

**Report of: Chief Officer, Strategy and Commissioning**

**Report to: Director of Environment & Housing**

**Date: October 2014**

**Subject: Extension and variation of the Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service with Leeds Women's Aid**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### Summary of main issues

- 1.1 The Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service is managed by a consortium led by Leeds Women's Aid (LWA). The other 2 partners are Behind Closed Doors (BCD) and HALT. The contract forms part of the programme of Housing Related Support services commissioned by Strategy and Commissioning on behalf of Environment and Housing.
- 1.2 The contract, for three years with an option of up to two 12 month extensions, has been in place with LWA since 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011. The contract was put in place after a competitive tender. The initial three year period is due to expire on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Approval is being sought for the first 12 month extension.
- 1.3 The service is experiencing significant capacity issues and since April 2014 has been supporting more clients than commissioned to support. While the service has been managing this, it has reached a point where it the situation is not considered sustainable. Approval is therefore also being sought for a variation to the contract to increase the funding by £51,325 (£564,574) and to increase the number of people supported by 30 (revised total 330).
- 1.4 Domestic violence and abuse is a Council priority has recently been identified as one of the cross departmental Breakthrough Projects.

- 1.5 There are no significant concerns in relation to performance, quality or cost of the service which continues to provide a strategically important, high quality service to support victims of domestic violence or abuse.

## **Recommendations**

- 1.6 The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve a 12 month extension to the existing contract with Leeds Women's Aid for the Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014.
- 1.7 The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve a 10% increase in funding (£51,325) for the duration of this extension, bringing the annual contract value to £564,574.

## **2 Purpose of this report**

- 2.1 This report seeks approval to enter into a 12 month contract extension period for the Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service provided by LWA, BCD and HALT.
- 2.2 It also seeks approval for a 10% increase in funding to address the increased demand for the service and the significant impact this is having on the service's capacity. The number of live cases the service is commissioned to work with will also be increased by 10%.

## **3 Background information**

- 3.1 The contract, for three years with an option of up to two 12 month extensions, has been in place with LWA since 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011 at a value of £513,249 per annum. The initial three year period is due to expire on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and approval is being sought to extend the contract for the first available extension period from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014.
- 3.2 This contract was originally put in place following a competitive tender to provide services to support people who have been victims of domestic violence or abuse.
- 3.3 The service supports people in a variety of ways but there are 4 main elements to the service:
- 1.) The Independent Domestic Violence Advisory (IDVA) element delivered by HALT. The IDVA provides independent support and advocacy including legal advice on a range of civil remedies available to clients (women and men) including non-molestation, residence and occupation orders. It supports clients through the criminal justice system to increase numbers of successful prosecutions, where this is appropriate. This includes providing advocacy in Police and Court settings. This IDVA service focuses on high risk cases subject to the Leeds Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process and provides proactive short to medium term crisis intervention through individual safety planning, personal and practical support.

- 2.) Resettlement support is provided by Leeds Women's Aid (LWA), to women leaving refuge and emergency accommodation, or clients who require a planned move to ensure their safety.
- 3.) Outreach support is provided by Behind Closed Doors (BCD), to women, men and children affected by domestic violence, enabling them to keep themselves safe, rebuild their lives and make informed choices about their futures, improve their quality of life and leave the abuse behind. The service has separate female and male outreach workers.
- 4.) Domestic Violence Telephone Helpline: LWA also operates a 24 hour telephone helpline in conjunction with the Stonham Refuge service. This helpline offers advice and information to women and men experiencing and/or recovering from domestic violence who require support; anyone concerned about family members or friends who want to find out more information about domestic violence; information on the availability of services in Leeds and professionals who want information to support their clients. LWA operates the telephone helpline during office hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).

3.4 The overall findings of the last validation visit that took place (October 2013) were positive. Workers were found to be passionate about the work they do and demonstrated in-depth knowledge and expertise in their area of work. The majority of clients who took part in the consultation were very satisfied with the service they had received.

#### **4 Main issues**

4.1 Over the lifetime of the contract there has been a steady increase in the number of people being supported. The number of live cases has been above the contracted 300 since April 2014. At the end of September 2014 the live cases numbered 328 (plus an additional 130 at various pending stages).

4.2 All workers in each element of the service are currently carrying a caseload higher than they would expect to. Combined with the facts that the number of complex cases is increasing and that there is an increasing trend of domestic violence and abuse incidents being reported across the city, this situation is not considered sustainable.

4.3 A service review of domestic violence and abuse services is being undertaken and is expected to be completed within the next 12-18 months. The contract extension being requested in this report is to ensure continuity of service provision while the review is completed and any subsequent remodelling and procurement takes place.

4.4 The review will be under-pinned by a co-production approach involving: consultation with clients, service providers and key stakeholders; data and performance analysis to identify trends and emerging issues; financial scoping; identifying equality and risk issues; and examining interfaces with other provision outside the scope of the review.

## **5 Corporate Considerations**

### **5.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 5.1.1 The Safer Stronger Scrutiny Board recently undertook a wide-ranging and extensive inquiry into domestic violence and abuse. The inquiry involved taking evidence from a wide range of partners, providers of services for both victims and perpetrators, representatives of the third sector and victims themselves. Recommendations resulting from the inquiry will inform the upcoming review.
- 5.1.2 Providers of the service are engaged in the wider work that is taking place across the city. They are represented at the Leeds Domestic Violence Strategic Group and on the Steering Group for a conference which is being planned. They are involved in work to develop a city-wide approach to measure customer satisfaction of domestic violence and abuse services. They are also being consulted on the proposed co-located multi-agency team to deliver responses to medium and high risk cases.

### **5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 5.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening has been completed and included as background information to this report. The screening indicates that a full assessment is not required because extending the contract will not involve any changes which would impact negatively on service users, staff or stakeholders.
- 5.2.2 A full Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration assessment will be completed in relation to the service review and any subsequent procurement in order to consider the impact of any changes on clients, staff and stakeholders.

### **5.3 Council Policies and City Priorities**

- 5.3.1 Domestic violence and abuse is linked to the Best Council objective of 'Supporting communities and tackling poverty'. Given the scale of the issue and the significant impact for individuals, children and families, communities and organisations, domestic violence and abuse has recently been identified as one of the priority cross departmental projects.
- 5.3.2 The service is strategically relevant, and contributes to a number of strategies and priorities. This includes the Health & Wellbeing strand of the City Priority Plan by supporting clients to live safely. The service also contributes to the Safer & Stronger Communities strand of the City Priority Plan by reducing the impact of crime across Leeds.
- 5.3.3 The service supports the delivery of the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030's aim to make Leeds the Best City for health and wellbeing where "people are supported by high quality services to live full, active and independent lives", and the Best Council Plan 2013/17 outcome of "improve the quality of life for our residents, particularly for those who are vulnerable or in poverty".

## **5.4 Resources and Value for Money**

- 5.4.1 As this is an extension to an existing contract, there is budget provision within Environment & Housing for the original contract value of £513,249.
- 5.4.2 The service was subjected to a competitive tender process when it was commissioned and was deemed to represent value for money.
- 5.4.3 The 10% increase in funding will be matched by a 10% increase in the number of live cases the service is commissioned to work with.

## **5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 5.5.1 The recommendation within this report is in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules 21.1 and there is provision for this 12 month extension within the original contract.
- 5.5.2 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.
- 5.5.3 The annual contract value is £564,574. This is therefore a Key Decision as the value of the decision is over £250,000 and as such will be subject to a call in period. A notice was published on the List of Forthcoming Key Decisions on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014.

## **5.6 Risk Management**

- 5.6.1 The 12 month extension period is required to enable continuation of the service provided by LWA, BCD and HALT through the Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service. It provides a key part of the services available to support victims of domestic violence and abuse. If this recommendation is not agreed vulnerable people will be left without the support and interventions which they rely on.
- 5.6.2 The increase in contract value is deemed necessary to ensure that the service is able to support the increasing number of people accessing the service.
- 5.6.3 There is a very small risk of challenge from other providers if the service is not exposed to competition at this time. However the original contract was awarded after a competitive tender and this extension is being requested to allow continuity of service delivery whilst a service review and subsequent procurement is undertaken. This is likely to generate competitive tendering opportunities.
- 5.6.4 The contract will continue to be performance managed by officers in Strategy & Commissioning. This includes regular reviewing of performance information and quarterly contract management meetings with the provider, at which any delivery issues are discussed. The service is delivered by a high quality, experienced staff team who are committed to providing the best service possible for a vulnerable client group.

## **6 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service provided by Leeds Women's Aid, Behind Closed Doors and HALT is a good quality and well performing service that supports people who have experienced domestic violence or abuse.
- 6.2 The current contract period expires on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2014 but there is provision for two 12 month extension periods and this report seeks approval to extend the contract for the first of these extensions from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014.
- 6.3 An increase of funding is considered necessary to address the increased demand for the service and the significant impact this is having on the service's capacity.

## **7 Recommendations**

- 7.1 The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve a 12 month extension to the existing contract with Leeds Women's Aid for the Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service with effect from 1st December 2014.
- 7.2 The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve a 10% increase in funding (£51,325) for the duration of this extension, bringing the annual contract value to £564,574.

## **8 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 8.1 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening document

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.