

Award of a contract to deliver the National Adopter Recruitment Campaign

Date: 21/02/2024

Report of: Commissioning and Market Management

Report to: Director of Children and Families

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

In support of the [National Adoption Strategy](#) a decision was made on the 10/11/2023 to undertake a competitive tender to procure a contract via the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Framework to deliver the Adoption National Recruitment campaign on behalf of Adoption England, previously known as the National Adoption team.

As a result of the tender activity this report seeks permission to award a contract to Freud Communications Ltd. The contract will commence on 1st April 2024 and will expire on 31st March 2025 with options to extend for a further 24 months and will be a value of £450,000 per annum with a maximum total value of £1,350,000 including extensions.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Children and Families is recommended to approve permission to award the contract to Freud Communications Ltd to deliver the Adoption National Recruitment campaign on behalf of Adoption England. The contract will commence on 1st April 2024 and will expire on 31st March 2025 with options to extend for a further 24 months and will be a value of £450,000 per annum with a maximum total value of £1,350,000 including extensions.

What is this report about?

- 1 A decision was made on the 10/11/2023 to procure this contract via an external procurement process. The external framework utilised was Crown Commercial Services Campaign Solutions 2 (RM6125) Framework. There were three bidders who applied for the opportunity, Freud Communications Ltd, MHP Group Ltd and Four Agency Worldwide Ltd. Following the evaluation process and tender exercise which was supported by the Procurement and Commercial Services (PACS) Freud Communications was the preferred bidder.
- 2 All three bids passed the standard selection questionnaire therefore all three were evaluated by the tender panel.
- 3 The tender evaluation panel was made up of representatives from National Adoption Recruitment Steering Group (NARSG), the Director of Policy, Research and Development at CoramBAAF, the CEO at the Consortium Voluntary Adoption Agencies (CVAA), the Head of Adoption London South and Head of Marketing and Communications Strategy, Adoption England.
- 4 One question within the method statement questions was scored by an adopted people's panel with lived adopted experience.
- 5 The bids were scored on a price/quality combined approach with 700 points allocated to quality and 300 price. In order to be shortlisted to the presentation stage bidders had to achieve a minimum score threshold of 60% overall for the method statement questions as per the published tender document. One provider did not meet the minimum score threshold therefore two were shortlisted to the presentation stage. Freud Communications Ltd scored the highest in the quality criteria and submitted a competitive price, they have therefore been identified as the successful bidder.
- 6 Social value was also included in the tender evaluation criteria.
- 7 As a result of this the tender activity; this report seeks permission to award a contract to Freud Communications Ltd on behalf of the National Adoption Strategic Team for the delivery of this contract. The contract will commence on 1st April 2024 and will expire on 31st March 2025 with options to extend for a further 24 months and will be a value of £450,000 per annum with a maximum total value of £1,350,000 including extensions.

What impact will this proposal have?

The impact will be over the next three years to ensure enough adopters are recruited from diverse backgrounds, and fully prepared, to enable early placements with excellent matches for all children with an adoption plan.

The contract will do this by:

- Raising awareness and changing perceptions of adoption.
- Attracting people from diverse communities.
- Promote evidence based benefits of adoption for children to key decision makers.
- Use National Adoption Week to promote modern adoption in an open and honest way highlighting the lived experience of adoptees.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 8 This proposal provides strong support for the refreshed Children and Young Peoples Plan and the Council's ambition to be a Child Friendly City. The outcomes delivered through this grant funding 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.
- 9 This proposal also supports the 2020-25 Best Council Plan priority to make Leeds a Child Friendly City where families are supported to give children the best start in life.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: N/A National Work

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 10 No individual wards in Leeds will be impacted by these proposals because the work will be delivered to support the National Adoption Strategy at a national and regional level.
- 11 There are no particular legal or statutory requirements to undertake consultation as part of this decision. Consultation has taken place regularly at regional RAA meetings with the National Adoption Strategic Lead and representatives from the DfE and RAA leaders to explore options on how to best continue management of the grant to achieve positive outcomes for prospective adopters and children awaiting adoption.

What are the resource implications?

- 12 The maximum budget per annum is £450,000 with a maximum total value of £1,350,000 should any extension be taken.
- 13 The duration of this contract will be dependent on an appropriate level of funding received from the DfE and positive impact on the recruitment campaign. Funding is additional revenue funding that is ring-fenced to deliver the outcomes specified in the DfE grant agreement. Procuring this contract will not create additional financial pressure to Leeds City Council. Should the contract not be awarded, Leeds City Council in consultation with the National Adoption Strategic Lead will make other arrangements for the allocated amount with other activity or not claim this amount from the DfE (paid in arrears).

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 14 The DfE funding must be spent as described in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and contribute towards the intended outcomes of the grant.
- 15 A National Adoption Strategy Team, now called Adoption England, has been established within Leeds City Council and has worked closely with representatives from the Commissioning and PACS services to ensure the tender and contract award process was undertaken robustly in line with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and Contracts Procedure Rules.
- 16 The project team will work in partnership with providers and monitor performance of the contracts to ensure they meet delivery requirements and deliver value of money.

What are the legal implications?

- 17 Undertaking this tender is in line with contract procedure rules (CPR) 9.1 and 9.2 High Value Procurement and using the CCS agreement is Compliant to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 18 This is a significant operational decision because it is being taken as a direct consequence of the key decision for permission to procure, which was published on the 10th November 2023 (ref: D56924).

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 19 Other options were considered including carrying out a full competitive tender however utilising the CCS framework was deemed the best approach.

How will success be measured?

- 20 The RAA Leader's Group is responsible for ensuring projects and activities deliver the intended outcomes of the grant and that performance is robustly monitored against the priorities of the National Adoption Strategy. Day to day contract management will be led by the Adoption England National Team.
- 21 The specification for the tender has set out specific targets and performance measures that link to the overall outcomes of the grant.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 22 The aim is to award the contract in March 2024 then commence from 1st April 2024 following a mobilisation period.

Appendices

- None

Background papers

- None