

Child Bereavement UK – child bereavement service contract

Date: November 2024

Report of: Head of Service for Children and Families, Commissioning, Market Management and Customer Services

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

The Children & Families Leadership Team received a paper relating to a review of the current commissioned services and proposals to either cease or reduce some areas of commissioned activity in order to deliver their savings target of £1.2m for 24/25.

This review indicated that £3.5m of commissioned activity could be in scope for potential reductions but an element of that total spend would not be possible to de-commission due to statutory obligations and deliver savings for 2024/25, this then generated a potential list of activity that could be subject to reductions that would enable savings to be delivered in 2024/25. Additional savings will continue to be sought whilst trying to maintain essential and statutory service provision.

As part of this programme of decommissioning the contract held with Child Bereavement UK for the delivery of the child bereavement service was deemed to be in scope for decommissioning. This contract is currently due to expire on 28th February 2025 and a request to terminate this contract early by exercising the 3-month break clause has been sought.

As part of the proposals presented to the Executive Board on the 13th December 2023 it was agreed that the proposal be subject to consultation. The consultation commenced at 5pm on the 3rd July 2024 when this was added to the list of forthcoming key decisions and the consultation period lasted until the 8th September 2024 to allow for an open consultation period.

A full impact assessment has been compiled with the provider and with various support teams within Leeds City Council to enable a successful decommission process.

The consultation has seen support noted from service users that demonstrates the impact the service has made on those supported. In addition, there is concern noted around the gap in services for children affected by bereavement. Notwithstanding the above the recommendation is that the contract be subject to termination.

Following ongoing conversation with the Director of Children and Families and Executive Member for Children and Families it has been agreed that the contract will not terminate early instead it will end as planned on the 28th February 2025.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Children & Families is recommended to enable the contract with Child Bereavement UK for the delivery of the child bereavement service to come to a close on the contractual end date of 28th February 2025.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report sets out the requirement to enable our service contract with Child Bereavement UK for the delivery of the child bereavement service to come to an end due to the need to release savings of £1.2m from our commissioned services.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 2 The end of this contract will have an impact on the wider system's capacity to support children who have been bereaved.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 3 There is an agreement in Leeds to move towards becoming a Marmot city with the aim to reduce health inequalities. The removal of this service which supports some of our most vulnerable cohorts of children and families could be detrimental to achieving this vision.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: All

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 4 Consultation as part of the key decision-making process. Open consultation from the publication of this decision on the key decision list 3rd July 2024 to 8th September 2024.

What are the resource implications?

- 5 If this contract is not terminated it will be necessary to reconsider those services deemed to be not in scope for decommissioning as classified as either essential or statutory. In turn placing delivery of our statutory responsibilities at risk.

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

- 6 Risk around system capacity to support children who have been bereaved may be impacted upon however there are a number of alternative offers available to children, young people and their families who can provide support around bereavement including direct support and telephone/online support. The new Social Emotional Mental Health third sector offer delivered by The Children's Society will provide support to an increased number of children and young people. A specific requirement of the service of includes:
The Provider must be able to offer mental health provision that ranges in complexity from early intervention in emotional crisis to more longstanding anxiety presentations resulting in different physical and emotional responses and varying levels of distress including mild to moderate depression. The work can cover issues including non-life threatening self-harm or complex bereavement. There is a risk that the end of the child bereavement service will mean there is no

long-term counselling available to children and young people. The revised SEMH third sector offer does not provide long-term counselling. Work is underway to understand the new Children's Society offer that will support children who are bereaved. In addition, The Market Place has recently relaunched its service offer to provide a bereavement offer to 11-25 year olds. Whilst limited this will also provide a level of support to those children and young people who have been bereaved.

- 7 Due to the level of interest that this service offer has received it is proposed that further work is undertaken with system partners to map out the remaining service offer, identify gaps and seek to recommission a future offer (with partners) that responds to the need for this cohort of children and young people.

What are the legal implications?

- 8 This is not a statutory duty for the local authority however if we do not terminate this contract there could be legal implications for meeting our statutory obligations if we have to reconsider talking savings from services deemed as essential or statutory.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 9 The review of commissioned activity indicated that £3.5m of commissioned activity could be in scope for potential reductions but an element of that total spend would not be possible to de-commission due to statutory obligations and deliver savings for 2024/25, this then generated a significantly reduced potential list of activity that could be subject to reductions that would enable savings to be delivered in 2024/25.

Additional savings will continue to be sought whilst trying to maintain essential and statutory service provision.

How will success be measured?

- 10 Closure of service and savings released by March 2025.

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

- 11 Contract closure December 2024 – February 2025

Strategic Commissioning Programme Lead – Joint Integrated Commissioning, Services and Partnerships

Appendices

- EDCI

Background papers

- None