

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 2 July 2015

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children and Economy

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Contracted Services for Halton Domestic Abuse
Family Support Services - Waiver of Procurement
Standing Orders

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To request the suspension of the relevant Procurement Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.6 (tendering/ competitive requirements), under the exceptional circumstances set out in this report, which places a requirement on the Council to tender or obtain quotes for contracts set up with external providers in the voluntary and independent sector.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) In light of the exceptional circumstances set out below, for the purpose of standing order 1.8.3, (c) where compliance with Standing Orders would result in a clear financial or commercial detriment to the Council. The Procurement Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.6 be waived on this occasion in order to extend the contract for the provision of Domestic Abuse Family Support Services, in order to ensure continuous care and support.**

- 2) The Strategic Director, Children and Economy be authorised, in conjunction with the portfolio holder for Children Young People and Families, to enter into the above contract until 31st March 2016.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In November 2013, Halton Borough Council commissioned Core Assets Children's Services to deliver a new domestic abuse service for children, young people and families experiencing domestic abuse to ensure a co-ordinated approach for families.

3.2 The service provides information, advice and direct support to families in a variety of methods. It works directly with parents to reduce the impact of domestic abuse on parenting capacity, helping them to understand and address the impact on the child's behaviour, both individually and in groups. It affords children and young people who have lived/ or are living with domestic abuse opportunities to share their feelings in an environment which is safe, through a discreet Art Therapy service as well as within Child Safety Planning work. The service also supports HBC Children's

Social Care with the Cheshire and Merseyside Local Authority Pre-Proceedings Protocol.

3.3 There continues to be a high level of identified need for children and young people in relation to domestic abuse. For a 12 months period the service received 96 referrals. Currently the service has offered 608 direct sessions with 97 parents.

- 50 children/young people completed one to one support aged 3 to 17
- 228 sessions have been offered to children/young people on a one to one basis
- 245 group sessions have been offered to parents.
- 171 sessions of Art Therapy have been offered to parents and children providing direct recovery work to deal with the trauma of domestic abuse.

3.4 Through the last 12 months the service has been working to capacity and has had to stop receiving referrals at times. The service does not hold a waiting list due to the levels of risk. As a result of the demand on the service, the criteria was further reviewed to work only with families who are open to Children's Social Care at a pre-proceedings level. This change both gave the service some capacity back as well as offering more scope to be able to attend professional meetings and become a more integrated part of the professional network.

3.4 The service has exceeded its contractual outputs and has added further value to the contract by drawing upon extra resources from across their organisation, thus providing a broader range of specialist skills and expertise to most effectively meet the needs of children and young people. During the life of the service, twenty two step downs have been achieved.

4.0 BUSINESS CASE FOR WAIVING STANDING ORDERS

4.1 Value for money and Competition

4.1.1 The current contracted service provider is a well-established organisation with an extensive knowledge and understanding of Halton and the needs of its local community. The current commission is less than £150,000 per annum and officers will keep the service under review to ensure desired outcomes continue to be achieved and that the method of service delivery remains the most cost effective option for the Council.

4.1.2 By recommending that existing arrangements continue the council will ensure continuous care and support will be offered to vulnerable children, young people and their families. This service supports the increased demand on to Children's Social Care particularly around the court pre-proceedings process, if the service is removed is it likely to increase the need of support from social workers. The extension will avoid disruption to service provision and allow sufficient time to further develop the highlighted points within the OFSTED action plan around the need to increase capacity of domestic abuse provision within the borough. The service contributes to both better outcomes for families as well as relieving pressure on public services, in particular children's social care.

4.2 Transparency

In order to ensure transparency it is proposed that the service will continue to submit performance reports to named lead Commissioning Manager. The frequency and detail will be agreed by the relevant Commissioning Manager as part of the contract compliance process. Subject to issues of commercial confidentiality information about the contracts would be accessible under the Freedom of Information Act and under the annual audit process.

4.3 Propriety And Security

The extension of this contract complies with Halton Borough Council's standing orders and procurement processes. The contract specification sets out requirements in respect to minimum standards for the delivery of care and support and will include comprehensive standards relating to the safeguarding of children and young people. The cost of entering into these contracts will be contained within existing available budgetary provision.

4.4 Accountability

Operational Director for Education, Inclusion and Provision would be responsible for the award of the contract. The contracts and the award process are open to PPB Scrutiny and the internal and external audit.

4.5 Position of the contract under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006

This contract is for educational and social care services, they are largely exempt from the 2006 Regulations so there is no need to advertise for expressions of interest in the official Journal.

5.0 POLICY ISSUES

5.1 The emotional health and well-being and risk taking behaviours of children and young people is a key priority for Halton Children's Trust and Halton's Health and Wellbeing Board, and within the range of plans that have been agreed by both Boards.

5.2 The service will assist with the key recommendations from the recent OFSTED inspection and subsequent action plan.

6.0 OTHER/ FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial implications of this contract will be met from existing budgetary provision.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

This service directly relates to improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The service supports key elements within

Halton's Safeguarding and Children and Young People's Plans.

7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills In Halton

A lack of sufficient service provision is likely to impact adversely upon children and young people with emotional health needs, which will subsequently impact upon their learning and future employment and skills development.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

The service support people to minimise reduce the risks of harm, and access relevant services to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

7.4 A Safer Halton

The service provides support to vulnerable children, young people and families to assist them to access appropriate service provision within their local communities. This links to satisfaction with services and overall perception of the area in which people live.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 The current contract for this service is due to end on 3rd November 2015; should the waivers not be agreed, the services will cease delivery of the provision.

Failure to have this service in place will additionally lead to vulnerable children, young people and families and services being placed under increased pressure.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 The contracts specified within this report relate to the needs of individuals and families with protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act 2010

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Equality Impact Assessment (2011)	Contracts & Commissioning Team, Second Floor, Rutland House	Barbara Butterworth