

Report of: Head of Commissioning and Market Management

Report to: Director of Children and Families

Date: 5th October 2018

Subject: Authority to procure a new Children and Families Bereavement Service

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, 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 authority from the Director of Children and Families to undertake a competitive procurement process to establish a new Children and Families Bereavement Service for Leeds.
2. The new service will fill a gap identified in a citywide review of bereavement services for children and the Leeds Childhood Bereavement Pathway, for a co-ordinated, holistic service to support children and young people, together with their family, who have been bereaved of a parent, sibling or significant other. The service will offer a range of personalised support to the child and their family or carer and signpost to specialist and other bereavement services in the city according to their circumstances and needs.
3. The service has a budget of £150,000 per annum plus a one off allocation of £15,000 in year one for an external academic evaluation and website / marketing set up costs. There is no internal provider for the service, and it is recommended that a procurement exercise is undertaken to appoint a suitably experienced provider to deliver a three year contract with the option to extend the term of the contract for a period of up to 2 years (24 months).

Recommendations

The Director of Children and Families is recommended to approve:

Undertaking a procurement exercise to commission a 3 year Children and Families Bereavement Service, with the option to extend the term of the contract for a period of up to 2 years (24 months) with a budget of £150,000 per year plus a £15,000 allocation for an external academic evaluation and website / marketing set up costs.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek authority to undertake a procurement exercise to appoint a provider for the new Children and Families Bereavement Service.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The project will create a new Children and Families Bereavement Service that will provide support and signposting advice to families where a child has lost a parent, carer, sibling or significant person. The service will be distinct from existing bereavement services and contribute to gaps in provision highlighted in the Leeds Childhood Bereavement Pathway (2017).
- 2.2 Children are rarely prepared for the death of a parent or a sibling. The loss of someone close through death is a traumatic and painful event for the majority of people. For many children and young people the death of a parent, carer or sibling can be extremely difficult. The response is an individual process and bereavement affects children and young people in different ways dependent on a variety of factors e.g. how sudden the death was; the age of the child or young person; the support mechanisms and resilience of the young person; how it is handled – both by the family and by the others around the young person, notably the response of the school for older children and young people; the closeness of the person who has died to the child or young person; the nature of the death.
- 2.3 The impact on children and young people can be profound and can run through a life course. Bereavement is one of the most stressful experiences a child can go through and grief is multi-faceted with physical, cognitive, spiritual and behavioural dimensions. Bereavement is not an issue to be dealt with once as it will continue to impact on the child / young person over time, especially as the child moves through different developmental stages. Studies have documented that parentally bereaved children are at a higher risk of a wide range of poor outcomes, for example, depression, substance abuse, low academic attainment and difficulty maintaining interpersonal relationships. Some children report being bullied as a direct result of being bereaved and feelings of insecurity are common. Research indicates children and young people experiencing the death of a close family member suffer from more physical health symptoms, accidents and serious illnesses than their peers and more likely to take risks with their health and to die early. Long term, adults bereaved in childhood, are less likely to be education to degree level, are more likely to be unemployed or long-term sick, have an increased risk of mental disorder, suicide attempt and hospitalization for a psychiatric disorder.
- 2.4 In 2014 a comprehensive review was undertaken of the services offered in Leeds for children and young people who have suffered a bereavement. A range of bereavement services were identified along with a number of gaps in provision. The findings were presented to the Children and Families Trust Board and actions were put in place to address some of the gaps. Officers from Public Health led on

the development of the 2017 Leeds Childhood Bereavement Pathway and supporting guide for professionals, to ensure that those working with children and young people are aware of the citywide approach to addressing the needs of bereaved children as well as understanding existing service provision.

- 2.5 It is estimated that around 4% of children and young people have been bereaved by a parent or sibling, and this could rise to 7% by the age of 18. The My Health My School Survey indicates that in the last twelve months, 2.72% and 2.57% of primary and secondary school pupils reported the death of a parent or sibling in the previous twelve months. This would equate to 3,281 young people in 2016/17.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The Pathway identified a number of services in Leeds that support bereaved children including; Martin House Hospice, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Leeds City Council's SAD Events Team and The Marketplace.
- 3.2 The project team carried out consultation on current services and gaps for children and families through an online survey and a workshop held at Leeds Town Hall on 6th June. 41 online surveys were completed and 33 people attended the workshop. Around a third of those participating in the consultation had lived experience of supporting bereaved children and the rest had a professional interest in bereavement support or children and family services. Feedback from the parents who had bereaved children were strongly in favour of a key worker model which provided support from the outset of a bereavement and is flexible enough to meet a range of needs.
- 3.3 Additional consultation was carried out with existing service providers, and further evidence on gaps was provided by Northpoint Wellbeing and the Jane Tomlinson Foundation, who have both been mapping services and investigating gaps in provision for bereaved children.
- 3.4 The consultation highlighted a lack of accessible information and awareness about services available in the city, constraints in terms of length of support or barriers to access and, a lack of support for the family immediately following a sudden death.
- 3.5 There is a comprehensive directory of bereavement support services published on the Leeds Bereavement Forum website. Each service has a differing speciality which makes it difficult for bereaved families to identify which service would best suit their needs.
- 3.6 Training for schools is offered through the Healthy Schools team, however many respondents to the consultation highlighted the differing levels of support offered to bereaved children in school, and some poor practice in dealing with the behaviour of a bereaved child.
- 3.7 The project team has developed a specification attached as Appendix 1 for a service that will address gaps in provision and deliver a single point of contact for bereaved families to access advice and support. The service will directly benefit bereaved children and families and include several elements including information and signposting, a key worker for families who need one and group work / peer support.
- 3.8 As this is new service, the specification allows for flexibility within the model to adapt to changes in demand. Existing service providers will also benefit from the

service through timely referrals, managing capacity within the sector and avoiding more costly interventions further along the bereavement process.

- 3.9 The value of the contract is £150,000 per annum, and this value will be a cap within the tender documents. An additional £15,000 one off funding has been made available to help the new provider set up a website and produce marketing materials, and pay for an external academic evaluation of the service.
- 3.10 The proposed service start date is 1st February 2019 following a mobilisation period. Procurement Officers have prepared a procurement timetable with roles and responsibilities clearly assigned.
- 3.11 There is no internal service provider who can deliver this service, or any existing contractual arrangements that can be utilised. Officers consulted with the service manager of the SAD Events Team which provides a limited number of counselling sessions in school. The service model required a more holistic family support model which is currently outside of the team's specialism. Therefore a procurement exercise will be undertaken in order to identify a provider to deliver this service.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 Consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders, bereavement service providers and families with lived experience. The consultation consisted of a workshop, an online survey and one to one interviews.
- 4.1.2 The Executive Members for Children and Families and Health, Wellbeing and Adults have been consulted and are supportive of the proposed model.
- 4.1.3 The service delivery model was published on Yortender and circulated to the consultation participants. The model was well received and the specification was updated with clarification on the Key Worker role

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An equalities screening assessment has been completed for the new service. It is important that the service is culturally sensitive as approaches and beliefs around death differ within our diverse population. The screening indicated that a full ECDI was not required as the service is open to all who meet the criteria and the specification requires the provider to ensure that protected characteristics, language and cultural needs are taken into account when promoting and providing a personal service to the family.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 The service contributes to the Best Council Plan's Child Friendly City priority of 'Improving social, emotional and mental health' by offering targeted and timely support at a crucial point in a child's life. It also delivers the outcomes identified in the Leeds Childhood Bereavement Pathway.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 A budget of £150,000 per annum has been approved for the service plus a £15,000 one off allocation towards the external academic evaluation and website / marketing set up costs. Bids will be assessed on quality and price on a 60/40 ratio. The specification is clear that the service must link with existing bereavement services to ensure that there is no duplication and focuses on gaps in the system to deliver maximum value for money.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 Based on the budget, this is a significant operational decision and will not be subject to call-in. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential within the council's access to information rules.

- 4.5.2 The procurement will be overseen by Procurement and Commercial Services to ensure compliance with legislation and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 A risk log has been created for the project and will be updated regularly by the project team.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The commissioning of the new Children and Families Bereavement Service will complement existing bereavement services and fill the gap for a holistic service centred around the family regardless of the circumstances of the death.
- 5.2 The key worker model will provide value for money and responds to the feedback gathered during the consultation process.
- 5.3 The appointment of an external academic evaluator will measure the outcomes of the service and provide a robust evidence base for future commissioning decisions.

6 Recommendations

The Director of Children and Families is recommended to approve:

Undertaking a procurement exercise in order to commission a 3 year Children and Families Bereavement Service, with the option to extend the term of the contract for a period of up to 2 years (24 months) with a budget of £150,000 per year plus a £15,000 allocation in year one for an external academic evaluation and website / marketing set up costs.

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.