

**Report of Commissioning Officer**

**Report to Deputy Director Children & Families**

**Date: May 2018**

**Subject: Request to waive Contract Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 in order to enter into contract for post removal support delivered by Home-Start Leeds**



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 & Families to waive Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 to enter into a contract with Home-Start Leeds for post removal support.
2. The value of the contract is £15,099 per annum which will enable the service to provide support to approximately 11 families at any one time. The contract start date is 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 and will expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
3. The service was originally funded via the Innovations Fund known in Leeds as the Family Valued Programme with outreach support being delivered alongside access to therapeutic support. However Family Valued funding expired at the end of March 2017. The continuation of funding for the outreach element allowed this post removal support to continue. Further, it facilitates the 'Futures' and the Home-Start Leeds Post removal provision to be adequately evaluated in order to consider the merits of a co-ordinated approach to future post removal support in the city. This work is currently ongoing. Funding is confirmed for the proposed contract period.
4. Approval is sought for a contract period of 32 months from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. This timeline coincides with funding currently available for the internally delivered 'Futures' service which provides support to families who have had a child removed in order to prevent repeat removals in future.

## **Recommendations**

5. It is recommended that the Deputy Director Children & Families approves the waiver of Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 & 8.2 in order to enter into a 32 month contract with Home-Start Leeds for the post removal service.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Deputy Director Children & Families to waive Contracts' Procedure Rules 8.1 & 8.2 in order to enter into a 32 month contract with Home-Start Leeds for the post removal service.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.2 Home-Start Leeds provides predominately volunteer led support to families with a young child to support parents to give their children the best possible start in life. The post removal outreach service provides support to families who have had a child removed with the aim of preventing future removals.
- 2.3 This service was funded under the previous innovations programme known in Leeds as Family Valued. Under the Family Valued Programme this service, alongside therapeutic support, was provided to parents who have had a child removed in order for them to access the support they needed to try and reduce the likelihood of future removals.
- 2.4 The ambition for a fully developed and sustainable post removal service for the city has been the subject of ongoing discussions between Leeds City Council's Children and Families Directorate, health commissioners within the CCGs and other partners. Work is ongoing to develop this joint service.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The provision of post removal support from Home Start Leeds was previously funded by Innovations Funding through the Family Valued Programme. This funding came to an end on 31/03/2017.
- 3.2 The need for post removal support has been clearly identified locally and nationally. In 2014 in Leeds 103 babies under the age of 1 year were removed into the care of the local authority. A more in depth study of a sample of 34 of these babies established that 41% of these were first pregnancies.
- 3.3 These numbers reveal an outstanding group of hard to reach parents who have had numerous children removed and are involved in repeated patterns of removal with little evidence of opportunities to recover or to alter their life circumstance. In 2015 28% of all children taken into care were babies; whilst this has been successfully reduced over recent years, it is still higher than the national rate of 19%.
- 3.4 The post removal support service delivered by Home Start Leeds provides support to families who have had a child removed. The service supports them to develop positive relationships with services whilst accessing specialist support to address issues such as substance misuse, domestic violence or mental health issues with the aim of reducing the likelihood of future removals.
- 3.5 Information from Home –Start Leeds shows that of the 16 families they worked with for financial year 2017/18, a total of 45 children have previously been removed.

- 3.6 Officers from the Commissioning and Market Management service, alongside other colleagues within the Children and Families Directorate and the current provider, have worked together to ensure this contract arrangement can provide a continuation of this important service whilst further discussions regarding the future of post removal support in the city take place

### **3.1 Strategic Priorities**

- 3.1.1 Post removal support contributes to a number of key strategic priorities for the Children and Families Directorate within the refreshed *Children and Young People's Plan 2015- 19 – from good to great*.
- 3.1.2 The service will particularly support the achievement of the outcome 'all children and young people are safe from harm' and priorities including 'help children to live in safe and supportive families' and 'ensure the most vulnerable are protected'. This is achieved through working proactively with parents to access the support required to address the issues that have previously led to having a child removed and therefore reducing the likelihood of future removals.

### **3.2 Performance**

- 3.2.3 The post removal service provided by Home Start Leeds under the Family Valued Programme was subject to robust contract management processes including quarterly contract management meetings. This contract will continue to be subject to the same robust contract management process
- 3.2.4 The service is commissioned to work with 11 families at any one time. A total of 45 children have been removed from the 16 families the service has worked with over 2017/18. Although ultimately the outcomes the service is looking to achieve are longer term outcomes relating to reductions in the number of repeat removals there are also a number outcomes including supporting parents to access appropriate support services which can also be measured.
- 3.2.5 The monitoring framework for this contract will endeavour to measure these range of longer term and short term outcomes, in order to best demonstrate the impact of this investment and help inform future discussion regarding the development of post removal support in the city.

### **3.3 Consultation and Engagement**

- 3.3.6 Consultation with the current provider and officers within Children and Families has taken place in order to inform these interim arrangements.
- 3.3.7 Discussions with health colleagues have also taken place in planning for a fully developed and sustainable post removal service for the city.
- 3.3.8 Further consultation will take place with a range of stakeholders in order to continue to plan the development of a fully integrated post removal service for the city.

### **3.4 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

3.4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening document has been undertaken and there is no impact in respect of equality and diversity as the new contract will continue on the basis of the existing provision.

3.4.2 Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration will continue to be considered throughout the undertaking of the Family Support Review and considerations about the future of this post removal work.

### **3.5 Council policies and Best Council Plan**

3.5.1 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 ensuring all young people are safe from harm and the priority to help children live in safe and supportive families and safely. It can also make a contribution to the key obsession to safely and appropriately reduce the number of Children Looked After by reducing the number of repeat removals.

### **3.6 Resources and value for money**

3.6.1 This report requests an investment of £15,099 per annum for a period of 32 months. This will allow the continuation of the outreach element of the post removal service previously funded via the Family Valued Programme. This investment will allow the Home Start Leeds service to work with approximately 11 families at any one time. Information provided by Home Start demonstrates that of the 16 families currently worked with over 2017/18, a total of 45 children have previously been removed. The potential for savings through reductions in repeat removals is therefore significant.

### **3.7 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

3.7.1 This report seeks approval to waive Contracts' Procedure Rule and 8.1 & 8.2 to enter into a contract with Home Start Leeds for the provision of post removal support service.

3.7.2 The decision requested is a significant operational decision and therefore not subject to call in. This report does not contain any exempt or confidential information under the Access to Information Rules.

3.7.3 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 terms of transparency it should be noted that Contracts Procedure Rules suggests that contracts of this value should be subject to a degree of advertising. It is up to the Council to decide what degree of advertising is appropriate. 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.

3.7.4 These risks may be mitigated to a degree by the fact that this report requests arrangements be put in place to ensure continuity of service and to allow the 'Futures' and the Home-Start Leeds Post removal provision to be adequately

evaluated in order to consider the merits of a co-ordinated approach to future post removal support in the city. Consideration should be given to of exposing the service to competition following these discussions. Whilst there is no legal obstacle preventing the waiver of CPRs 8.1 and 8.2, the above comments should be noted when making the final decision. The Deputy Director Children & Families should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents Best Value for the Council.

### **3.8 Risk Management**

- 3.8.1 In the event that the actions required in order to continue the delivery of post removal support are not approved, continuity of this service provision could not be maintained. This could therefore have an impact on the council's priorities as outlined in the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan 2015-2019.

## **4 Conclusions**

- 4.1 The Deputy Director Children & 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 contracts with Home Start Leeds for a period of 32 months. The value of the contract is £15,099 per annum.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Deputy Director Children & Families approves the waiver of Contracts' Procedure Rule 8.1 & 8.2 in order to enter into a contract with Home Start Leeds for a period of 32 months at an annual value of £15,099. The contract start date will be 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 with the contract expiring on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

## **6 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 6.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.