

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	The Student Voice – Contextual Safeguarding tool
Decision Maker:	Trevor Cook, Assistant Director, Educational Services
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Oscar Ford
ELT Lead:	Tara Geere, Director of Starting Well (Statutory Director for Children’s Services)
Report Author and contact details:	Trevor Cook, 01708 431250, trevor.cook@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	There is no equivalent product available on the market, which is highly specialist. There are other safeguarding concerns reporting tools from other organisations, however only The Student Voice includes wider contextual safeguarding factors to be considered and enable reporting at a Local Authority level. Furthermore, the Local Authority have been offered an opportunity to have a number of Havering schools included in a pilot at a heavily discounted rate.
Financial summary:	<p>The total cost of the contract with The Student Voice is £80,000 (£40,000 per year) excluding VAT.</p> <p>It will be funded from the HSIS Safeguarding General Fund budget, which is ring-fenced to supporting schools safeguarding functions and activities.</p> <p>A waiver to the usual Contract Procedure Rules has been agreed due to the specialist nature of the service.</p>

Non-key Executive Decision

Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee:	People OSC
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	The decision will be exempt from call in as it is a Non Key Decision

Non-key Executive Decision

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Things that matter for residents X

~~Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy~~

~~Resources - A well run Council that delivers for People and Place.~~

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

This report seeks approval from the Assistant Director of Educational Services to directly award a contract with a maximum value of £80,000 to Student Safeguarding Limited (“SSL”) t/a The Student Voice, for the participation of local schools in a pilot contextual safeguarding programme. The contract is expected to commence on 1st September 2025 and be completed by 31st August 2027.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Havering Council Constitution

Part 3: Responsibility for functions

Section: Functions delegated to officers

Scheme 3.3.3 Powers common to all Strategic Directors

4. Contracts

4.2 To award all contracts with a total contract value of below £500,000 other than contracts covered by Contract Procedure Rule 16.3. This delegation shall include the ability to extend or vary a contract up to and including a value of £1,000,000 (provided that the extension is in line with the existing contractual provisions.)

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Currently, most electronic safeguarding tools focus on listening to adults, but research (Carlene Firmin (2017)) shows that students may not readily share such information with adults.

Designed to remove the fear and stigma attached to reporting issues, The Student Voice platform is an interactive and child-friendly contextual safeguarding reporting tool for young people that encompasses all aspects of their wellbeing.

Firstly, the tool seeks to overcome barriers to reporting so that all young voices can be heard.

Secondly, it empowers young people to be courageous and responsible by giving them the tools to advocate for their community and participate in keeping their community safe.

Lastly, it seeks to understand young people’s experiences, so schools and local safeguarding partners can expand their safeguarding culture and prevent future harm in their communities.

Designed to remove the fear and stigma attached to reporting issues, the platform is an interactive and child-friendly reporting tool that utilises interactive maps of all the contexts that young people spend time in, so schools and safeguarding partners can improve these spaces with more targeted and effective interventions, and ultimately prevent future harm.

Non-key Executive Decision

The Student Voice can go further than school level, sharing anonymised community data to a Local Authority dashboard, promoting the sharing of safeguarding information among essential services. This multiplies the shared protective capacities of schools, police, health, and social services through effectively gathering and sharing empirical safeguarding hotspot data, about the location, times of day where incidents occur, and age or year groups of young people experiencing them. This allows services to not only address current concerns but to also implement and track interventions intended to prevent future harm.

It aims to identify, assess, and intervene with the social conditions in which harm is taking place. Whether a young person travels on the bus with peers, sees issues happening in the local park, or has a quiet and safe space they prefer in school, they can use The Student Voice contextual safeguarding tool to rank how safe they feel in the spaces they spend time in and report their experiences in these contexts.

The Student Voice platform enables schools and the Local Authority to review contextual safeguarding data to develop hotspot mapping. It also collects contextual data that encompasses the whole student experience to inform interventions. By combining anonymous with confidential reporting, this will lead to better outcomes and reduce barriers to reporting.

The tool is flexible as the Dedicated Safeguarding Lead decides monitoring times, and receives a live data feed of proactive information. There is also a built in feedback tool which enhance school culture and cycle of trust with students.

A pilot programme was run during 2024/25, and through the pilot, The Student Voice contextual safeguarding tool provided:

- children and the young people of Havering Borough with the opportunity to share information about their life experiences in school, in their community, at home and online.
- functionality that will allow service providers in the areas of health, social care, police and education to access and analyse the information shared.
- functionality for service providers to be able to assess and understand the effectiveness of services provided to young people and children in the London Borough of Havering.
- functionality for service providers to be able to assess, understand and respond to issues that may be impacting the safeguarding, health and wellbeing of young people and children in the London Borough of Havering.

Through listening to authentic student voices and seeking to understand the everyday life experiences of young people, the tool aims to:

- know our communities are safe.
- know the safeguarding issues our young people really face.
- know our safeguarding interventions are effective.
- provide authentic opportunities for our young people to engage and be positive and active members of their communities.

Following the pilot programme, an evaluation has been conducted to determine the success of the tool. Whilst successful, schools commented that the short term nature of the pilot programme discouraged full participation and greater engagement. It is therefore proposed that a two year pilot programme is commenced, which will enable the participating schools to continue their engagement, whilst also expanding the tool to more schools across the borough. Following this pilot, schools will be able to continue to subscribe to The Student Voice contextual safeguarding tool at the discounted price, ensuring best value for the schools in Havering.

A waiver from competition has been agreed by the Lead Cabinet Member, Cllr Ford for this purchase.

Non-key Executive Decision

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OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

There is no equivalent product available on the market as the provider is highly specialist and offered an opportunity for the Council to participate in a pilot.

Schools already use a child protection and safeguarding monitoring and reporting tools, and the market leaders are CPOMS and MyConcern. However, these only offer one dimensional reporting, centred around bullying or one aspect of the student experience, are adult led, and do not offer the wider contextual reporting functionality.

The Local Authority also used MOMO, an app which enable young people to communicate their views to a trusted practitioner in their care. However, this app is only available to children with a social worker, and therefore does not provide the full range of coverage, or enable wider contextual safeguarding concerns to be shared and reported.

Other safeguarding tools also offer limited information, with little or no contextual information to improve spaces and places young people spend time in.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

No formal consultation has been conducted, but engagement occurred with a number of local schools to confirm interest and participation in the pilot.

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Trevor Cook

Designation: Assistant Director for Education

Signature:



Date: 24/07/25

Non-key Executive Decision

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council must provide or arrange for the provision of services, facilities or resources, or take other steps, which it considers will contribute towards preventing or delaying the development by adults in its area of needs for care and support; contribute towards preventing or delaying the development by carers in its area of needs for support; reduce the needs for care and support of adults in its area and reduce the needs for support of carers in its area in accordance with Section 2 of the Care Act 2014. The Council is making a decision to make a contract for the provision of student safeguarding for that purpose.

The Council has the power to procure and award a contract for these services under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which allows the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions or through its general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual can do, subject to certain constraints. None of the constraints apply to this decision.

The overall maximum contract value is £80,000 which is below the applicable public procurement threshold for services contracts of £214,904 stipulated in the Procurement Act 2023 (PA). Therefore, the contract is not subject to the full PA regime.

For the reasons set out above, the Council may award the contract.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The total cost of the contract with The Student Voice is a maximum of £80,000 excluding VAT – £40,000 per year for a two year contract.

This is a time-limited purchase with no commitment to renew, although this will be considered following evaluation of the product's impact in terms of outcomes and cost.

The cost of this subscription allowing the schools to participate in the programme is met through the HSIS Safeguarding General Fund budget, which is ring-fenced to support schools safeguarding functions and activities.

The Local Authority has negotiated a preferential rate due to the collective purchasing across a number of schools. The Student Voice has applied their maximum discount, and the individual costs and savings per school are shown below;

<i>Type of school</i>	<i>Discounted rate</i>	<i>Non-discounted rate</i>	<i>Saving</i>
Primary schools	£882	£980	£98
Secondary schools	£2,246	£2,995	£749

Currently, 23 primary schools and 5 secondary school have committed to joining the programme. This is a total cost of £33,016 (£20,286 primary and £11,230 secondary), including a charge of £1,500 for the Local Authority to access a centralised dashboard. It is expected that other schools may wish to join the programme, so a maximum budget of £40,000 per year has been identified. This will allow a further 7 primary schools, or 3

Non-key Executive Decision

secondary school to join the programme, or a combination thereof. Any schools that wish to join the programme after the maximum budget of £40 000 has been met will be charged the discounted rate.

A waiver to the usual Contract Procedure Rules has been agreed due to the specialist nature of the service.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

There are no further human resources implications or risks from this decision.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- I. the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- II. the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- III. Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'protected characteristics' are: age, gender, race and disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council demonstrates its commitment to the Equality Act in its decision-making processes, the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and employment practices concerning its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing of all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no environmental and climate change inclusion implications or risks from this decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

None

Non-key Executive Decision

Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

~~Proposal NOT agreed because~~

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Trevor Cook

~~Cabinet Portfolio held:~~

~~CMT Member title:~~

Head of Service title: AD Education Services

~~Other manager title:~~

Date: 3rd October 2025

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Committee Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____