

Report of Commissioning and Market Management Team

Report to the Director of Children & Families

Date: 15/10/18

Subject: Counselling in Children's Centres - Permission to Procure



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. Leeds Children and Families Services currently commissions Northpoint to deliver an individual counselling service to parents/carers of young children (including ante-natal) in the Children's Centres located in the 30% most deprived areas of Leeds.
2. The contract was let until 30th June 2017 with two 12 month extension periods, which have both been invoked until 30th June 2019.
3. A project team has been established to scope the future needs of this service and it is proposed a new contract is commissioned by way of competitive tender to start on 1st July 2019.
4. The project team wish the contract to be for three years; commencing on 1st July 2019 and expiring on 30th June 2022. There will be two options to extend by 12 months.
5. The contract will be a fixed price; with bidders invited to bid their best price against a price cap. The maximum contract value will be £160k p.a.

Recommendations

- 1 The Director of Children and Families is recommended to approve the procurement of a counselling service to be delivered in the Children's Centres located in the 30% most deprived areas of Leeds via competitive tender. The contract will be for three years; commencing on 1st July 2019, expiring on 30th June 2022. There will be two options to extend of 12 months. The maximum contract value will be £160k p.a.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Director of Children & Families to undertake a competitive procurement exercise to procure a counselling service to be delivered in the Children's Centres located in the 30% most deprived areas of Leeds.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Leeds Children and Families Services currently commissions Northpoint to deliver an individual counselling service to Parents/Carers of young children (including ante-natal to 5 years) in the Children's Centres located in the 30% most deprived areas of Leeds. This is an early intervention emotionally responsive service to prevent unnecessary escalation to more targeted services.
- 2.2 The provision of this service plays a key role in meeting the obsessions and outcomes within the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan, particularly that *all young people are safe from harm*. Key outcomes of the service are to enable children to live in safe and supportive environments and for parents to maximise emotional health and wellbeing such that they are able to support and parent in the best possible way.
- 2.3 The contract with Northpoint is for three years, with the option to extend by a further two 12 month periods. This was awarded in 2014 following a competitive tender and all extension periods have now been invoked. The contract is due to expire on 30th June 2019.
- 2.4 The contract has performed very well and there is an ongoing need for the service. The contract consistently exceeds targets and case studies illustrate the positive impact of the service. As there are no further extensions available and the preferred option to secure continued provision is to undertake a competitive procurement exercise.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Children and Families Services wish to commission an organisation to deliver counselling in Children's Centres located in the 30% most deprived areas of Leeds from 1st July 2019.
- 3.2 The purpose of this report is to request approval from the Director of Children & Families Services to undertake a competitive procurement exercise to procure this service.
- 3.3 A bidder's event is to be held in November 2018, shortly after the tender is advertised. Bidders will be provided with information on the aims of the service and an opportunity will be provided for bidders to ask any questions about the tender/service.
- 3.4 The contract will be for three years; commencing on 1st July 2019, expiring on 30th June 2022. There will be two options to extend of 12 months each.

- 3.5 The contract will be a fixed price; with bidders invited to bid their best price against a price cap. The maximum contract value will be £160k p.a.
- 3.6 The tender will be evaluated on price and quality: 60% quality and 40% price.
- 3.7 The tender evaluation will comprise of:
- Written tender questions.
 - Interview & presentation.
- 3.8 The evaluation panel will comprise of representatives from:
- Early Start – Children & Families Services
 - Commissioning & Market Management – Children & Families Services.
 - Health – 0-19 service
 - Parent(s)
- 3.9 It is likely that TUPE will apply with this tender should there be a change in provider although this will be limited as many counsellors are self-employed.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 A project team has been established, which includes representatives from:
- Early Start
 - Health – 0-19 service
 - Children & Families Commissioning & Market Management
 - Procurement service
- 4.1.2 Prior to the previous tender exercise, significant consultation was undertaken to review the specification and inform the tender. The specification has proved fit for purpose but this will be revised with further consultation with parents and other stakeholders. Performance and outcomes data from the current contract will also inform this process.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 An equality impact screening form 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 keeping people safe from harm and reducing the number of children looked after.
- 4.3.2 This contract will support Children and Families Services commitment to:
- Help children and parents to live in safe, supportive and loving families
 - Ensure that the most vulnerable are protected

- Support families to give children the best start in life
- Increase the number of children and young people participating and engaging in learning
- Improve achievement and attainment for all
- Improve at a faster rate educational progress for children and young people vulnerable to poor learning outcomes
- Improve social, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The maximum contract value for the contract is £160k p.a. This budget has been confirmed as being available and sits within the Learning for Life service area.
- 4.4.2 The price element of the evaluation will be scored based on the overall contract value. The bidder with the lowest total cost will score the highest in the price evaluation. This approach will help to drive down the cost.
- 4.4.3 Bidders will be asked to submit a service cost analysis form (SCAF) which will provide a full breakdown of the bidder's price.
- 4.4.4 Quality will be evaluated by way of written questions and presentation/interview, which will be structured to test the bidder's understanding of the service specification and the expertise and knowledge required to deliver such a service. Each question will be scored from 0-10, with quality thresholds of 60% set for key questions. The bidders who meet these thresholds will be invited for presentation/interview.
- 4.4.5 The evaluation panel will consist of representatives who have expertise in this area and will include a parent or parents who will evaluate the bidder's presentation/interview.
- 4.4.6 This contract will provide a valuable preventative service, which aims to prevent unnecessary escalation to more targeted services.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 The annual value of the contract is up to £160k and this is therefore a significant operational decision and not subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 A risk register will be produced and managed by the project team. The timetable is tight and so there is a risk of this slipping and an interim contract needed to ensure service continuity. This will be monitored closely to ensure there is no gap in contract. The contract terms and conditions will include a break clause in case the budget cannot be secured for this provision in future years.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 This decision represents the most fair and transparent method of procuring a valuable, early intervention service which aims to prevent unnecessary escalation to more targeted services. Value for money will be obtained by adhering to a robust tender process where applications will be evaluated against a 60% quality and 40% cost evaluation criteria.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Director of Children and Families is recommended to approve the procurement of a counselling service to be delivered in the Children's Centres located in the 30% most deprived areas of Leeds via competitive tender. The contract will be for three years; commencing on 1st July 2019, expiring on 30th June 2022. There will be two options to extend of 12 months. The maximum contract value will be £160k p.a.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 N/A

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.