

Report of: Strategy and Commissioning Team

Report to: Director of Environment & Housing

Date: February 2015

Subject: Variation of the Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service contract 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 type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" 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. Tackling domestic violence and abuse is a key priority for Leeds. The Leeds Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy sets out the ambition that Leeds becomes a city with a zero tolerance approach to domestic violence and abuse, where individuals, children and families and wider communities are supported to reach their potential and lead safe, healthier and happier lives.
2. A city wide multi-agency action plan has been developed which sets out the key actions and milestones to deliver the objectives set out in the Strategy. Key indicators are identified, namely to increase reporting of domestic violence and abuse and to reduce the number of repeat incidents. A key element of this plan is the establishment of the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership. The aim of this is to improve our response to incidents of domestic violence and abuse (in particular those at high risk).
3. The success of the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership will depend on effective joint working from all key partners who have a role in ensuring the safety and support of those experiencing domestic violence and abuse. The specialist domestic violence services will play a key role.

Recommendations

1. The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve a variation to the existing Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service provided by a consortium of Leeds Women's Aid (LWA), Behind Closed Doors (BCD) and HALT to expand the remit of the service to support the partnership arrangements being developed through the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership. £35,000 has been secured from Children's Services to fund this work.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to vary the existing contract for the Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service in order to expand the remit of the service to support the partnership arrangements being developed through the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The contract for the Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service has been in place since 1st December 2011 following a competitive tender. The initial three year period expired on 30th November 2014 and the contract is in the 1st of 2 possible 12 month extensions.
- 2.2 The partners involved in the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership will work as part of a domestic violence hub. This will involve an integrated and co-located unit to provide a specialist multi agency response and pro-active interventions to improve the safety of victims of domestic violence and abuse and their children. This hub will act as a gateway where incidents are researched, risk assessed and actions and interventions agreed on.
- 2.3 The LSP will contribute to the city's aim to reduce the prevalence and impact of domestic violence and abuse by:
 - Providing a faster and more co-ordinated and consistent response to domestic violence cases through improved quality of services and information sharing between partner agencies
 - Improving planning and management of risk assessment and investigation
 - Improving processes for accessing services and expertise
 - Improving domestic violence and abuse pathways in Leeds ensuring access to more comprehensive and coordinated support
 - Preventing escalation of issues through effective risk assessment, robust decision making and targeted interventions
 - Reducing duplication of assessments and interventions
 - Improving the targeting of offenders
 - Improving the use of additional tools such as DVPO's, Claire's Law, tenancy breaches

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The presence of specialist domestic violence and abuse service providers in the hub will be key to its success. The variation will allow for 2 additional IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) to be recruited by HALT to support the hub. They will ensure effective information sharing across the partnership and support the action-planning process. In addition, Leeds Women's Aid will provide support (case processing and case research) through the current triage provision.
- 3.2 The service is currently at full capacity and is unable to provide the support required by the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership within the existing contract value. Children's Services has committed £35,000 funding to allow this additional activity to take place.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The Safer Stronger Scrutiny Board undertook a wide-ranging and extensive inquiry into domestic violence and abuse in June 2014. 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. The Leeds Safeguarding Partnership has been developed in line with recommendations from the inquiry.
- 4.1.2 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 taking place in March 2015. They are involved in work to develop a city-wide approach to measure customer satisfaction of domestic violence and abuse services. They have also been consulted on and engaged in the process of developing the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening was completed when the decision was taken to extend the current contract by 12 months. It is included as background information to this report. Varying the contract will not involve any changes which would impact negatively on service users, staff or stakeholders.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 Given the scale of the issue and the significant impact for individuals, children and families, communities and organisations, domestic violence and abuse has been identified as one of the priority cross departmental projects. Domestic violence and abuse is linked to the Best Council objective of 'Supporting communities and tackling poverty'.
- 4.3.2 Domestic violence and abuse services support 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.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 £35,000 funding for this additional activity has been secured from Children’s Services.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 The recommendation within this report is in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules.

4.5.2 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.

4.5.3 This is not a Key Decision and is therefore is not subject to a call-in period.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 The contract variation is required to enable the service to participate fully in the domestic violence hub. The providers of specialist domestic violence services are key partners in the hub and if they do not have a presence there is a risk that the new arrangements will not be as effective as they could be.

4.6.2 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.

5 Conclusions

5.1 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.

5.2 Extending provision to enable the service to play a full role in the development and implementation of the domestic violence hub will contribute to the city’s aim of reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic violence and abuse.

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Director of Environment and Housing is recommended to approve a variation to the contract for the Integrated Outreach, Resettlement and Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service to expand the remit of the service to support the partnership arrangements being developed through the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening document (completed November 2014 when contract was extended)

¹ 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.