

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18 January 2018

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

SUBJECT: Preliminary Report - Request for Halton Borough Council to lead the joint procurement of Services for Missing from Home and Care and Exploitation services for young people across Cheshire for Halton, Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester and Warrington

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 In compliance with Procurement Standing Order 2.1, Executive Board approval is sought to commence a procurement process for the provision of Missing from Home, Care and Exploitation services for young people across Cheshire.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board approves Halton Borough Council to lead a joint procurement exercise of Missing from Home and Care and Exploitation services for young people across Cheshire with Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester and Warrington.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.0 Since 2008 Halton has commissioned a Missing from Home and Care service in order to fulfil its responsibilities under the statutory guidance on children and young people who go missing from home or care. The guidance serves to safeguard all runaways and to redress the imbalance that currently exists between services offered to runaways from the looked-after population and those who run away from home.

3.1 During 2010 and 2011 the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB'S) of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington with Cheshire Constabulary, have collaborated to produce a Pan Cheshire Joint Protocol for Children and Young People who run away or go Missing from Home or Care. The joint protocol seeks to identify and manage the risks and ensure a consistency in approach across borders and agencies.

- 3.2 During this time period the four local authority commissioners had a dialogue around the possibility of a pan Cheshire MFH service. All four local authorities agreed to go ahead with a joint commission with Halton being the lead authority, Catch 22 were the successful provider that started in 2012.
- 3.3 The Service works across all of the four local authority areas with clear links with Cheshire Constabulary's missing from home co-ordinators to support young people who have been notified as missing from home or care. There is a co-ordinated and organised response including return interviews will facilitate direct intervention work with children, young people and their families.
- 3.4 In April 2014 the Missing from Home service was expanded to include the emerging links around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Both elements of the service support vulnerable children, young people and families as well as assisting with local and national requirements. The current contract is in place until 30th June 2018.
- 3.5 A contract will be awarded by Halton in collaboration with Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington for an initial period of two years with a one year optional extension. This will mean the aggregate spend will be in the region of £1.8 million.
- 3.6 The Commissioners will seek the delivery of a high quality service that is effective in improving outcomes delivered by skilled practitioners which safeguards children and young people that are identified at risk. The expectation is that the Service will combine a balance of advice/guidance and direct evidenced based interventions for those that require additional support.
- 3.7 Tender submissions will be evaluated using MEAT (Most Economic Advantageous Tender) principles with a proposed weighting of 75% quality and 25% price.
- 3.8 **Value for Money**
By Halton working in collaboration with Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington with a joint commissioning approach for the service, it will stimulate market interest, promote best value and encourage competitive submissions.
- 3.9 **Transparency**
Contract details will be recorded and published on the Council's Contract Register accessible via The Chest.

All Council payments in excess of £500 are published on the Council's Open Data and Financial Information Page on the internet in compliance with the Transparency Code 2014.

3.10 Propriety and Security

Compliance with anti-corruption practices will be adhered to and any of the contracts within the subject of this report will be terminated if there is any occurrence of corruption by any organisation or their staff.

3.11 Accountability

The contracts will be performance managed and service standards monitored by commissioners and the contracts team.

3.12 Position of the Contract under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015

The light-touch regime (LTR) is a specific procedure for certain service contracts that tend to be of lower interest to cross-border competition. Those service contracts include certain social, health and education services, defined by Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) codes.

LTR will be applied to the Services for Missing from Home and Care and Exploitation Services for young people across Cheshire.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The method of procurement complies with both Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Procurement Standing Orders

4.2 The authority continues to have a statutory duty to provide services to looked after children within the authority.

4.3 The service supports the Pan Cheshire Missing from Home and Care Protocol and Pan Cheshire Child Sexual Exploitation Protocol with Cheshire Constabulary

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The independent report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council by Louise Casey CB was published in February 2015 and this has clearly highlighted Rotherham's failing to support vulnerable children and young people. This report along with others will ultimately put more scrutiny into how local authorities deal with child sexual exploitation and how they act on their duties to protect vulnerable children and young people from harm.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

This service directly relates to improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by reducing the incidents of missing and risky behaviour. This service supports key elements within Halton's Safeguarding and Children and Young People's Plans.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills In Halton

The provider will ensure that children and young people that go missing from home or care or that are vulnerable to exploitation are supported in their learning and future employment and skills development.

6.3 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.

6.4 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.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The current contracts for these services will end on 30th June 2018; should the above not be agreed, the services will cease delivery of the provision and there will be a detrimental effect on children and young people across Cheshire.

If contracts for Missing from Home and Care are not in place, this may lead to the Council being unable to fulfil its statutory duty regarding looked after children. Failure to have this service in place will additionally lead to vulnerable children, young people and families being placed under increased pressure.

Financial risk is minimised as tenders will be invited within existing budgets.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

9.0 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