, enabling them to develop a strong sense of belonging and contribute actively to society
* champion them to have a voice in decisions which affect their lives
* take place in local and fit-for-purpose environments in which they can socialise safely with their peers, spend time with people from different backgrounds and develop trusting relationships with adults
* offer opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities through which young people build skills for life and work and the capabilities they need to make a successful transition to adulthood
* raise young people’s aspirations in education, training, or employment, encouraging them to realise their potential help disadvantaged and vulnerable young people, as well as young people at risk of not realising their full potential, informing their decisions and thereby reducing risky, anti-social behaviours.

There will be 2 Lots in the procurement process and the Council would welcome bids for single or multiple ‘Lots’ from Providers. We would expect the successful Provider/s to work together to ensure seamless delivery is achieved.

**Lot 1 – Detached and Holistic Health & Wellbeing Support for Young People (THinK) (2A. Specification)**

The aim of this Service is to intervene in the lives of young people and offer a challenging programme of informal social education.  Youth workers on this service will be important influencers on young people's lives to stimulate discussion and involve them in a variety of activities.  This model of youth work practice will be targeted at young people on their territory (streets, parks, open and shared public spaces). Participation is voluntary and engagement is on the terms of the young people.

This service will also be responsible for delivering our ‘youth voice’ offer across the Borough, including the responsibility for the maintenance and delivery of our local Youth Cabinet and associated youth engagement and social action groups.

The service will also be responsible for delivering holistic health and wellbeing support provision for young people within the borough of Knowsley. This element of the service will be called the Teenage Health in Knowsley Service (THinK). The THinK service will be responsible for working with the Council and partner organisations to deliver public health interventions, information, advice and support to young people in Knowsley. The service must work with colleagues in public health and partner organisations across Knowsley to co-design this support. The service will act as a key delivery partner to ensure that key public health messages, interventions, information, advice and support are provided to young people in Knowsley in a consistent and seamless manner.   An important aspect of this co-ordination role will be developing ‘drop-down’ days in individual schools where young people have the opportunity to engage with a range of health services on site, and creating an agreed calendar of activity, developed in conjunction with individual schools and our main providers

The successful Provider will be required to support the priorities set out within the Knowsley Cared for Children Strategy 2023-2026 and Knowsley Care Experienced People Strategy 2023-2026. This will include providing a dedicated offer over a minimum of two days at Our Place, but with the ambition to grow an offer that will support and enhance opportunities for care experienced people to achieve their aspirations.

Maintenance of the Our Place building on Longview Drive, Huyton will also be included in this Contract.  The anticipated costs associated with the running of this building have been included as part of the Contract’s budget.  Please be aware that no equipment or assets currently in the building will transfer as part of the contract but may be agreed by way of separate negotiations with the incumbent Provider.

**Lot 2 – Targeted 1:1 Service (2B. Specification)**

The aim of this Service is to support young people in the Borough to ensure they reach their potential; overcome barriers they face and achieve the outcomes and goals they set themselves.  The Service will work in a variety of ways; including 1-1, small group work, coaching, etc., and will be responsible for the promotion of the Service to young people in the area.  The Service will also contribute to Boroughwide activities and events for young people.

**4a FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

The Provider/s for the Integrated Youth Service Offer will support the following outcome frameworks as appropriate to the service:

**The Framework of Outcomes for Young People 3.0** is the latest version developed by the Centre for Youth Impact with the sector on behalf of the Local Government Association. Key features include:

1. **Focus on Socio-emotional Skills -** emphasises the development of young people's socio-emotional skills
2. **Domains of Socio-emotional Skills** - such as: Self-awareness, Emotional regulation, Social skills, Motivation and agency, Resilience and coping
3. **Quality Practice and Evaluation -** guidance on what quality socio-emotional skill development (SESD) looks like in practice and Includes tools for evaluation and continuous quality improvement
4. **Evidence-informed and Practice-led** - built on a strong foundation of research and extensive consultation
5. **Alignment with National Priorities**

**National Youth Work Curriculum (National Youth Agency)**

This is a flexible and widely adopted framework that underpins high-quality youth work in England. It is structured around four key cornerstones:

* **Participation** – Empowering young people to lead and influence.
* **Equality** – Promoting inclusion, diversity, and social justice.
* **Education** – Supporting informal learning and personal development.
* **Empowerment** – Helping young people gain confidence and agency.

**Outcomes Framework – What Works for Children’s Social Care**

Although primarily focused on social care, this outcomes framework is increasingly being integrated into youth services. It emphasises:

* Cross-sector collaboration (health, education, youth services)
* Evidence-based outcomes
* Stakeholder engagement, including youth voices

**4a1 Service Outcomes**

The Provider/s will work to achieve positive outcomes and increased life chances for young people in Knowsley. The Service will maximise outcomes for young people as follows.

**Principal Service outcomes will include:**

* Improved engagement with hard-to-reach young people in Knowsley
* Young people who have low-level mental health and emotional wellbeing needs met in an appropriate and timely manner.
* Contribution to the overall improvement in the educational achievement and attainment of young people
* Young people have access to advice around money and finances - finance and money skills, debt, benefits and bursary advice
* Young people are supported to access relevant careers information and where to go to get further advice and support, working with schools, colleges and providers to ensure a cohesive approach to information, advice, guidance and support for young people
* Young people are supported to access relevant housing information and where to go to get further advice and support
* Collaborative working with our Community Education colleagues and learning providers to ensure that young people who have dropped out, or are at risk of dropping out of education, are provided with appropriate information, advice and guidance and are supported to re-engage and remain in learning
* Activities/programmes of work developed and delivered in line with key priorities, including child exploitation, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, safeguarding, healthy lifestyle, housing issues, self-esteem, health, enterprise, anger management, life skills, money and finance, literacy, drugs and alcohol and offending based behaviour
* Access to help and support for those involved in the Youth Justice system, including directly linking with the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and enabling a step-down avenue for YOS workers as part of their exit strategies
* Service Users are regularly engaged in helping to improve and shape service delivery
* Improvement in the identification of children and young people suffering or at risk of suffering sexual or criminal exploitation (in collaboration with other agencies/services working with vulnerable children)
* Supported pathways to early tier 3 and tier 4 services where necessary

Additional service outcomes are provided for within the appropriate Lot. (See 2A. Specification and 2B. Specification).

**4a2 Individual outcomes**

The Service will use a range of appropriate outcome measures relevant to young people to evaluate the impact of the Service for individuals and groups of young people.  The Provider/s will be expected to provide visual evidence of the impact that the Service is having at regular intervals during the life of the Contract.

**4b PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS**

4b1 The Contractor’s performance and provision of the service shall be monitored by the Authorised Officer.

4b2 The Performance Framework, including Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators, will be agreed between the chosen provider and the council, and will be monitored by the council throughout this Contract. This will include:

* **Contract Monitoring Meetings and Annual Review** - The purpose of the monitoring meeting is to discuss ongoing performance in relation to the Service specification.  At these meetings, Providers should be prepared to answer questions and provide evidence of how the Service standards and outcomes and individual outcomes have been met.  The Service Provider will be required to attend Contract Monitoring Meetings on at least a quarterly basis.  The Provider will also be expected to produce an annual report detailing the overall performance for the year.  This should include, as examples, any cost benefit, gaps identified and / or addressed and any improvements or considerations for future delivery.
* **Quality Review visits** – Quality Review visits are an important part of the monitoring process and will be arranged on an ad hoc basis between the Council and Provider/s where practicable.  The main focus of the visit is to ensure that our Providers comply with all aspects of safeguarding and that all appropriate policies and procedures are in place and adhered to.  A secondary aim of the visit is to observe practice, activities and relationships between the workforce and families receiving support, where appropriate.  The Council may use this as an opportunity to engage and consult with children, young people, their families and the workforce.  Quality Review visits will also provide an opportunity to assess whether families feel that the Service is delivering safely, effectively and according to need.
* **Reports** - At least two weeks in advance of Contract meetings, the Service Provider will be required to send to Commissioners quantitative and qualitative data / information in the form of pre-determined Excel spreadsheets and management reports detailing the information listed in sections 4b5 for the period and the year to date.  Case studies on a select number of individuals accessing the Service will also be required.
* **Consultation** - Providers will be expected to include consultation with children and young people, families, staff and volunteers when monitoring and evaluating the service provided.  This may include the use of child friendly questionnaires, consultation activities, informal feedback, and involvement in Service planning and reviews.  The Provider/s will collate and share evidence of feedback from families with the Local Authority.

4b3 In addition to the Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators, monitoring processes may be put in place in relation to social, environmental and other relevant issues.

4b4 The Authorised Officer will work with the Contractor to achieve continuous improvement in the Contractor's performance throughout the duration of the Contract.

4b5 Some examples of performance measures but not limited to:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance Measure** | **Target** | **How performance will be measures** |
| **General** |
| % of young people contacted within 5 working days of referral  | 100% | Performance Management Framework |
| % of young people in service within 6 weeks of referral | 100% | Performance Management Framework |
| **Lot 1 – Detached and Holistic Health & Wellbeing Support for Young People (THinK)** |
| The number of detached youth hours delivered per quarter | XXX hours per quarter; XXXX per annum | Performance Management Framework |
| The number of contacts with young people made by the detached team per quarter | XXX per quarter; XXXX per annum | Performance Management Framework |
| Number of young people actively engaged in planned interventions per quarter  | XXX per quarter; XXXX per annum | Performance Management Framework |
| **Lot 2 – Targeted 1:1 Service** |
| Number of young people receiving Targeted 1:1 service during the quarter | XXX per quarter; XXXX per annum | Performance Management Framework |
| % of young people who have made progress toward their primary outcomes/ goals | 80% | Performance Management Framework |
| % of young people who have improved their physical and emotional health and wellbeing | 80% | Performance Management Framework |

As the Service is established the Service Provider/s will be expected to work with the Commissioners to refine the content and format of performance and quality information. This activity will be beneficial to all partners and will be undertaken to best evidence outcomes and delivery:

**5 OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

**5.1 Confidentiality**

The Service Provider/s will be required to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures regarding confidentiality are in place and that Staff are trained appropriately regarding their responsibilities.  These policies shall apply equally to employed Staff and Volunteers.

**5.2 Information Governance and UK GDPR**

The Service Provider/s will need to obtain certain information about individual Service Users for the purpose of addressing need and ensuring the Service is providing according to that need.  The Service Provider must ensure that:

* Service Users are provided with adequate information and support including being told why their information is being collected (privacy notice)
* The views of Service Users are known before making decisions which affect them, including gaining consent where appropriate
* Service Users are provided with choice and that they are able to participate in the decision-making processes
* The civil rights of Service Users are safeguarded and respected by others and that their legal rights and entitlements are observed
* Access and signposting to other services where appropriate and necessary is facilitated
* Service Users’ information is dealt with appropriately and securely by adequately trained staff

It is expected that the Service Provider/s will record information about Service Users which includes both personal and sensitive information.  Therefore, the Service Provider/s must comply with all statutory legislation and legal obligations covering information governance, especially the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and rights of confidentiality.  The use of secure, encrypted email software will be required on this Contract to facilitate the transfer of personal sensitive information between the Local Authority and the Service Provider.

It is a requirement of the Service Provider/s to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to comply with the UK GDPR.  Although the Authority envisages that both parties will be acting as independent controllers of personal data, as the Commissioner of the service it is expected that service providers will allow the Authority to audit the service providers in relation to their compliance with the UK GDPR.

The Service Provider/s will be required to assist the Authority with the completion of the Date Processing Schedule contained within the contract before any personal information is provided as part of any Contract.  The schedule includes the requirement for the Service Provider to delete or return all personal data pertaining to the Contract at the end of the Contract term.   Additionally, it is a requirement of the Service Provider/s to complete the Cloud Security Form included within the tender pack if they are processing personal data under this contract using cloud based software or systems.

**5.3 Safeguarding**

Knowsley Safeguarding policies and procedures for adults and children must be in place for the Service and there must also be an appropriate training plan to ensure all members of staff and any volunteers have sufficient awareness of how to respond to these incidents.

Knowsley’s Safeguarding policies and procedures for adults can be found here:

[Care and Support for Adults in Knowsley | Knowsley Safeguarding Adults Board](https://knowsleysafeguardingadultsboard.co.uk/)

The [Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership](https://www.knowsleyscp.org.uk/) web site provides more information about your responsibilities and how to report concerns.

The Provider must co-operate with any Safeguarding Enquiry being conducted by the Council under Section 42 of the Care Act (2014) and under the provisions of the Care Act Statutory Guidance in relation to any service user who is currently, or has previously been, in receipt of a service under this contract.  The Provider must respond to any reasonable request for information from the Council’s authorised officers leading the Safeguarding Enquiry, in a timely manner, such as not to unreasonably delay progression of the safeguarding enquiry.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2) guidance sets out the framework for inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

If you are a professional or a Volunteer who comes into contact with children as part of your work, you have a statutory duty to safeguard children and report any allegations or concerns about their welfare or safety.  Similarly, if you have identified a child or young person who could benefit from a service or needs help and support, you have a responsibility to pass this information on to the relevant agency.

**5.4 Complaints, Comments and Compliments**

Service User feedback about the Service must be actively encouraged, for example by the use of Service User satisfaction surveys.  The Service must be able to demonstrate how feedback and evaluation of Service User experience is used to inform the development of the Service.

The Service Provider/s must have a policy and set of procedures governing its management of complaints from Service Users.  The complaints policy must be available to Service Users and must be advertised so that individuals accessing the Service understand how to complain and how their complaint will be dealt with.

A record of all complaints made, including any action undertaken by the Service Provider/s as a result of the complaint and any lessons learned or improvements to the Service as a result, must be maintained.  This must be provided as part of the quarterly monitoring information required by Commissioners

**5.5 Other Policies**

The Service Provider/s shall ensure that robust policies and procedures, with accompanying training for relevant Staff are in place to ensure the effective performance of the Service, including, **but not limited to**:

* Safer Recruitment
* Whistle blowing
* File retention
* Confidential waste
* Equality and Diversity
* Equal Opportunities
* Recruitment and Retention
* Training and Staff Development
* Safeguarding
* Health and Safety
* Confidentiality
* Information Sharing
* Information Management
* Referral Process
* Lone Working Policy
* Complaints / Compliance
* Disciplinary / Grievance

The Service Provider/s must ensure that it complies with any other statutory obligations.

The Service Provider/s shall maintain a business continuity plan covering, for example, telephone disruption, computer failure, staff illness or pandemic.

The Service Provider/s shall meet all current legal requirements in respect of health and safety, sex discrimination, race relations, equal opportunities and disability discrimination, employment rights, human rights, data protection and freedom of information.

**6 TIMESCALES AND MILESTONES**

**6.1 Contract duration**

The contract will commence on 01 February 2026. The initial contract period will end on 31 January 2030, with an option to extend the contract for two further twelve-month periods. The latest date that the contract will end will therefore be 31 January 2032.

**6.2 Transition Arrangements**

It is fundamentally important that the Service Provider has a clear and robust exit strategy in place from early delivery.  This exit strategy must be clear on the roles and responsibilities for the Service Provider and its Staff and any expectation the Service Provider has of the Local Authority.  This exit strategy must be shared with Commissioners no later than the end of Quarter 1 of year one and kept up to date according to the progress of the Service during the life of the Contract.

The Service Provider/s will work with the Authority and any Provider/s as may be required to ensure a seamless continuation of support to Service Users transferring into the Service or out of the Service after re-tender from the current Contract.  The Service Provider/s will ensure that there is no break in support and that all Service Users support needs are met from the start of and during the life of the Contract.

The Service Provider/s will work in a spirit of co-operation with all parties to minimise disruption to Service Users and in doing so the Service Provider/s will ensure that it:

* promptly updates all needs and risk assessments for those Service Users affected
* provides full information to Service Users during the transition relevant to their specific circumstances
* has dedicated senior and operational management input leading up to and during the transition
* has appropriate staffing in place from the commencement of the Contract
* keeps the Authority regularly and fully informed of any issues that may arise

In addition, during the transition period, the Service Provider/s will work closely with the Authority and any future Provider to establish the Service in relation to:

* the ‘handover’ of any buildings
* the transfer of Service User data
* establishing onsite Information Technology and telephony within required timescales
* agreeing an approach to assets such as furniture and utilities
* any other actions which are required to establish a functioning accommodation service by Contract commencement

**6.3 Payments, invoicing and billing**

Knowsley Council has an intended funding envelope of £0.780m per annum for this service:

* Lot 1: Detached and Holistic Health & Wellbeing Support for Young People (THinK) = £0.550m
* Lot 2: Targeted 1:1 Service = £0.230m

Bids up to this maximum value per Lot are invited from Providers and the Council would welcome bids for single or multiple ‘Lots’ from Providers.

The Provider/s will invoice the Knowsley Council and invoices will be paid monthly and in arrears.

**7 CONTRACT / SERVICE MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

7.1 The council shall appoint a Contract Manager to act generally in the name of the council for the purposes of this contract (the "Authorised Officer"). The council shall give notice in writing to the Contractor of the identity of any person so appointed and of the replacement of any such person.

7.2 Monitoring will focus on the key aspects of the contract including overall performance, quality, price, delivery, customer service, and social value commitments.

7.3 The Contractor shall be responsible for monitoring its performance under the Contract and provide the Council with full particulars of any aspects of its performance which fail to meet the requirements of the Contract, unless otherwise notified in writing by the Council.

7.4 The council reserves the right, for the duration of the contract, to monitor compliance with information submitted in the Quotation / Tender including as part of the initial screening questions in response to Company Information questions.

7.5 The Contractor will be required to submit management and monitoring information in a mutually agreed format to be agreed at the commencement of the Contract.

7.6 From time to time the Contractor (and/or any subcontractors) may be requested to attend specially arranged meetings at any of premises of the Customers using this Contract.

7.7 The Contractor may, taking into account all requirements arising from the Contract, issue appropriate operating and procedural instructions in writing to all staff engaged in the Contract. These must be approved and copies provided to the council prior to issue.

7.8 The Contractor shall provide copies to the council of any instructions, which withdraw, notify or supplement any instructions prior to issue to the individual Customer’s instructions on who is to receive said copies.

7.9 The Contractor shall maintain such records in respect of the Contract as the council may reasonably require and shall on request produce them for inspections.

7.10 The Contractor shall make available such records for the use of the council when required. They shall not be released, published or disposed of without the prior written consent of the council.

7.11 The Contractor shall as required by the council’s representative make written submission or oral presentations of the work done under the Contract in aid of any reviews or of the conduct of business at the locations.

7.12 **Liaison meetings**

Liaison meetings between the council and the Contractor shall be held Quarterly or as required by the council or the Contractor. The council will make the necessary arrangements for these meetings, which will be held at premises determined by the council. A record of all meetings shall be made by the Contractor and supplied to and approved by the council.

7.13 The Contractor shall arrange for the attendance of such members of its staff and those of its Subcontractors or agents who may be required by the council to attend as necessary.

7.14 **APPROACHING CONTRACT EXPIRY**

 Prior to expiry of the initial term of the Contract, the council will notify the Contractor if it wishes to extend the Contract based on price, quality and performance.

7.15 To assist any subsequent procurement exercise, the contractor must provide management information data to the lead authority when requested and in a timely manner. Such management information must be provided in the requested format.

**8 SKILLS AND EXPERTISE REQUIRED**

Providers must demonstrate how they will ensure a competent, trained and supported workforce capable of delivering high-quality youth provision in line with national standards.

**8.1 Professional Standards and Qualifications**

The Provider/s must ensure that youth work is delivered by appropriately trained and skilled staff and volunteers. All practitioners working directly with young people must have achieved, or be working towards a Level 2 or 3 qualification or diploma in youth work practice, that enables them to;

* Understand the purpose, role and values of youth work.
* Safeguard young people and adults at risk within a youth work context.
* Understand adolescent development and how youth work supports this.
* Plan and deliver structured, safe and engaging activities for young people.

Although we understand that some voluntary sector groups may not have access to professionally qualified youth workers, the Provider/s must ensure that youth support workers and volunteers are supported and supervised by a JNC-qualified professional youth worker as a minimum.

Providers are encouraged to build connections with Regional Youth Work Units or other local infrastructure bodies to access professional supervision, peer support and continuous professional development.

**8.2 Knowledge and Experience**

We anticipate a mixture of roles depending upon the model of delivery across this Contract and the level at which Staff will be working.  However, the minimum requirements for all Staff on this Contract are:

* Extensive knowledge and experience of working with young people and families
* Extensive knowledge and experience of working with vulnerable and at-risk young people
* Experience of a delivering low-level mental and emotional wellbeing support to young people
* Experience of working with children and young people with behaviour that challenges
* An ability to work flexibly to address a range of needs
* A good understanding of the services available in Knowsley that young people can access to further support their needs and aspirations
* Experience of working with children and young people with SEND

Further to this, there should be sufficient Staff that can fulfil the following requirements:

* Experience of a range of assessments that gauge and monitor a child’s needs and progress against wellbeing outcomes
* Experience and / or knowledge of Domestic Abuse and its impact on young people
* Experience and / or knowledge of Child Exploitation, the risks associated and its impact on young people
* Experience of Anti-social behaviour in terms of its risk and associated pathways to serious and organised crime along the criminal continuum
* Experience of working with and supporting children and young people who present with emotional and mental health needs relating to their sexuality or gender identity.

**8.3 Minimum Training Requirements**

The Provider/s must ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in the delivery of the service have completed training in the following core areas prior to commencing delivery:

* Safeguarding (children and vulnerable adults)
* Risk assessment and management
* Emergency first aid
* Leading and managing youth activities
* Building relationships with young people
* Confidentiality, data protection, and secure information handling
* Equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion

Evidence of completed training and qualifications must be retained and made available to the Commissioner on request.

**8.4 Ongoing Training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

The Provider/s must have a clear and structured approach to staff and volunteer development. This includes ensuring access to;

* Accredited qualifications and training programmes
* Internal or external CPD opportunities (e.g. local training events or online learning)
* Reflective practice, supervision, and peer learning
* Relevant youth work networks and communities of practice

The Provider/s is required to maintain up-to-date training records for all staff and volunteers and must outline how ongoing training needs will be assessed, reviewed and met throughout the contract term.

**8.5 Recruitment**

The Provider/s are expected to evidence that that they have, and follow, robust recruitment policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff and volunteers.

All staff and volunteers who work for the Provider/s must have an appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and will not commence employment until the checks have been completed.

The Provider/s will always follow up references for new recruits and will not commence employment until they are satisfied that references are satisfactory.

Ideally, where possible you should recruit staff and volunteers that have an understanding or relevant experience of the communities within Knowsley.

The Provider/s will ensure that staff are in place to meet the requirements set out in this service specification. During periods of staff absence such as sickness and holidays, the Provider/s will need to ensure that it is not adversely affected and arrangements for cover will enable the service to continue in line with this specification. Knowsley Council will be notified immediately of any closures and/or reduction of service delivery.

**9 SOCIAL VALUE**

Knowsley Council’s definition of social value is:

*“Outcomes, measures and activity that will create strong and well-connected public, private and social sectors that enable communities to be more resilient”.*

The council’s social value outcomes and measures have been developed to support the vision, priorities, and actions of the Council’s corporate plan to make Knowsley the “Borough of Choice”.

The contracted provider will be encouraged to use the [Social Value Portal](https://socialvalueportal.com/) throughout the contract period to report on the delivery of outcomes in accordance with the National TOMs framework. The Provider needs to be able to demonstrate delivery of these through agreed performance measures and they will be included in the performance framework on award of the contract and monitored as part of the agenda during the Contract Review Meetings (CRM).   Quarterly performance management meetings will continue to review the level of social value activity across the contract taking into consideration wider social, economic, and environmental benefits.