

REPORT TO: Health & Wellbeing Board

DATE: 17th July 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Children & Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Domestic Abuse services for Children, Young People and Families

WARD(S): Borough –wide

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

1.1 To inform the board of commissioning process, timeline and main elements that will encompass the new Domestic Abuse services in Halton for children, young people and families.

2. RECOMMENDATION THAT:

1. **the report be noted;**
2. **agree to the service delivery approach outlined within the attached draft service specification;**
3. **children’s services support Communities directorate in the re-commission of Haltons Domestic Abuse Services; and**
4. **endorse the approach that other services supporting the hidden harm and domestic abuse agenda adopt were viable the main elements required around child safety planning.**

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Commissioning in Halton is shaped by both national policy and guidance and the local need to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The focus of commissioning is to ensure that it is coherent and effective; delivering cost effective services that promote good outcomes for children, young people and their families.

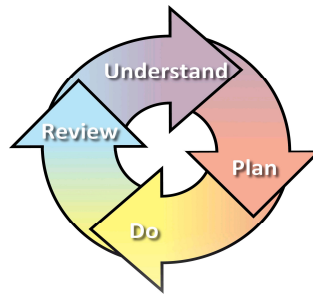
3.2 The commissioning cycle encompasses:

- a strategic needs assessment – engaging with children and families, understanding their needs and taking a sophisticated approach to the use of data
- planning and service design – identifying what services need to be put in place to promote preventative solutions, and how to develop holistic services which can address the totality of each child’s needs

- deciding on how to deliver and with whom– identifying which organisations are well placed to deliver services and contracting, or putting service level agreements in place so that all parties are clear about deliverables
- reviewing and challenging the fitness for purpose of services and providers and monitoring their impact on outcomes

3.3 It is a core principle within Halton that where possible we commission services to meet local needs and priorities. Commissioning can be described in four stages:

- Understand - population needs assessment and resource identification
- Plan - aligning resources to meet needs; filling gaps between needs and services
- Do - developing or purchasing services
- Review - monitoring performance and evaluating outcomes.



3.4 The generic cycle of understand, plan, do, review, correlates with the processes of needs assessment and strategic planning, shaping and managing the market, and improving performance, monitoring and evaluating.

3.5 The above commissioning principles were used whilst drawing together the relevant information for the proposal for the new Children’s Domestic Abuse Service. The following steps have place over the last few months:

- Halton Domestic Abuse Forum carried out some work during autumn of 2012 to look at the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people a draft plan was produced which is due to be refreshed alongside the borough’s Domestic Abuse Strategy later this year. As part of this work the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Co-ordinator undertook a piece of work to map the impact of domestic abuse across the borough. (See appendix 1)
- In January 2013 the forum asked HBC adults and children’s commissioning teams to meet and look at future plans for commissioning services particularly around a perpetrator programme and services for children and young people.
- In late March 2013 funding was sourced from Children’s specialist budget and a lead commissioner from the Children’s Commissioning team was identified to undertake research and draw together the details required for a specification for a service to support children, young people and families.

- During April 2013, a benchmarking exercise was carried out with other local authorities to determine their approach to commissioning of domestic abuse services.
- Throughout May 2013 there were some initial consultations with service providers and practitioners around their views of the current demand and need of families around domestic abuse services. This information has fed into attached draft service specification. (appendix 2)
- The procurement process has been drawn up and the main elements within the timeline are:
 - A development day at the end June to ensure as widest participation as possible and to give providers clarification on the requirements of the service
 - Evaluate tenders during early August
 - Interviews early September
 - Award contract September
 - Mobilisation period – September and October (there will be a clear implementation plan which will include staff selection, pathways, process, publications etc.)
 - Contract start date 4th November 2013
 - Contract will be 1 year with the option to extend for a further year

4. Proposal for Domestic Abuse services for Children, Young People and Families

4.1 Domestic abuse is an intractable and widespread problem. Two women per week are killed by their current or ex-partner and CAADA estimates that there are 100,000 victims at high risk of serious harm or murder. It costs the tax payer an estimated £3.9bn per year, with high risk domestic abuse making up nearly £2.4bn of this. Domestic abuse has adverse impacts on the health and wellbeing of victims, and is closely associated with child abuse and neglect, as well as a range of other social issues including homelessness and substance abuse.¹

4.2 It is worth highlighting that Halton does have some current resources around the Hidden Harm agenda in the form of the Specialist Youth Support Service. The primary purpose of the Service is to support people to change their risk taking behaviour and to enable them to be active citizens, playing a full and meaningful part in the community. The service is open to young people 0- 19 years up to 25 years with young people with additional needs and is in place to provide a personalised, holistic approach which looks further than their risk behaviour and addresses any underlying causes or contributory factors. However there is a clear recommendation about implementation of specialist services for children and young people to tackle the issues around domestic abuse.

4.3 There will be four main elements to the new service;

¹ CAADA Insights: A place of greater safety November 2012

- Support to parents that are victims of domestic abuse which gets parents to understand the impact of domestic abuse on how they parent and how domestic abuse has an impact on the children and young people's behaviour.
 - Direct work around children/ young people safety planning where the young person is still in the situation
 - Longer term recovery work therapeutic approach where the perpetrator is no longer within the family.
 - Support social care with pre- court proceedings process and provide information and assessments where required.
- 4.2 The service will work with children and young people that link into formal process such as Children in Need and Child Protection to meet individual outcomes for each child and family as part of a formal plan. However, there will be a clear link into the new Levels of Need Framework and will relate to formal process such as Common Assessment Framework and the Inspiring Families Programme to meet individual outcomes for each child and family as part of their formal plan.
- 4.3 The Service will support the Cheshire and Merseyside Local Authority Pre-Court Proceedings Protocol. The decision to intervene legally in a child's life and family is a significant one which will have major consequences for that child. It is crucial that any decision to do so is based on clear, evidenced-based assessment and care planning which demonstrates what attempts have been made to manage the risks and support the child to remain in their family.
- 4.4 The child safety plan is a key element that needs to be adopted across service areas within Halton to ensure that children and young people are clear about the strategies they can have in place to reduce risk.
- 4.5 Information gathered from across the country shows that children and young people had clear concerns about their own safety and that of their parents when arguments/ issues arose. A full service evaluation undertaken in Devon highlighted that there were clear gaps in children's knowledge of safety planning at the point of engagement with services and this was mirrored across other areas. Caseworkers reported that only 1 in 3 children (37%) would know how to keep themselves safe in the event of further abuse or how to get help, and half of the children reported that they did not know, or were unsure of, how to get help if they or someone they cared about felt afraid. A third were unsure of how to keep themselves safe in the event of subsequent abuse.²
- 4.6 There will be a robust performance framework that will be out in place that will measure outputs with regard to numbers coming into the service and from where, reductions in number of young people on plans etc. There will be focused outcomes that will track and monitor progress of individuals and families. These outcomes will be reinforced with the use of recognised tools

² Evaluation of 'best value' in Specialist Service Provision for Domestic Violence and Abuse in Devon: October 2010 to September 2011

such as Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) to measure Mental Wellbeing as an outcome of the interventions.

- 4.7 The performance framework will also make reference to the CAADA Insights outcomes measurement tool. The Insight tool evidences the outcomes that domestic abuse services have on victim safety, enabling services and commissioners to make a business case for service improvement and funding.
- 4.8 Progress and impact of the service will be reported into Domestic Abuse Forum, Children's Trust, Safeguarding Board and other areas as required.