

**Delegated Decision by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
25th February 2025**

Learning Disability Respite Service Contract Extension

Report by the Director of Adult Social Care

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to

- A) Agree to a continued extension of the contract with Brandon Trust to deliver the Adult Learning Disability Respite contract with the Council for an additional 7 months, from 1st September 2025 to 31st March 2026.

Executive Summary

1. A tender process was completed in September 2024 to appoint a new provider to take over the running of Adult Learning Disability Respite Services in Oxfordshire. The tenders received did not meet the required quality threshold. Therefore, a short-term extension was used between 1st April 2025 to 31st August 2025, this was under the existing contract terms to ensure continuity for people receiving support from the respite service.
2. A further extension is now required as a key decision to enable a further extension of the existing contract between the dates 1st September 2025 to 31st March 2026. This will allow time for market engagement to bring in a wider pool of providers to tender for a new contract to start from 1st April 2026. Additional time is also required to improve the buildings that providers will be asked to provide support in the new contract from 1st April 2026.
3. The Council continues to work with Brandon Trust to find efficiencies and to also identify where improvements can be made to the service whilst maintaining support for those who use the respite services on offer.

Background

4. Brandon Trust holds the current contract for Adult Learning Disability Respite Services with the council. A replacement tender in September 2024 was unable to award to a support provider that met the quality threshold set. A short-term extension was used within Brandon Trust's existing contract terms between 1st April 2025 to 31st August 2025. This was a short extension to ensure continuity of support for people using respite services.

5. The council have responded to Brandon Trust's concerns regarding the service's financial feasibility under the current contract, this included a cost review between the council and Brandon Trust. This will allow the council to continue with the existing terms for the remainder of the contract.
6. There continues to be dialogue with the provider on developing the respite service. Building work will be required to bring the buildings up to standard, co-production with users has taken place and identified areas that they want to improve including décor and signage.

Council Priorities & Policies

7. Respite is one of the fundamental services that support carers to be able to continue in their caring roles. The offer that the council provides in terms of building-based provision is within this contract. Respite are planned, time limited, or emergency care provided to support customers and care givers with having a break from each other or a break from their caring role, also allowing individuals to socialise with their peers in their personal time.

Financial Implications

8. The Adult Learning Disability Respite contract is currently delivered by Brandon Trust across 4 Oxfordshire sites. This service was commissioned as a 5 year plus 5 year building based spot contract, commencing on 16th October 2018. The extension is fully funded by the council from the Live Well pooled budget. No change to existing funding arrangements is required.

Comments checked by:

Stephen Rowles, Strategic Finance Business Partner
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Legal Implications

The legal implications section should be completed by a member of the legal service

9. The council has the statutory power to purchase and provide the Adult Learning Disability Respite contract under the Care Act 2014.
10. The contract as originally procured contains a unilateral right for the council to extend it on any number of occasions for up to 5 years in aggregate. The extension proposed in this report is within such 5-

year period and is therefore compliant with procurement legislation and does not pose any legal risk.

Comments checked by: Jonathan Pool, Solicitor (Contracts)
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Staff Implications

11. The current contract recommended to extend does not involve services or staff directly provided by the Council. Therefore, there is no impact on the Council's workforce because of this recommendation.
12. There will be no anticipated impact on the staff employed by Brandon Trust who will continue to operate the contract during the extension to maintain continuity of support provided.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

13. This Adult Learning Disability Respite contract is designed to meet the specific needs of people with a learning disability, autism, complex health, and physical disabilities. The expectation of care providers is to deliver person centred support. The contract includes a requirement to have an equalities policy and to self-certify that their organisation has an active equality and diversity policy in keeping with the Equality Act 2010.

Sustainability Implications

14. At present a Climate/Environmental Policy is not required by providers.

Recruitment

15. Recruitment for care and support mostly attracts a local workforce, therefore limiting the amount of extensive travel time.

Staff Travel

16. The contract for Adult Learning Disability Respite is currently across 4 OCC sites and are building based provision only, therefore there is limited requirement for staff travel.

Risk Management

Risks in agreeing this recommendation

17. There are no risks to agreeing this recommendation. This recommendation will allow for the continuation of respite provisions with no disruption to the existing provision and those using the service.

Risks in not agreeing this recommendation

18. If this recommendation is not agreed then the provision of respite will cease to be offered to carers, causing significant disruption to carers lives and the people that they support. It may cause an upturn in the breakdown of caring roles and lead to an increase in the need for supported living or increased packages of care.

Consultations

19. The Council spoke to users of the service and families/carers that utilise the service via OXFSN and directly. They were consulted on the improvements we are making to the building including new colour schemes, blinds and outside signage. The Council are planning on a new session once decisions have been reached on the number and placement of buildings the Council will be using in future.

Karen Fuller

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14 February 2025