

Report of Head of Complex Needs

Report to Director of Children's Services

Date: 24th January 2018

Subject: Request to approve the award of a two year contract (with the option to extend by a further three 12 month periods) to Barnardo's for the provision of the Leeds Portage Service from 1st May 2018



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. This report seeks approval to award a contract to Barnardo's for the provision of a Portage service to promote good educational outcomes for children and increase parental confidence and skills. This award follows a competitive tendering exercise.
2. The value of the contract is £185,000 per annum. This is a High Value Procurement and therefore a delegated decision is required. The cost of this contract award is under £250k and is therefore a Significant Operational decision and does not need to be published on the forward plan.
3. The contract will be for two years; commencing on 1st May 2018 and expiring on 30th April 2020. There will be three options to extend by 12 months.
4. The contract will be a fixed price; the bidders were invited to bid their best price against a price cap. The maximum contract value will be £370k for the initial two years; or £925k if all extensions are taken up.

Recommendations

5. The Director of Children's Services is recommended to approve the award of a contract to Barnardo's for the provision of the Leeds Portage Service for a period of two years (with the option to extend for two further 12 month periods) at a cost of £185k per annum.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request the award of a two year contract (with the option to extend by a further three 12 month periods) to Barnardo's for the provision of the Leeds Portage Service from 1st May 2018.

2 Background information

2.1 What is Portage?

- 2.1.1 Portage is a home visiting service for children 0 – 3 years old who demonstrate a delay of 50% or more in at least 2 areas of learning.

- 2.1.2 The Portage Service is considered to be one of the first steps on the ladder in terms of educational support for children with SEND and fits within the 'A life ready for learning' and 'Think Family Work Family' agendas. The SEND Code of Practice [2014] recommends early intervention with a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning as the best method for closing the gap and improving outcomes for C&YP with SEND. The model of Portage is designed to respond to the child's day to day environment as the context for learning and focussed around the parents' knowledge of their child's response to his/her personal world on a daily basis.

- 2.1.3 The delivery of a Portage-type service is not statutory but there is an identified need as there would be a gap for 6month-2 ½ year olds struggling to access general playgroup provision without it. All families have access to general Early Years provision, e.g. local play groups, but families with additional needs often find accessing general play group provision difficult because of their child's needs and associated challenges that presents.

2.2 National Portage Association

- 2.2.1 All Portage Services are required to register with the National Portage Association (NPA), which offers support and information to parents and professionals involved in Portage. Portage Services are required to deliver the portage model and work within set criteria. These criteria link to the particular characteristics that make portage different to other home visiting services, including good practice principles, such as; working in partnership with parents and their children to agree long term goals for the child and regularly reviewing these goals which are child-centred, effectively communicating with other professionals, and working as a Team Around the Child (TAC) and the family.

- 2.2.2 There are 105 registered Local Authority Portage Services nationally, including one in each of the fifteen local authorities in the Yorkshire & Humber region – Leeds is the only authority that currently outsources this provision.

2.3 Identified Demand

- 2.3.1 FEEE begins at 2 years old to support SEND children into pre-school [FEEE criteria must be met] and before then the Educational Psychology Team is available and have a small capacity for consultations with children but, without Portage or something similar, families of 6mth – 2 ½ year olds will feel they do not have the means or support required to access Universal Early Years provision. In the absence of a Portage Service, families may seek support from the SENIT Early Years' Service, however, without additional resources, is not manageable to offer the same level of service without employing any more staff, which would potentially have TUPE implications.
- 2.3.2 Portage is a discreet service and there are no other services delivering anything similar in Leeds. The current delivery method consists of fortnightly home visits to improve the educational attainment of the child and to empower parents/carers to support their child's development. It aims to benefit the whole family by promoting good educational outcomes for children and increasing parental confidence and skills. It currently meets the needs of a minimum of 90 children aged 0 – 3 years old and their families.
- 2.3.3 Portage is integral to plans for the Complex Needs Service within LCC Children's Services. The model contributes to the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) outcomes of doing well in learning and improving support where there are additional health needs. There is a strong evidence base supporting the level of demand and need for service. There are an increasing number of CYP with complex needs and widening attainment gaps in Leeds:
- 2.3.4 Presently, the existing provider, maintain delivery of the Portage Home-visiting Service to a caseload of 60 families. This is a similar level of service as other local authorities within the region.
- 2.3.5 The birth rate increased in 2009 and has been maintained and this will continue to be reflected in numbers of children in primary and secondary provision requiring support until at least 2040.
- 2.3.6 11% increase in in funding allocated on A band (learning and cognition) for mainstream schools including nursery pupils from 2015/16 to 2016/17
- 2.3.7 144% increase in number of pupils identified as having moderate learning difficulties in Leeds Schools between 2011 and 2016 and this increased by 43% between 2015 and 2016. (4306 pupils 2016)
- 2.3.8 Attainment in Leeds is below the national average and the need to tackle widening attainment gap is urgent. 2016 DFE comparison data; KS1 Leeds 11.3% below all LAs for pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing, maths and science.
- 2.3.9 30% increase in number of number of new EHC requests from 2013/14 to 2015/16
- 2.3.10 33% increase in number of final EHCPs issued from new assessments from 2014/15 to 2015/16

2.4 Current Arrangements

- 2.4.1 In May 2013, Leeds City Council commissioned Barnardo's to deliver Portage. Prior to this arrangement, there were two Portage services in Leeds; one delivered by LCC Complex Needs Service, and the smaller of the two provisions provided by Leeds Mencap, however, the model of split provision was inefficient. Following a competitive tender process, involving parents, carers and other stakeholders, a contract was awarded to Barnardo's and the value was increased from £101,500 to £185,000 to support additional capacity. This contract is due to end in April 2018 and a full procurement process will need to be undertaken before then to ensure continuity of provision.
- 2.4.2 It should be noted that, following the previous procurement exercise, delays to delivery occurred at the point of transition as Barnardo's, despite staff transferring to the organisation via TUPE regulations, didn't have enough trained portage workers to meet the existing demand. The recommendation of NPA is that all new portage workers are expected to complete 6 months of supervised home visits following completion of their mandatory 3-day training. This has been accommodated within the procurement timeline.

3 **Main issues**

- 3.1 This report is seeking approval from the Director of Children's Services to award a contract to Barnardo's for the provision of the Leeds Portage Service from 1st May 2018 following a competitive procurement exercise.
- 3.2 The contract will be for two years; commencing on 1st May 2018 and expiring on 30th April 2020. There will be three options to extend by 12 months.
- 3.3 The contract was be a fixed price; with bidders invited to bid their best price against a price cap. The maximum contract value will be £370k for the initial two years; or £925k if all extensions are taken up.
- 3.4 A market test exercise in September 2017 identified that there's at least three potential providers that could deliver this contract. It was agreed by the project team that, in accordance with CPR's, a full procurement exercise would be undertaken. Unfortunately, only one provider – the current provider, Barnardo's – tendered a bid.
- 3.5 The tender was evaluated on price and quality: 60% quality and 40% price.
- 3.6 The tender evaluation comprised of:
- PQQ questions.
 - Written tender questions.
 - Professional's panel.
- 3.7 The evaluation panel comprised of:
- Complex Needs Area Lead.
 - SEN Inclusion Team Lead.

- Commissioning Officer/Manager – Children’s Services.
- EPIC Leeds.
- Third-sector representative.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 Relevant stakeholders have been consulted and involved in the commissioning of this service and the successful provider will continue to consult and engage as part of ongoing development of the service.

4.1.2 EPIC parents forum have been involved in the Evaluation Team and their input has been invaluable in ensuring parent’s voices are heard in determining the procurement of this provision.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as appendix 1.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

4.3.1 This contract will support the best council plan priorities of:

- Children and young people are safe from harm.
- Children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life.

4.3.2 This contract will support Children’s Services commitment to:

- Help children live in safe and supportive families.
- Ensure that the most vulnerable are protected.
- Support children to be ready for learning.
- Improve support where there are additional health needs

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 Schools Forum has agreed that this provision will continue to be funded through Early Years DSG and there hasn’t been any indication of reduction. Both the Early Years and High Needs block DSG funding streams were due to be reviewed at a national level in 2016, however, the Government have postponed reformation plans – there has been no further news.

4.4.2 The tender was evaluated on price and quality: 60% quality and 40% price.

4.4.3 The maximum spend for Leeds in relation to this contract will be £370k for the initial two years; or £925k if all three extensions are taken up.

4.4.4 The price element of the evaluation was scored based on the overall contract value.

4.5 **Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 This contract is not subject to Call In under the provisions made in the Council Constitution.

4.6 **Risk Management**

4.6.1 A risk register is in place and managed by the steering group.

5 **Conclusions**

5.1 The recommendation contained in this report will help ensure disabled children, young people and their families continue to have access to a key preventative service. The contract award will follow a fair and transparent competitive tendering exercise, which involves meaningful involvement of stakeholders.

6 **Recommendations**

6.2 The Director of Children's Services is recommended to provide permission to commission Barnardo's to deliver the Leeds Portage service following a competitive tender. The contract will be for two years; commencing on 1st May 2018, expiring on 30th April 2020. There will be three options to extend for 12 months. The maximum contract value will be £370k for the initial two years; or £925k if all extensions are taken up.

7 **Background documents¹**

7.1 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.