

BRIEFING REPORT

Contract Award for the provision of Community Equipment services PART I



1. INTRODUCTION

This contract award report is in relation to the procurement of the Plymouth Community Equipment Services (CES) for the period between 2025 and 2029. The previous contract was in place between 01/03/2023 and 31/07/2025 and held by Nottingham Rehab Ltd (T/A NRS Healthcare), approximately 17,000 people are supported by the service every year. The contract will continue to be in partnership with NHS Devon ICB.

The need to review the existing contract arrangements were driven by the local authority being informed by NRS Healthcare that they would become insolvent by 31st July 2025. The provision of community equipment services is a statutory duty, any gaps in service provision present a range of risks to health and social care services in Plymouth.

Every effort has been made to secure the continuity of the service via a 2-month contract with Millbrook Healthcare to support the urgent mobilisation of a new service. The recommendation is to award a further contract to Millbrook Healthcare from 1st October 2025 until 31st January 2029 to stabilise the service while a full redesign and procurement is carried out.

2. BACKGROUND

Plymouth requires a Community Equipment Service (CES) for adults and children within the Plymouth City Council area or those on the outskirts if registered with a GP in Plymouth.

This service provides equipment relating to a prescribed, clinical need to support a person in their own home. This includes equipment such as beds, mattresses and mobility aids. Equipment may be provided to support someone with a short term need, while they recover from illness, or longer term or permanent ill health. Referrals to the service are made by prescribing organisations such as Livewell Southwest, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, St Luke's Hospice and Practice Plus Group Hospitals.

CES includes the provision of a range of Core Stock equipment which is most frequently used, more specialist Non-Stock equipment ordered on an ad-hoc basis and Minor Adaptations. It is a requirement that the service is supported by a comprehensive web based IT platform for the provider and those referring to the service.

A team of Plymouth City Council and Livewell staff have been working together across children's and adult services to enact a contingency plan for the contract. This has included liaison with key partners who rely on the service, including University Hospitals Plymouth and St Lukes'.

3. RISK

The following are risks which have been considered as part of the process of contingency planning:

Risk to	Possible impact
Reputation of the Council and ICB	Reputational damage from not being able to deliver a statutory service
Children and adults	Risk of physical harm due to not having required equipment or un-serviced/ faulty equipment which is not maintained.
Prescribers/staff	Exposure to unsafe working environments, increased risk of injury
Carers (Employed and family/foster carers)	Harm caused by default if take on additional tasks such as lifting without suitable equipment in place
Hospitals	Delays in discharging patients, more admissions and reduction in use of virtual wards.
Provider staff	Uncertainty about security of employment, not being able to access stock or vehicles
End of life care	Delays in discharge or the provision of appropriate equipment to meet need
Care and support providers	Reluctance to accept new care packages for people without appropriate equipment in place or escalation into residential care for those who cannot be supported safely at home without equipment
Schools	Children being unable to access education without required equipment
Wider supply chain	Loss of data, lack of payments, over or under ordering of alternative equipment

4. PROCUREMENT PROCESS

A background paper titled “Contract Award for the provision of Community Equipment services Part 2” details the procurement considerations. A direct award of the Community Equipment Services Contract to Millbrook Healthcare is recommended under the Procurement Act 2023 direct award grounds for urgency.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS



The financial implications for the procurement and contract award are described in the Part 2 paper.

6. APPROVAL

Authorisation of Contract Award Report

Author (Responsible Officer / Project Lead)

Name: James Stannard

Job Title:	Market Improvement Manager		
Additional Comments (Optional):			
Signature:		Date:	01/08/2025
Head of Service / Service Director [Signature provides authorisation to this award report and award of Contract]			
Name:	Gary Walbridge		
Job Title:	Strategic Director of Integrated Commissioning		
Additional Comments (Optional):			
Signature:		Date:	01/08/2025