

Report of Commissioning and Market Management Team

Report to Director of Children & Families

Date: 04/02/19

Subject: Counselling in Children's Centres – Contract Award



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: 10.4 (3) Appendix number: 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	No

Summary of main issues

1. This report seeks approval to award a contract to Northpoint Wellbeing for the provision of 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. This award follows a competitive tendering exercise. Permission to procure was approved on 26/10/19.
3. The value of the contract is £159,969 p.a, commencing on 1st July 2019 and expiring on 30th June 2022. The contract will be for three years so the contract value over the life of the contract will be £479,907. There is one 24 month option to extend the contract.
4. The award criteria for this contract were based on price and quality: price 40% and quality 60%.
5. Northpoint Wellbeing were the only bidder for the contract but met all minimum quality thresholds within the tender.
6. Awarding this contract will:
 - 6.1. Support the best council plan priorities of:
 - o keeping people safe from harm; and
 - o reducing the number of children looked after.

7. Recommendations

8. The Director of Children and Families is recommended to approve the award of a contract to Northpoint Wellbeing for the provision of 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. The contract will be for 3 years; commencing on 1st July 2019, expiring on 30th June 2022. The value of the contract is £159,969 p.a. The contract will be for three years so the contract value over the life of the contract will be £479,907. There is one 24 month option to extend the contract.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request the award of a contract to Northpoint Wellbeing for the provision of 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. The contract will be for 3 years; commencing on 1st July 2019, expiring on 30th June 2022. The value of the contract is £159,969 p.a. The contract will be for three years so the contract value over the life of the contract will be £479,907. There is one 24 month option to extend the contract.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Leeds Children and Families Services currently commissions Northpoint Wellbeing 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 current 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 request to award a contract to Northpoint Wellbeing is made following a competitive procurement process and is based on a fair and transparent evaluation of price and quality.
- 2.5 A competitive procurement exercise commenced in December 2018.
- 2.6 The tender evaluation comprised of:
- Standard Selection Questionnaire (SSQ).
 - Written tender questions.
 - Interview.
- 2.7 The evaluation panel comprised of four representatives as follows:
- Early Start - Children's Centres & Early Start Lead
 - Children's Centres – Children's Centre Manager
 - 0-19 Service – Service Manager
 - Children & Families Commissioning & Market Management: Commissioning Programme Manager.

- A parent/carer representative was sought for the interview but none could be secured.

- 2.8 Bidders were required to submit a method statement, consisting of a series of responses to questions based on the requirements and outcomes stated in the service specification and were also required to complete and submit a pricing schedule. Three of the method statement questions carried a minimum quality threshold of 60%.
- 2.9 Bidders were then invited to attend an interview which consisted of two questions, totalling 200 points.
- 2.10 Tender documents were prepared using standard procurement documentation. The award criteria were based on a split of 60% for the quality of the submission and 40% for the price submitted. This quality/price evaluation split was agreed by the Project Team and was approved by the Head of Commissioning and Market Management.
- 2.11 This is an existing service and the current provider, Northpoint Wellbeing, were the only bidder for the tender. However, they scored above average (of the points available) and met all of the minimum quality thresholds.
- 2.12 The Procurement Service checked the SSQ responses, to ensure the organisation is fit able to deliver the service of this type.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 There are no specific implications or impact on a specific ward or wards as the provision delivered city wide with a focus on Children's Centres located in the 30% most deprived areas of Leeds.
- 3.2 The Lead Member for Children and Families Services has been briefed on the re-commissioning of this service and will be updated on the outcome.
- 3.3 The recommendation contained in this report will have positive implications for vulnerable children and families.
- 3.4 The provider will be informed of the decision as soon as possible. Officers within Learning for Life and Commissioning and Market Management, will work with the provider to mobilise the new contract.
- 3.5 This tender has not resulted in a change of provider. Therefore most of the risks associated with mobilising a new contract are not applicable.
- 3.6 Commissioning the service internally was not the preferred option because Children and Families Services does not have the expertise to deliver this activity.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.7 Consultation and Engagement

4.7.1 A project team was established which includes representatives from:

- Early Start
- Children's Centres
- 0-19 Service
- Children & Families Commissioning & Market Management.
- Procurement Service

4.7.2 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.

4.8 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.8.3 An equality impact screening form has been completed and is attached as appendix 1.

4.9 Council policies and Best Council Plan

4.9.4 This contract will support the best council plan priorities of keeping people safe from harm and reducing the number of children looked after.

4.9.5 This contract will support Children's 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.

4.10 Resources and value for money

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

4.10.2 The value of the contract is £159,969 p.a. this is slightly under the total budget and current contract value of £160k per annum. The contract will be for three years so the contract value over the life of the contract will be £479,907. There is one 24 month option to extend the contract.

4.10.3 The price element of the evaluation was scored against a maximum contract value. This approach has contributed to driving down the cost of provision.

4.10.4 Robust contract monitoring has been written into the service specification and will be monitored by Children and Families Services Commissioning & Market Management team to ensure the contract delivers value for money.

4.11 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.11.1 Appendix 2 to this report has been marked as confidential under Access to Information Procedure Rules 10.4 (3) on the basis that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) which, if disclosed to the public, would, or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of that person or of the Council.

4.11.2 The value of this contract is £159,969 p.a. and is therefore a significant operational decision. The decision is not subject to call in.

4.12 Risk Management

4.12.1 If this recommendation is not approved, a highly valued, preventative service would be lost, where there is evidence of high levels of service satisfaction from parents/carers and practitioners and positive impact on children; including the important role counselling has played in helping cases to be stepped down from child protection plans and helping reduce the need for children to be taken into care.

4.12.2 A risk register is in place and has been maintained throughout the project. One risk identified was lack of interest/capacity in the market. When the contract was last procured there were a total of six bids received and the project team felt there was a sufficient market to attract competition. Although the tender did attract some interest, with 14 organisations viewing the advert and tender documents, there was only one bid received from the incumbent provider. Four organisations gave reasons why they opted not to bid. These reasons included being unable to supply or be competitive and being too small an organisation to bid for the whole tender.

4.12.3 The tender submission received was of high quality and came in just under budget.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The recommendations contained within this report will help ensure continued delivery of this valuable, early intervention service which aims to prevent unnecessary escalation to more targeted services. The contract award follows a fair and transparent competitive tendering exercise.

6 Recommendations

6.1 The Director of Children and Families is recommended to approve the award of a contract to Northpoint Wellbeing for the provision of 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. The contract will be for 3 years; commencing on 1st July 2019, expiring on 30th June 2022. The value of the contract is £159,969 p.a. The contract will be for three years so the contract

value over the life of the contract will be £479,907. There is one 24 month option to extend the contract.

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.