

	Officer Key Decision
	Report to the Director of Public Health, Leisure and Parks
	Lead Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure
AUTHORITY TO DIRECT AWARD A CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF A SOFTWARE SOLUTION FOR DELIVERY OF THE NHS HEALTH CHECKS PROGRAMME THROUGH A DIRECT AWARD.	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key Decision
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers¹:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Name: Raafia Arshad Butt Job Title: Senior Public Health Strategist Email: Raafia.butt@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report concerns the procurement for the provision of a software solution for delivery of the NHS Health Checks Programme to Pungo Ltd. This report requests authority to award the contract as required by Contract Standing Order 88. This report summarises the process undertaken in procuring a contract and, following the completion of the procurement and market assessment, recommends to whom the contract should be awarded.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Director of Public Health, Leisure and Parks, in consultation with the Lead Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure:

- 2.1 Approves the award of contract for the provision of a software solution

to support the delivery of the NHS Health Checks programme to Pungo Ltd, by way of a direct award, for a contract period of three years with the option to extend for an additional year, at a total value of £552,950, exclusive of VAT.

3.0 Detail

Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1 The Brent Borough Plan Priorities 2023 – 2027 that are most relevant to the procurement of the NHS Health Checks IT solution are A Healthier Brent and Thriving Communities.

(a) **Enhancing Preventative Health Services:** The NHS Health Checks Programme identifies cardiovascular risks early and promotes preventative care. A bespoke IT solution will integrate seamlessly with GP systems, improving patient management and referrals. Brent faces high health inequalities—diabetes prevalence (8.0%) exceeds the England average (7.7%), and hypertension disproportionately affects Black and Asian communities. Adaptable digital tools are essential to address these disparities.

(b) **Improving Health Outcomes:** The software will enhance referrals to lifestyle services through its unique 'marketplace' feature like the National Diabetes Prevention Programme and Exercise on Referral. This will strengthen our digital infrastructure and ensure better signposting to health services, empowering residents to make informed health choices.

(c) **Driving Digital Innovation:** Market research confirms Pungo Ltd is the only provider offering the bespoke integration Brent needs.

3.1.1 This procurement also aligns with Brent's Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

(a) **Healthy Lives:** "I can make healthy choices and live in a healthy way, for myself and the people I care for."

(b) **Staying Healthy:** "I, and the people I care for, understand how to keep ourselves physically and mentally healthy."

(c) **Healthy Ways of Working:** "We work together to support the health and wellbeing of everyone in Brent."

Background

3.2 The Council requires the provision of a software solution for delivery of the NHS Health Checks Programme. Officers have undertaken a procurement exercise and identified a contractor providing the most economically advantageous offer in accordance with relevant evaluation

criteria and therefore recommend award of a contract for three plus one-year option to Pungo Ltd for bespoke development of a software solution. (the “Contract”).

The Procurement Process

- 3.3 The Contract will be awarded through a direct award route for a duration of three years with the option to extend for one year.
- 3.4 Market research was undertaken by the public health team and the NHS data leads to seek initial options that could support with the IT software solution. While alternative providers exist, none possess the bespoke development capabilities necessary to align with Brent’s strategic vision and core values for the NHS Health Checks Programme. The preferred provider (Pungo Ltd) is the only one that can deliver a solution that is fully tailored to Brent’s unique needs, integrating seamlessly with GP systems, supporting patient lifestyle referrals through a ‘marketplace’ feature, and providing real-time data analytics for Public Health Officers to analyse for strategic direction to improve health outcomes.
- 3.5 The NHS Health Checks Programme is designed to provide preventative health checks to individuals aged 40-74, focusing on early detection and intervention for cardiovascular diseases. This programme is delivered by GP Practices in Brent and is critical in addressing health inequalities in the borough, it is essential that the solution procured not only seamlessly integrates with GP clinical systems but also enhances service delivery through a tailored and scalable digital infrastructure.
- 3.6 Brent experiences some of the highest health inequalities in London. Key local health data includes:
- In 2023/24, 8.0% of patients in Brent were recorded on practice registers as having diabetes, higher than the England average (7.7%).
 - Hypertension disproportionately affects Black and Asian communities, which make up a significant proportion of Brent’s population, necessitating adaptable software.
 - Obesity is a key risk factor contributing to heart disease and stroke.
 - In 2021, Brent’s all-age cardiovascular mortality rate was 267.2 deaths per 100,000, compared to the England average of 230.4 per 100,000.
- 3.7 While the previous system met the necessary information governance requirements and did not introduce any clinical risk, it lacked full interoperability with GP clinical software. This resulted in a fragmented delivery model, creating inefficiencies and inconsistencies in service provision across practices. GP clinical leaders raised significant concerns regarding this lack of integration, as it placed additional

administrative burdens on their practices, disrupted clinical workflows, and potentially impacted service delivery uptake. Given that local authorities have the flexibility to determine the most suitable delivery model and software for their area, it was imperative for officers to take these concerns into account. The new system aligns with GP clinical workflows, it is fundamental to improving uptake, streamlining delivery, and ultimately maximising the programme's impact on public health outcomes in Brent.

- 3.8 The contract award for Pungo Ltd (Joy App) solution will resolve these challenges while positioning Brent as a leader in digital health innovation. By procuring a system that is adaptable and scalable, Brent will establish a future-proofed approach to NHS Health Checks Programme, ensuring services evolve to meet residents' needs and drive long-term reductions in cardiovascular diseases.

Evaluation process

- 3.9 To ensure to correct decision was taken, public health officers worked closely with legal and procurement colleagues to explore the market initially and different procurement routes to secure a technical product which met the needs of the Council and GP Practices. The procurement route also needed to align with procurement and legal regulations; therefore, a thorough and extensive process was required to ensure the software met the needs of all parties involved. As an alternative to waiving the CSO, the use of the G-cloud 13 framework was explored. However, this evaluation concluded that the use of the framework would not meet out requirements.
- 3.10 Due to the complexity of the contract and the partnership-based approach required for delivery, extensive engagement was conducted with Public Health, Integrated Care Board (ICB) colleagues, and GP Practices. This was a key factor that was discussed with the procurement and legal teams contributing to our decision to procure. Officers reviewed three preferred providers during their market testing, assessing their suitability for Brent's approach. During the engagement with stakeholders, officers discussed the requirements and the best models of delivery to achieve higher levels of uptake as well as considering the GP Practices operational requirements.
- 3.11 Key considerations included minimising the administrative burden on GP Practices, clinical safety through a seamless integration with the clinical system EMIS which is used by GPs in Brent, and a clear, simple patient referral pathway. While two alternative options met some requirements, they lacked essential features available in the preferred software. Further discussions with NHS clinical data leads confirmed that only Pungo Ltd (Joy App) could offer the necessary scalability and customisation.

3.12 The preferred software solution Pungo Ltd provides a highly specialised, future-proofed approach, ensuring Brent remains at the forefront of NHS Health Checks delivery. Key features include:

- **Seamless GP System Integration** – Reducing administrative burden and ensuring continuity of care through EMIS integration.
- **Referral ‘Marketplace’** – Creating direct pathways to local lifestyle services, including exercise referral schemes, the National Diabetes Prevention Programme, and social prescribing, ensuring timely and appropriate support for residents.
- **Real-Time Data Analytics** – Enabling Public Health Officers to monitor service uptake, identify health trends, and target interventions effectively.

3.13 Given Brent’s significant health challenges and the market research conducted; a generic off-the-shelf IT system cannot provide the necessary level of customisation. The bespoke nature of the Joy App solution ensures:

- **Compliance with NHS Information Governance (IG) standards** and clinical safety requirements, safeguarding patient data while meeting regulatory standards.
- **Custom-built functionality tailored to Brent’s health priorities**, offering greater flexibility than one-size-fits-all systems. Real-time analytics will support targeted outreach in high-risk areas such as Harlesden and Stonebridge, where CVD prevalence is particularly high. The Joy App’s integration with social prescribing ensures high-risk patients (e.g., those with elevated HbA1c levels) are automatically referred to culturally tailored weight management and diabetes prevention programmes, improving early intervention rates.
- **User-focused design** - Enhancing patient engagement by simplifying referral pathways and increasing accessibility to preventive services, particularly for Brent’s diverse communities.

3.14 Given the unique capabilities of Pungo Ltd (Joy App) and the extensive stakeholder engagement, a direct award is the most appropriate procurement route to award the contract. This ensures seamless service delivery, adaptability, and continuous quality improvement, making it a future-proof solution. Moreover, its interoperability allows GPs and officers to effectively connect with health and lifestyle services, maximising the impact of NHS Health Checks Programme in Brent.

3.15 The Contract will commence on 16th June 2025 subject to the Council’s observation of the requirements of the mandatory standstill period noted in paragraph 6.4 below.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 Consultation has been undertaken taken with the Corporate Director of Strategy and Reform, stakeholders including Northwest London ICB as well as the relevant cabinet member and the Leader.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 The total value of the three plus one-year contract with Pungo Ltd is £552,950 exclusive of VAT.
- 5.2 The full cost of the Contract will be funded from the existing Public Health budget.
- 5.3 Brent Financial Services were consulted to review the costings for the contract with Joy App. This included the development and design costs in year one, as well as the ongoing maintenance costs for the subsequent years.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 The estimated value of the Contract over its lifetime is in excess of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the “PCR 2015”) threshold for Services and the award of the Contract is therefore governed by the PCR 2015. Section 3 of the report outlines how the Contract was procured in accordance with the PCR 2015. The procurement of the contract started prior to the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023, therefore, it will continue to be procured under the PCR 2015.
- 6.2 Officers are permitted to directly award a contract under section 32(2)(b)(ii) of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 if competition is absent for technical reasons. This provision allows contracting authorities to bypass the usual competitive tendering process when the works, supplies, or services can only be provided by a particular economic operator due to technical reasons.
- 6.3 The award of the Contract is subject to the Council's own Standing Orders in respect of Medium Value Contracts. The Director has delegated power to award Medium Value Contracts in accordance with paragraph 9.5 and paragraph 9.7 of Part 3 of the Constitution following Lead Member waiver. The Lead Member waiver was obtained prior to the award of this contract.
- 6.4 The Council must observe a mandatory minimum 10 calendar day standstill period under the PCR 2015 before the Contract can be awarded. Therefore, once the Director has determined that the Contract will be directly awarded to a single supplier, the supplier will be issued with written notification of the Contract award decision. A minimum 10 calendar day standstill period will then be observed before the Contract

is concluded – this period will begin the day after the supplier is sent notification of the award decision – and additional debrief information will be provided in accordance with the PCR 2015. The standstill period will run concurrently with the Council’s usual call-in process. Subject to there being no call-in, after the standstill period ends, the successful supplier will be issued with a letter of acceptance and the Contract can commence.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 Pursuant to s149 Equality Act 2010 (the “Public Sector Equality Duty”), the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,

7.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7.3 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

7.4 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary.

7.5 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no adverse equality implications.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 The proposal in this report does not impact the Council’s environmental objectives and climate emergency strategy.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

9.1 This service is currently provided by an external contractor and there are no implications for Council staff arising from the procurement of the Contract.

9.2 There are no property or accommodation implications.

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 The proposal in this report does not require a communication strategy or campaigns.

Report sign off:

Dr Melanie Smith

Director – Public Health, Leisure and Parks