

Notice of Non-Key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Permission to Direct Award the Care Providers Voice Service & Flourish Learning Service
Decision Maker:	Barbara Nicholls, Strategic Director of People
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gillian Ford, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care Services
ELT Lead:	Barbara Nicholls, Strategic Director of People
Report Author and contact details:	Laura Wheatley, Portfolio Manager Live Well & Age Well laura.wheatley@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	The Council has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to shape the social care market. This includes the responsibility to ensure services are of good quality, operate with a valued and well trained workforce and are appropriately resourced.
Financial summary:	The Care Providers Voice Service & Flourish Learning Service is commissioned at a cost of £161,250.00 the 3-year contract duration 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2029.
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee:	People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	The decision will be exempt from call in as it is a Non key Decision

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

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well **X**

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

To agree to directly award a contract to Care Providers Voice (CPV) for the provision of Care Providers Voice Service & Flourish Learning Service at a cost of £161,250.00 for the 3-year contract duration 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2029.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

Scheme 3.3.3 - Powers common to all Strategic Directors

1. General

1.1 To take any steps, and take any decisions, necessary for the proper management and administration of their allocated directorate, in accordance with applicable Council policies and procedures.

4. Contracts

4.2. To award all contracts with a total contract value of below £1,000,000 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

This report is seeking approval from, the Strategic Director of People to directly award a contract to Care Providers Voice (CPV) for the provision of Care Providers Voice Service & Flourish Learning Service at a cost of £167,250.00 for the 3-year contract duration 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2029.

Why a Direct Award

This request seeks approval to waive standard procurement regulations and proceed with a direct award for this contract. The total contract value is below the threshold for Light Touch contracts under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA 2023). As such, the contract is not subject to the full implications of the PA 2023. The justification for a direct award is based on the highly specialised nature of the work, for which only CPV has the necessary expertise and capacity to deliver the required outcomes. Furthermore, this provider already collaborates with Havering and other NEL boroughs, ensuring continuity and leveraging their existing working relationships and understanding of local requirements. For these reasons, we are waiving CPR rules.

Prior to reaching this decision, a soft market testing exercise was undertaken to assess the availability of alternative providers capable of delivering the full scope of the Care Providers Voice Service. The outcome confirmed that no other organisation possesses the requisite combination of specialist knowledge, cross-borough credibility, and established networks needed to fulfil the service requirements. While several providers demonstrated experience in aspects of workforce support or stakeholder engagement, none were able to offer the comprehensive, system-wide approach required for coordinated market intelligence, strategic provider engagement across North East London. CPV's proven track record, existing

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relationships, and ability to deliver at pace make them the only viable provider for this contract, ensuring both continuity and the successful delivery of outcomes critical to the region's stability and development.

A waiver was delivered and agreed at GRG panel on the 12th March 2026.

Current service delivery

The Care Providers' Voice (CPV) initiative aims to enhance the collaboration between care providers and local authorities across North East London (NEL). The initiative seeks to ensure clarity, consistency, and genuine partnership in the delivery of care services, addressing the variable engagement currently experienced across boroughs.

CPV is a well-established organisation in Havering, with a proven track record of supporting the care sector in Havering and across North East London (NEL) through a robust network of local partners. CPV's provider-led alliance ensures strong relationships with local care providers, enabling workforce development, and access to free training resources for candidates.

The following table provides an overview of Care Providers Voice (CPV) membership across the North East London boroughs, illustrating the breadth of provider engagement in the region. It highlights both the number of CQC registered providers and the proportion actively participating in CPV, demonstrating the organisation's strong presence and reach across the care sector.

CPV Membership

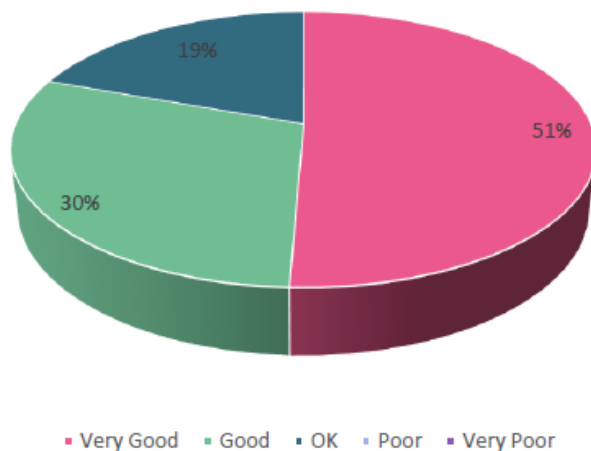
Borough	CPV members that are CQC registered	Total CQC-registered care providers per borough*	CPV membership (% of CQC-registered care providers)	CPV members that are not CQC registered
Barking & Dagenham	148	180	82%	62
Hackney	45	68	66%	10
Havering	110	181	61%	41
Newham	103	125	82%	47
Redbridge	170	202	84%	64
Tower Hamlets	41	73	56%	11
Waltham Forest	68	107	64%	26
Funded NEL Boroughs - Total	685	936	73%	261

Performance to Date

The CPV Provider Perception Report offers a comprehensive overview of how Care Providers' Voice (CPV) is perceived and valued by its stakeholders. The report consolidates insights from five different surveys conducted between 2023 and 2026, providing a well-rounded picture of provider experiences across multiple engagement points. The findings highlight that CPV is highly regarded for its role in representing the views of care providers to local authorities and the wider health system. Providers consistently report positive experiences with CPV, with no negative ratings recorded. The report underscores the high confidence in CPV's services, noting that events and forums are particularly valued for their practicality and usefulness. Trusted relationships with providers are a key strength, with CPV being seen as an approachable and credible partner.

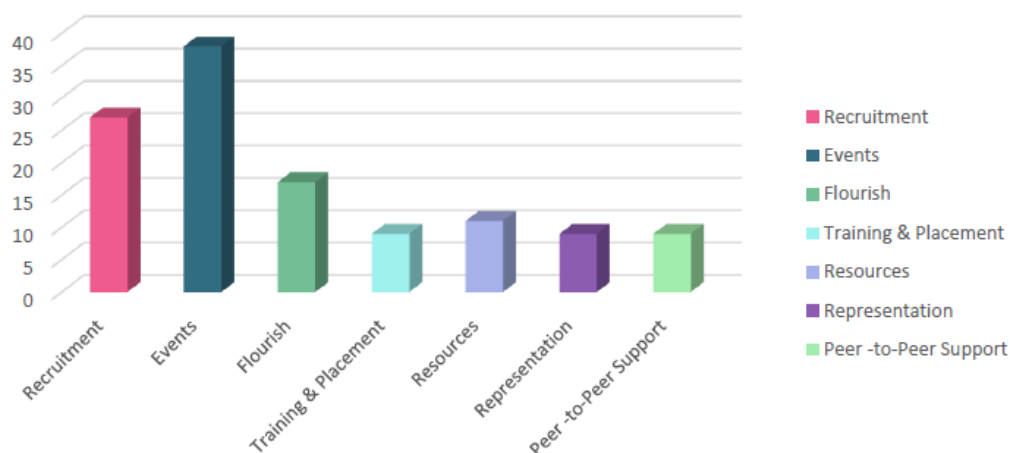
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How would you rate CPV?



The report also includes qualitative feedback from providers, which further emphasises the value of CPV's services. Providers appreciate the support in recruitment, networking opportunities, and the ease of communication facilitated by CPV. The positive impact of CPV on providers' work is evident, with many noting improvements in their confidence, decision-making, and overall satisfaction. The report concludes that CPV's effectiveness and ongoing relevance to the sector are clear, positioning it well for future growth and influence.

Most Valued CPV Services



Next steps

Havering is taking the lead on documentation and administrative processes for the award of this contract. At North East London (NEL) level meetings, the following boroughs have all agreed to enter into contract with CPV, with the deliverables and service specification agreed collectively as a group:

- Barking and Dagenham
- Havering
- Redbridge
- Newham
- Waltham Forest

Support offer

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The purpose of the Care Providers Voice Service is to formalise governance and engagement structures, involve CPV in economic development and workforce pathways, co-design social care tender specifications, support market sustainability and provider resilience, ensure transparency in fee uplift processes and strengthen provider engagement and onboarding. CPV shall operate as a strategic system partner within Havering and North East London, supporting local authorities by convening care providers, contributing structured provider intelligence, and supporting system level planning in relation to market sustainability, workforce resilience and service quality.

The service is designed to provide comprehensive support and representation working closely with both regional groups and local authorities. Its remit spans stakeholder engagement, economic development collaboration, workforce support, and the creation of resilient provider networks. Through involvement in key initiatives and the provision of valuable resources, the service aims to strengthen the social care sector and ensure the voices of providers are actively heard.

- **Active Representation:** Participation in NEL-level groups and local authority meetings to ensure engagement with key stakeholders.
- **Economic Development & Workforce Initiatives:** Collaborative role in local economic development, supporting staff development pathways and provider resilience.
- **Co-Design of Social Care Specifications:** Direct involvement in co-designing tender specifications for social care services.
- **Transparent Fee Uplift Process:** Commitment to maintaining fairness and openness in the fee uplift procedure.
- **Participation in Sector Initiatives:** Active role in steering groups, digital development projects, and cross-cutting sector initiatives.
- **Provider Engagement & Networking:** Support for provider onboarding, representation on boards, and the facilitation of forums and surveys to amplify the 'Provider Voice'.
- **Access to Resources:** Provision of unlimited training and development opportunities, a central social care hub, a shared events calendar, peer support, and access to facilitators and assessors.
- **Recruitment & Retention Support:** Addressing workforce challenges by collaborating with local partners, understanding workforce needs, and promoting social care careers through targeted sessions and support mechanisms.
- **Provision of structured provider intelligence:** Including insight on market risks, workforce pressures and emerging system issues, to inform commissioning, market shaping and system planning activity.
- **Delivery and coordination of workforce pipelines:** Including recruitment, employability, retention and progression initiatives, aligned to borough, sub regional and NEL workforce priorities.

Budget breakdown

The costs for the Care Providers Voice (CPV) Service shall be determined in accordance with the prices specified below:

Local Authority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Havering	£43,750.00	£43,750.00	£43,750.00	£131,250.00

The costs for the Flourish Learning Service shall be determined in accordance with the prices specified below:

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Local Authority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Havering	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£30,000.00

Timescales

The service will operate from the 1st April 2026 until 31st March 2029.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a contract is directly awarded to Care Providers Voice for the delivery of the Care Providers Voice Service & Flourish Learning Service, at a cost of £161,250.00 for the 3-year contract duration.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 – Conduct a Competitive Procurement Process

A full competitive tender process was considered; however, this option was rejected because the service required is highly specialised, and Care Providers Voice (CPV) is the only provider with the existing infrastructure, expertise, and established relationships across all five NEL boroughs to deliver the required outcomes effectively. Running a procurement exercise would introduce unnecessary delay, increase administrative burden, and risk destabilising current regional collaboration without delivering additional benefit or value.

Option 2 – Commission Each Borough Separately

The option for each borough to commission its own local service independently was explored. This was rejected because fragmented commissioning would prevent the development of a unified NEL wide approach, reduce consistency, and duplicate costs. A joint contract enables economies of scale, shared intelligence, and coordinated workforce development, all of which would be lost through single borough arrangements.

Option 3 – Bring the Service In-House

Bringing the provider engagement and Flourish Learning functions inhouse was considered but rejected due to lack of internal capacity, the need for specialist sector wide networks, and the significant cost of establishing equivalent capability. CPV already has an established provider led alliance and workforce support infrastructure that the Council could not feasibly replicate within existing resources.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION


The Strategic Director of People & DASS has implemented monthly steering group meetings with NEL colleagues to monitor the progress, implementation and outcomes of the support offer. Approval to proceed with commissioning CPV for this offer has been attained by all NEL boroughs involved.

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

Name: Laura Wheatley

Designation: Portfolio Manager Live Well & Age Well

Signature: 

Date: 19/03/2026

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has the power to award the contract under s111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

The Council also has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual may generally do subject to any statutory limitations. The recommendation sought within this report is in accordance with this power.

The total estimated contract value is below the threshold for Light Touch contracts under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA 2023). As such, the contract is not subject to the full implications of the PA 2023.

The Council is a Best Value authority and has a duty to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. As set out in this report, officers consider the contract represents best value.

The Council’s Contract Procedure Rules (CPR) require a tender process for contracts above £100,000. A waiver to the CPR is therefore required and was granted on 12th March 2026.

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This decision paper is seeking approval to directly award a contract to Care Providers Voice (CPV) for the provision of Care Providers Voice Service & Flourish Learning at a cost of £161,250.00 for the 3-year contract duration 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2029.

The annual cost for Havering will be £53,750. This will be funded from existing Adult Social Care budgets. The annual cost for CPV in the 25/26 financial year was £50,000 and therefore this is not a new pressure, the increase is £3,750 per annum and the increase will be met from existing resources.

The CPV initiative delivers value for money because it reduces costs, prevents waste, and improves outcomes across the care system.

Direct awarding the contract carries financial risks with less assurance on value for money. However, CPV’s proven expertise and ability to mobilise quickly make them uniquely positioned to deliver urgent support for displaced care workers, helping stabilise the sector.

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

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

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

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Havering has a diverse community made up of many different groups and individuals. The council values diversity and believes it essential to understand and include the different contributions, perspectives and experience that people from different backgrounds bring.

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, sex, race, 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.

An EqHIA (Equality and Health Impact Assessment) is normally completed but is not required in this instance.

The Council seeks to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all in all situations. There are no equalities and social inclusion implications and risks associated with this decision.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

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

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no identifiable health & wellbeing implications or risks arising from this decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

None

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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

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Barbara Nicholls

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title: Strategic Director of People

Other manager title:

Date: 31 March 2026

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 _____