

Mediation Service contract extension 2026 - 2027

Subject: Mediation Service Contract Extension

Originator: Commissioning Officer

Decision Number: 11 - 2026

Reason for Submission: For Decision

Submitted to: Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Summary

1. In accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 the Police and Crime Commissioner can commission services that:
 - a) secure, or contribute to securing crime and disorder reduction in Suffolk;
 - b) are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by offences and anti-social behaviour
2. A mediation service has been supported by the PCC since April 2015. It receives referrals from the police to help address repeat incidents of anti-social behaviour, with the aim of reducing demand on the Constabulary and preventing escalation into crime or disorder. The service in Suffolk is currently delivered by Anglia Care Trust (ACT), which was awarded an initial three-year contract, beginning in 2023, with the option to extend for two additional 12-month periods. The initial three-year term is due to end on 31 March 2026.
3. A review of the service has been successfully completed, including an analysis of available options, and costs have been confirmed for the two optional 12-month extensions (£23,225 for Year 4 and £23,922 for Year 5).
4. The service supports delivery of Theme 2, Objective 2 in the Suffolk Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the PCC:

1. Agrees to the extension of the ACT mediation contract for a further 12 months (April 2026 – March 2027) with an option to extend for a further year (April 2027 – March 2028), subject to satisfactory service and referral levels.

Approval by PCC

The recommendation as outlined above is approved.

Signed: Tim Passmore

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Passmore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'P'.

Signature:

Date: 2 April 2026

Detail of Submission

1. Objective

- 1.1 In accordance with the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 the Police and Crime Commissioner can commission services that:
- a) secure, or contribute to securing crime and disorder reduction in Suffolk;
 - b) are intended to help victims or witnesses of, or other persons affected by offences and anti-social behaviour.
- 1.2 In applying this provision, the PCC will ensure that the services commissioned are also consistent with Theme 2 of the [Suffolk Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029](#). The mediation service specifically delivers on the following:
- supporting problem-solving in local communities, by investing in solutions which reduce reoffending, prevent crime and disorder, or improve community safety.
 - consider with the Constabulary, areas where investment might reduce non-crime demand on the police.
- 1.3 This report therefore seeks approval from the PCC to exercise the option to extend the mediation service contract with Anglia Care Trust (ACT) for a further 12 months (April 2026 – March 2027) with an option to extend for a further year (April 2027 – March 2028), subject to satisfactory service and referral levels.

2. Background

- 2.1 Suffolk's mediation service takes referrals from the police to deal with repeat incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), predominantly from neighbours. The types of issues addressed include neighbour disputes, noise nuisance, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, criminal damage and vandalism. The service reduces escalation (to criminal offences and prosecution), reduces the time spent by the police on non-crime demand (reduced calls for service) and ensures better outcomes for the parties involved.
- 2.2 The PCC has supported a mediation service since April 2015. In 2023, the service was competitively tendered, with ACT appointed as the successful provider and awarded a contract for an initial three-year term, with the option to extend for two additional 12-month periods.
- 2.3 The initial three-year contract term is due to end on 31 March 2026.

3. Areas for consideration

3.1 In February 2026, an internal review of the Mediation Service was conducted to assess its effectiveness and overall impact. The review focused on:

- Service usage and associated value for money.
- Performance against agreed KPIs.
- Partner perceptions and experiences of the service.
- Lessons learned from service delivery to date.
- Recommendations and next steps to inform future development of the service.

3.2 The information below summarises the findings of the internal review.

Service usage

3.3 Prior to the current contract, the service received an average of 40 referrals and directly worked with over 100 individuals a year. The table below shows annual referrals since ACT took over the contract including the year-to-date information for the current contract year.

Contract period	Annual Referrals	Individuals worked with
2023-24	56	142
2024-25	34	76
2025-26 YTD (April – Nov '25)	28	71

3.4 While Year 1 saw a 30% increase in referrals compared with the average of previous years, referrals then fell by 21% in Year 2. Current year-to-date figures indicate that referral numbers are likely to be similar to last year's, suggesting that activity is stabilising.

3.5 Referrals are made directly from Suffolk Constabulary so the decline from year one cannot be attributed to the mediation service provision itself. Recorded ASB is not increasing in Suffolk: the last Accountability and Performance Panel (APP) [Neighbourhood crime and ASB](#) report showed a reduction of 7.78% in the last 12 months and a 26.9% reduction over the long-term average.

- 3.6 It is therefore difficult to determine whether officers are not referring cases that could benefit from the service (because of lack of awareness/understanding), or whether there is simply a lack of suitable cases in Suffolk, indicating genuine low demand. The Constabulary lead continues to promote the service and has commented on ACT's vital contribution to publicity material designed to raise awareness of the facility to officers. This consists of video content embedded into training material on ASB as part of the Neighborhood Policing Programme 2 qualification for frontline officers as well as a contribution to a podcast during ASB Awareness week 2025.
- 3.7 Based on the 2024/25 contract costs and the number of referrals received, the estimated cost per referral is approximately £553, with an average of 2.5 individuals involved in each case. A Home Office report from 2010 estimated that government agencies faced annual costs of [£3.4 billion](#) in responding to ASB reports, based on data captured from a single day of reporting. This equated to an approximate cost of £212 per ASB report at that time. Adjusted for inflation (around 66%), the equivalent cost today would be approximately £352. While this figure spans all agencies, all types of ASB, and is now outdated, it highlights the significant financial burden associated with managing ASB overall. Additionally, the 2023 report '[The Cost of Community Conflict by Mediation Hertfordshire](#)' noted that West Yorkshire Police estimated the cost of responding to a non-emergency call to be as high as £1,000. As the Mediation Service aims to address repeat incidents of ASB, these figures suggest it offers good value for money, particularly where early intervention helps prevent multiple police call-outs for each referral. Increasing referral numbers in the next financial year would further enhance the value delivered by the service.

Performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- 3.8 The desired outcomes from the service are as follows:
- Reduction in police intervention in ASB cases.
 - Stops escalation of ASB to criminal activity or through the criminal justice system.
 - Reduce repeat calls for service to police (and potentially other agencies).
 - Resolution of ASB for victims / parties involved:
 - Positive outcomes or completed mediation. Mediation will not always be resolved to an agreement between the parties, but it is imperative that the services can show a positive impact or positive attempts to engage both parties and any benefits from that engagement.

- Satisfaction with the service.
- Effective engagement with ASB Act partners to ensure utilisation of the service as a preventative measure in reducing demand.
- Eases neighbourhood tension / improves neighbourhoods for all.

3.9 A mix of qualitative and quantitative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were identified and agreed to measure these outcomes; however, no quantitative data is currently available to assess the service's effectiveness in reducing police involvement in ASB cases, escalation into criminal activity, or repeat calls. This would require an evaluation of police data and could be a disproportionate use of resource for the service value. However, there is qualitative input from the Constabulary on the efficacy of the service, see sections 3.13 and 3.14.

3.10 Monitoring reports are delivered every six-months and the eleven KPIs and overall service delivery are reviewed biannually by the Head of Commissioning, with attendance from the Mediation Service Manager and Suffolk Constabulary. The measurable KPIs were predominantly met or exceeded over the three-year contract period demonstrating strong performance.

3.11 The qualitative measures in place are more difficult to assess due to the reliance on feedback in terms of building rapport with involved parties and gaining follow-up information from officers. Anglia Care Trust have indicated that they have had difficulty in collecting this information in meaningful numbers over the three-year period. However, the following service user feedback has been received:

"The situation has improved since mediation and is not affecting my everyday life at the moment. I found the mediation service very helpful in resolving conflict when people lost abilities to make constructive conversation. In our case, it helped to manage bad emotions, exchange different points of view, find solutions, repair relationships and most importantly prevent problem escalation. Many thanks for this."

"Mediation brought issues to light that the solicitors were unable to. I would recommend mediation to others in the future."

3.12 In terms of satisfaction with the service, over the three-year period 76 individuals who completed evaluations stated they had improved feelings of safety / risk reduction and had indications of positive behaviour change.

3.13 Referring officer feedback:

"I have carried out some research on our systems and it appears we have not had contact from either party for at least the past 12 months, there was a harassment investigation from Feb 2023 which led to the mediation referral. This appears to have been the last and most recent contact with police."

"I am happy to confirm that we have had no calls whatsoever this year from either Mr P or Mrs H. Many thanks for your efforts in resolving this neighbour dispute."

Partner perceptions and experiences of the service

3.14 As part of the review, feedback was requested from Anglia Care Trust's Operational Manager and Suffolk Constabulary County Partnership and Prevention Hub (CPPH) representatives. The mediation service is viewed as an essential intervention option, often providing the only viable route to de-escalate ongoing disputes and reduce demand on services. Partners highlight strong operational relationships, noting excellent communication and collaboration between the ACT Mediation Team, the CPPH ASB Team, and local policing leads. The service is praised for its flexible and responsive delivery, with mediators adapting their approach to meet the needs of increasingly varied and complex cases. Senior policing leaders fully endorse the service and support its continued and expanded use.

Lessons learned from service delivery to date

3.15 Insights from both ACT and the Constabulary lead highlighted a number of challenges:

- Frontline officer awareness: Officers often lack confidence explaining the mediation process, which contributes to low take-up among the public.
- A misunderstanding of the process: members of the public often reject mediation because they misunderstand what the process involves.
- Partial engagement: Cases frequently involve one party consenting and the other declining, preventing progression.
- Referral inconsistency: Volumes fluctuate, making planning and resourcing more difficult for ACT, and at times weakening the ability to clearly demonstrate ongoing demand for the service.

3.16 Equality analysis suggests that there is no negative impact from the service on those with protected characteristics. Barriers to service access for those with disabilities have been addressed and the service offers a range of ways for users

to engage. To further support compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) the collection of demographic data and service communications and resources (literature) could be improved and routinely reported on at contract meetings.

- 3.17 The review itself has highlighted a number of qualitative KPIs in the contract that are difficult to evidence, such as service user satisfaction, rapport and the reduction in callouts. If the contract is extended it is recommended that the KPIs are reviewed.

Recommendations and next steps

- 3.18 The mediation service is highly valued, viewed as operationally effective, and strongly supported by both practitioners and leadership.

Therefore, it is recommended the PCC:

- Extends the mediation service contract with Anglia Care Trust (ACT) for a further 12 months (April 2026 – March 2027) with an option to extend for a further year (April 2027 – March 2028), subject to satisfactory service and referral levels.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner should:

- Work with partners to increase referrals by improving officer understanding of the mediation process, supported by clear literature in a range of formats that encourages all parties to engage.
- Revisit the qualitative KPIs and ensures a clear reporting line for one-party willingness to complete.
- Work with partners to find a more effective way of obtaining feedback from both service users and referring officers.
- Consider additional non-crime disturbances for community mediation/ expanding the service to include local authority referrals (subject to co-funding) in the longer term.

4. Other options considered

4.1 The following options have also been considered:

- a) De-commission the service:** This is an option due to the low value of the contract and the reduction of referrals into the service after the first year.

However, the provision of the service does meet two of the commitments stated in the Police and Crime Plan in a way that other initiatives do not. Police colleagues are keen for the service to continue and those who have used it have seen its benefits. Rather than remove the service altogether the more attractive option would be to look at ways of increasing referrals in the future to improve its value for money.

- b) Re-procure the service:** This is not an option given the contract ends on 31 March 2026. The current supplier is meeting the KPIs in terms of quality of provision so there is no need to look for alternative suppliers at this point. The only reason for re-procuring would be if we were to change the terms of the service significantly in response to co-commissioning with other local authorities which would increase scope, referrals and value of the service.

5. Strategic aims / objective supported

- 5.1 This decision supports theme 2 of the Police and Crime Plan: commissioning services which support victims of crime and investing in initiatives which reduce crime, disorder, offending and prevent victimisation. The service specifically addresses the following intentions in the plan:
- supporting problem-solving in local communities, by investing in solutions which reduce reoffending, prevent crime and disorder, or improve community safety.
 - consider with the Constabulary, areas where investment might reduce non-crime demand on the police.

6. Financial and other resource implications

- 6.1 The cost of the service provided by Anglia Care Trust for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 is £23,225. Should the PCC choose to extend the contract for a further year, the cost for the period 1 April 2027 to 31 March 2028 will be £23,922. This reflects an increase of £3,608 for 2026/27 compared with the current contract year. The uplift is driven by three years of cumulative cost-of-living and National Living Wage increases affecting administrative staff, as well as higher employer National Insurance contributions.

6.2 The recommended budget line is the PCC’s Commissioning budget for Crime and Disorder Reduction.

7. Environmental Implications

7.1 No specific environmental implications to include within the decision report.

8. Other implications and risks

8.1 There are no other implications and risks beyond those presented in this report.

Originator Checklist (must be completed).

Please state ‘yes’ or ‘no’

Checklist Item	Yes / No
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	No
Has the PCC’s Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	Yes
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered, including equality analysis, as appropriate?	Yes
Have human resource implications been considered?	No
Is the recommendation consistent with Police and Crime Plan objectives?	Yes
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	No
Have environmental factors been considered?	Yes
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the ‘other implications and risks section of the submission?	Yes
Is this report a Confidential Decision?	No

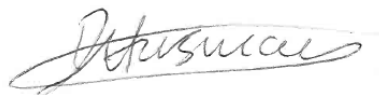
If yes, please state reasons below:

Approval to submit to the decision-maker (This approval is required only for submissions to the PCC)

Chief Executive

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report, that the recommendations have been reviewed and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.

Signed: Darren Horsman



Signature:

Date: 16 March 2026

Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)

I certify that:

- a) there are no financial consequences as a result of this decision,
Or
- b) the costs identified in this report can be met from existing revenue or capital budgets,
Or
- c) the costs identified in this report can be financed from reserves
And
- d) the decision can be taken on the basis of my assurance that Financial Regulations have been complied with.

Signed: Colette Batson



Signature:

Date: 20 March 2026

Public access to information: Information contained within this submission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and wherever possible will be made available on the OPCC website. Submissions should be labelled as 'Not Protectively Marked' unless any of the material is 'restricted' or 'confidential'. Where information contained within the submission is 'restricted' or 'confidential' it should be highlighted, along with the reason why.