

Report of Commissioning Officer

Report to the Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire



Date: 30.10.2017

Subject: Request to waive Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 in order to enter into a contract with Cornerstone for a period of 1 year at an annual value of £27k per annum.

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. The purpose of this report is to seek permission from the Deputy Director Children and Families to waive Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 to enter into a contract with Cornerstone for a service to support One Adoption West Yorkshire in the setting up of a peer mentoring scheme. This contract will be for a period of 1 year at an annual value of £27k and will support the delivery of an improved adoption service particularly for hard to place children.
2. Cornerstone was set up in 2015 by two adopters. It pilots a new end-user led approach to adoption with three key elements: firstly targeted recruitment for harder to place children, secondly 1 to 1 mentoring with monthly support groups and thirdly therapeutic parenting training for all adopters at the point of approval to adopt. This model is based on the principles of co-production with experienced adopters working with social workers in partnership.
3. This model was piloted across 11 local authorities over 18 months and the results evaluated in two studies Coram and the University of Sussex. In both these evaluations the findings were consistent: placements for children with more complex needs were accelerated, social worker capacity was freed up, adopters felt more confident, peer mentoring had the effect of normalising the adoptive parents' situation, parenting strategies were improved.

4. In summary the Cornerstone model showed both significant improvements in quality whilst reducing cost and generating revenue. It is anticipated that the peer mentoring will lead to more efficient use of the social work resource in OAWY.
5. This service will assist One Adoption West Yorkshire in the setting up of its own peer mentoring scheme and will provide ongoing tools and guidance to administer the scheme successfully.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that the Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire approves the waiver of Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 & 8.2 (intermediate value procurement) in order to enter into a 1 year contract with Cornerstone for the value of £27k per annum.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval from the Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire to waive Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 & 8.2 (intermediate value procurement) in order to enter into a contract with Cornerstone for the provision of a service.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Cornerstone was set up in 2015 by two adopters who secured funding from the DFE to pilot a new end user led approach to adoption. The model included three elements; targeted recruitment of harder to place children, 1 to 1 mentoring with a monthly support session, and therapeutic parenting training for all adopters at the point of approval to adopt. This model was based on the principle of co-production. Furthermore the model was predicated on introducing support right at the start of the adoption journey rather than tagged onto the end. Peer mentors would be matched with and support a family from the point of commencing their assessment through to adoption order and beyond.
- 2.2 The model was piloted across 11 local authorities over 18 months and the results evaluated in two studies (Coram and the University of Sussex). In both these evaluations the findings were consistent: placements for children with more complex needs were accelerated, social worker capacity was freed up, adopters felt more confident about the task of adoptive parenting.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 This service is needed to facilitate the setting up of peer to peer mentoring by One Adoption West Yorkshire.
- 3.2 The Head of Service for One Adoption West Yorkshire has consulted with the adopter voice across Yorkshire and Humberside regarding a peer support service. Currently adopters prefer the Cornerstone model and want to trial this before possibly going out to the wider market in the future.
- 3.3 This funding will allow One Adoption West Yorkshire to set up an in house peer mentoring scheme using the expertise of Cornerstone to guide it.
- 3.4 Cornerstone Model
 - 3.4.1 The model has three main elements;
 - 3.4.2 The targeted recruitment for harder to place children
 - 3.4.3 Mentoring with monthly group support sessions
 - 3.4.4 Therapeutic parenting training for all adopters at the point of approval to adopt.

3.5 Strategic Priorities

- 3.5.1 Cornerstone is closely aligned to a large number of important national and regional strategy, policy and priorities in Children and Families. It supports Child

Friendly Leeds and supporting families. It helps in reducing looked after children by supporting families to ensure children do not enter care post adoption.

3.6 Cornerstone Outcomes

- 3.6.1 The service will assist One Adoption West Yorkshire in the setup of its own peer mentor scheme.
- 3.6.2 Out of an estimated 65 families in assessment and 300 open cases it is estimated that 40 mentors will be needed in a year.
- 3.6.3 Cornerstone will provide the full package of policies, templates procedures, role profiles and reporting tools. There will be 4 initial set up sessions to guide One Adoption West Yorkshire to establish Peer Mentoring .Cornerstone will deliver one round of mentor training to incorporate Train the trainers sessions. Cornerstone will deliver support to set up a local corporate rewards programme. Weekly support as needed as well as quarterly face to face support sessions. Cornerstone will also give access to the mentor portal and to content for ongoing mentoring development.

3.7 Consultation and engagement

- 3.7.1 Consultation with the Adopter voice across Yorkshire and Humberside has been undertaken in reaching this decision.
- 3.7.2 This contract will allow the Cornerstone service to commence quickly.

3.8 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 3.8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening document has been undertaken and there is no impact in respect of equality and diversity.

3.9 Council policies and best council plan

- 3.9.1 The outcomes this service will be commissioned against are those within the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2015 – 2019. This contract will contribute to a number of the outcomes and priorities within the plan including the outcome to ensure all young people are safe from harm and the priority to help children live in safe and supportive families and safely. It also makes a significant contribution to the key obsession to safely and appropriately reduce the number of Children Looked After.

3.10 Resources and value for money

- 3.10.1 This report requests £27k for 1 year to enable the setting up of a peer mentoring scheme by One Adoption West Yorkshire. We anticipate through this that we will get more efficiency out of our social workers because adopters will be more self-reliant and support each other.

3.11 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

- 3.11.1 This report seeks approval to waive Contracts' Procedure Rule and 8.1 & 8.2 to enter into contract with Cornerstone for the assistance in setting up a peer mentoring scheme.
- 3.11.2 This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information under the Access to Information Rules.
- 3.11.3 Giving the work to this provider without competition could leave the Council open to a potential claim from other providers, to whom this contract could be of interest, that it has not been wholly transparent. In giving the work to this provider without competition there is a potential risk of challenge from other providers who have not been given the chance to tender for this opportunity.
- 3.11.4 The Head of Service for One Adoption West Yorkshire has consulted with the Adopter voice across Yorkshire and Humberside and there is a clear desire to use the Cornerstone model to set up a peer to peer mentoring scheme.

3.12 Risk management

- 3.12.1 In the event that this decision is not approved this could have an impact on the council's priorities as outlined in the Child and Young People's Plan 2015-2019 including the key obsession to safely and appropriately reduce the number of children looked after.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 The Deputy Director Children and Families is requested to note the contents of this report and to approve the waiver of Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1& 8.2 in order to enter into a contract with Cornerstone valued at £27,000 per annum for a period of 1 year for the delivery of the service.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire approves the waiver of Contracts' Procedure Rule 8.1 & 8.2 (intermediate value procurement) in order to enter into a contract with Cornerstone for the service at an annual value of £27k for a period of 1 year.

6 Background documents¹

- 6.1 None

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.