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**Market Testing – Creative Therapy Service for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities**

**Overview**

Camden Council is reviewing its Creative Therapy service for children and young people (aged 4 to 18 years) with special educational needs and disabilities, which is due to terminate at the end of March 2023, with a view to deciding whether and how to recommission this provision.

**What are creative therapies?** Creative therapies offer therapeutic interventions for children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) and / or social, emotional and mental health needs. The current Creative Therapies service delivers a range of art and music therapies to pupils across Camden’s maintained specialist schools as well as doing targeted work within Camden’s mainstream schools, where young people are at risk of a placement breaking down.

The service works with a wide range of children and young people, including those with severe and profound learning disability, those involved with the Youth Offending Service and with post-adoption services..

The service also helps families/carers and the staff who work with the young people to build capacity and resilience, and to support the delivery of outcomes for young people across settings.

**What are the benefits of Creative Therapies?**

The service supports young people to improve the clinical, educational and social aspects of their lives and to help reduce feelings of isolation. It can be an alternative (and more immediate) response to more formal Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for children with SEND and that those less likely to engage in more traditional talking therapies. It ensures that children and young people across Camden, have access to the services most suited to them.

1. **Details of the services**

The Creative Therapies servicee currently delivers support to 120 children and young people per year – 70 on a 1:1 basis and 50 in small group-based provision. This covers a range of art and music therapies to pupils across three of Camden’s maintained specialist schools as well as targeted work within Camden’s mainstream schools, when young people are at risk of a placement breaking down. .

The service works with children and young people with severe and profound learning disability, those involved with the Youth Offending Service and post-adoption services. Service users’ needs can be complex – for example, young people with suicidal ideation, safeguarding issues, unaccompanied asylum seekers or children with communication difficulties.

The service also includes training sessions for school staff (70 spaces per year) and sessions that involve parents / carers and other family members. This supports the continuation of the work in the young person’s wider network after the therapy sessions have come to an end, building capacity and resilience in the network and supporting the delivery of outcomes for young people.

The service needs to be flexible in order to meet unanticipated demographic or social changes in Camden e.g. recently mobilisations to deliver short term interventions with asylum seeker / refugee children; the change in approach needed to deliver services over the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Key objectives:**

Achieving positive and sustainable outcomes for children and young people with SEND and / or social, emotional and mental health needs.

Optimising take-up and raising awareness of the service across education, health and social care providers in Camden to ensure a strategic use of the therapies available.

1. **Market testing**

The Council wishes to undertake soft market testing on the possible re-commissioning of the service, and therefore would welcome the views of providers on the questions set out below.

Interested parties will not be prejudiced by any response or failure to respond to this soft market testing and a response to this notice does not guarantee any invitation to participate in any future public procurement process that the Council may conduct.

This notice does not constitute a call for competition to procure any services for the Council and the Council is not bound to accept any proposals offered. The Council is not liable for any costs, fees or expenses incurred by any party participating in the soft market testing exercise. Any procurement of any services by the Council in due course will be carried out strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Any responses provided will not be treated as commercially confidential, unless expressed by the providing party,and may be used by the Council in the final service specifications used for the contracts, but no organisation will be individually identified.

We would like to receive feedback on the following areas (see questions in section 5) and any other comments that you may have. Organisations will have the opportunity to ask clarification questions on the specification should a procurement process be undertaken.

Following this market testing exercise the Council may run a commissioning exercise, which would likely include the following key stages (see indicative timeframe in section 3).

1. **Indicative timeframe**

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| **Stage** | **Date** |
| Tender advert released | 9 September 2022 |
| Deadline for tender | 24 October 2022 |
| Notification of decision to tenderers | 12 December 2022 |
| End of standstill period- Award letter to winning tenderer | 22 December 2022 |
| **Commencement Date of Contract** | 1 April 2023 |

1. **Market Questionnaire**

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| 1. What is your general level of interest in bidding for the service(s)? (Please briefly explain why below) |
| * High (very likely to bid) * Medium (may bid) * Low (unlikely to bid) |
| 1. What experience have you had of delivering creative therapies? Please detail the benefits have you seen and the outcomes you have achieved |
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| 1. What is your understanding of the needs of young people with SEND and / or social, emotional and mental health needs in Camden? |
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| 1. What proportionate split do you think is appropriate for a service offering 1:1 and group-based interventions and for delivering a mix of provision in mainstream and specialist schools in Camden? |
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| 1. What do you see as the key delivery challenges based on the proposed service model? |
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| 1. Would you be prepared to work in a partnership model to deliver these services? |
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| 1. How could this area of work be used to deliver Social Value to communities, i.e. improvements in the economic, social and/or environmental well-being of the areas? |
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| 1. In what ways do you think your organisation could promote equality and diversity both within your services and to service users? Please explain what you have done previously or are currently doing in this area as part of your current contracts. |
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| 1. Would you be willing to discuss this work further? Please give details of key contacts and (general) availability if so. |
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1. **General Information**

Following this market testing exercise Camden Council will consider options for developing the provision in question.

Please submit your completed questionnaire by email to Denise Pittaway ([denise.pittaway@camden.gov.uk](mailto:denise.pittaway@camden.gov.uk) ) and copied to David Walsh ([david.walsh@camden.gov.uk](mailto:david.walsh@camden.gov.uk)) **by 2.00pm** **3 August 2022**.