



Report of: Head of Commissioning

Report to: Director of Resources and Housing

Date: 6th June 2019

Subject: To seek authority to procure a 'Support service for women who are sex working in Leeds' and waive Contract Procedure Rule 15.2 (tender evaluation)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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 authority to procure a support service for women who are sex working in Leeds, focussing on those most at risk with the most complex needs. The proposed service requirements include provision of enhanced support to increase healthy behaviours and reduce harm, co-production activity with women involved in sex work, partnership working to develop effective service pathways and helping women to exit sex work.
2. Current services are commissioned predominantly from one third sector organisation (Basis Yorkshire) on a mixture of short term contracts and grants from both the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Council. The investment in this commissioned work supports key Council and CCG strategies and initiatives.
3. There are a wide number of issues (health, criminal justice, housing, social services) affecting these women meaning that there is a clear need for a single holistic service where women can easily access a trusted partner who is able to provide a full range of advice and support.

4. The service funding envelope is £188,000 per annum, which comprises funding from the Council and CCG. The proposed start date for the new service is 1st April 2020 for a period of 3 years, with the option to extend by up to 36 months in any combination. The total value of the contract over the initial contract period is £564,000.
5. This report also seeks a waiver of Contract Procedure Rule 15.2 (tender evaluation) in order that the evaluation of bids be determined on a 100% quality basis to ensure that the highest quality and most appropriate tender is awarded the contract, and that full use is made of the available budget to meet increasing demand and to maximise the outcomes of the service.

Recommendations

The Director of Resources and Housing is recommended to approve:

- The procurement of the service to support women who are sex working using the open procedure;
- The contract period being three (3) years, with the option to extend for up to 36 months with a budget of £188,000 per annum;
- The waiver of CPR 15.2 to enable the tenders to be evaluated on the basis of 100% quality.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the authority to procure a support service to work with women who are sex working in Leeds focussing on those most at risk with the most complex needs. The service will provide support and advice to the women to keep them safe, enable them to make positive health and lifestyle choices, and help them to exit sex work.
- 1.2 This report also seeks authority to waive CPR 15.2 to allow the tender evaluation panel to base their decision on a 100% quality basis with no weighting for price.

2. Background information

- 2.1. Services to support women involved in sex work are commissioned across council services predominately from one third sector organisation (Basis Yorkshire) on a mixture of short term contracts. The CCG also provides Basis Yorkshire with some grant funding.
- 2.2 The existing commissioned services who support women involved in sex work in terms of their health and wellbeing are:

Commissioner	Provider	Contract Name	Current End Date	Period of Extension	Contract Value per annum
LCC – Commissioning (funded by Resources & Housing)	Basis Yorkshire	New Futures	31 st March 2020	N/A	£16,717
LCC – Commissioning (funded by Resources & Housing)	Basis Yorkshire	Intensive support worker service	30 th September 2020	6 months	£44,844
LCC – Public Health	Basis Yorkshire	Improving the health of women involved in the commercial sex scene	31 st March 2020	N/A	£36,520
CCG	Basis Yorkshire	Sex worker advocacy	31 st March 2020	N/A	£45,000

- 2.3 There is also specialised support available for women who are sex working within other services across the city. These include:

- The Joanna Project, a voluntary sector organisation which provides support to women with complex needs who are sex working in the area and works closely with other agencies such as Basis and Forward Leeds.
- Forward Leeds, the alcohol and drug service for Leeds, provides intensive support to women involved in sex work with a drug and/or alcohol addiction via a number of workers.

- The integrated Sexual Health Service offer outreach contraception and STI screening.
- Housing Leeds (part of Leeds City Council) provide outreach housing advice and support to women involved in sex work and also making links to supported accommodation.
- West Yorkshire Police have a designated Sex Worker Liaison Police Officer.

2.4 The outcomes for clients from the support they receive from these services are positive, with women reducing their sex working, accessing employment, training and education, improving their general health and sexual health, improving access to housing and benefits, and receiving treatment for their addictions and mental health issues.

2.5 The Council's existing provider, Basis Yorkshire, recently conducted a Health Needs Assessment in Leeds, covering a period of 12 months, of women sex working both outdoors (29) and indoors (34). The Health Needs Assessment identified that a service is needed to provide essential support and assistance with sexual health and drug addiction, but also to meet wider needs, including more acute physical and mental health needs, financial needs (including access to benefits), housing needs and educational needs. It also emphasised the need to build long term relationships with support workers and build confidence and skills to be able to seek advice, healthcare and build self-management. Care needs to focus on the individual, as well as responding to the immediate issues.

3. Main issues

3.1 Moving forward, it is the Council's intention to procure a single holistic service to meet the support needs of women involved in sex work and to work closely with other partners in the city.

3.2 The proposed start date for the new service is 1st April 2020 for a period of 3 years, with the option to extend by up to 36 months in any combination.

3.3 The proposed service will work with women who are sex working in Leeds, focussing on those most at risk. The proposed service requirements include co-production activity with women involved in sex work, provision of enhanced support to improve healthy behaviours and reduce harm, partnership working to develop effective service pathways and helping women to exit sex work. The service will be flexible to the changing needs and priorities of both the women themselves and commissioners. A single contract would also avoid potential service duplication and be resource efficient in terms of contract management.

3.4 A consultation exercise has been undertaken to inform the service review and develop the new service arrangements. A key finding is that women who are sex working in Leeds need support to access emergency and long-term accommodation where they feel safe. The consultation also reflected the complex needs of this client group including domestic abuse and mental health issues, drug and alcohol

addiction, vulnerability of migrant working women, stigma and the need for services accessible to women who have suffered trauma.

3.5 The proposed new service objectives are:

- Prevention
 - work with women who are at risk of starting sex work to prevent them from beginning to sex work and becoming reliant on it
- Engagement & Outreach
 - undertake outreach work to reach and engage with women who are sex working in order to develop trusted relationships with them.
- Co-production
 - plan and design the service with the women to meet their needs and identify their priorities
- Enhanced support and pathways
 - work with women involved in sex work to reduce harm and encourage healthy behaviours, and improve access to services to achieve positive health outcomes
- Improving knowledge and understanding
 - work with healthcare professionals and statutory services to upskill and educate them on the needs of women involved in sex work
- Partnership and collaborative working
 - work with services and third sector organisations to develop effective pathways, and signpost and facilitate access for women involved in sex work to services (e.g. drug and alcohol support services)
 - work with key partners to develop and manage outcomes of key strategies for Leeds to improve the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable women involved in sex work
- Exiting
 - support women involved in sex work to stabilise and facilitate access to support services such as employment and training, and housing and for the women to connect with positive social networks

3.6 This report seeks authority to waive CPR 15.2 in order that the tender evaluation be awarded on a 100% quality basis to ensure that the highest quality and specialist proposal is successful and the service makes full use of the budget available to meet demand and maximise outcomes.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1. Consultation and engagement

4.1.1. A consultation process has been undertaken to inform the design of the new service. A questionnaire has been circulated to key stakeholders including West Yorkshire Police, Forward Leeds drug and alcohol support service, Basis Yorkshire, Engage Leeds visiting support service, Together Women Project, and Beacon supported housing service.

- 4.1.2. Basis Yorkshire and Joanna Project have asked service users to complete questionnaires, the results of which have been considered as part of the consultation for the review. Key issues identified include social isolation, access to appointments and the need for support to access training, education and develop employability skills, e.g. CV writing.
- 4.1.3. Joanna Project also carried out an evaluation of their service in 2018, where they consulted with service users with regard to their needs, the findings of which will be included as part of the consultation for the review.
- 4.1.4. The project team also approached other core UK cities to assess what services are available to support women involved in sex work in comparable local authority areas.

4.2. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1. An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening has been completed in respect of the recommendations in this report.

4.3. Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1. This investment in commissioned work to address the support needs of women who are sex working is made within the context of supporting the outcomes of key local ambitions and strategies including:

- Council's ambition for Leeds to be a compassionate and caring city
- Vision for Leeds 2011-2030 to be the best city in the UK
- Best Council Plan 2018/19 - 2020/21 – Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities
- Community Safety Strategy 2018-21 – Safer Leeds
- Forthcoming Reducing Re-offending Strategy – this is likely to reflect the priority set out in the West Yorkshire Reducing Reoffending Strategy for certain particularly impacted and/or vulnerable groups. This includes those serving short sentences, female offenders, those from BME backgrounds and care leavers
- Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy 2018-23
- Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021 whose ambition is 'Leeds will be the best city for health and wellbeing' and vision is 'Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest'
- Leeds Housing Strategy 2016-2021
- Leeds CCG Strategic Plan 2018/19 – 2020/21 – whose ambition is that 'Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest.'

- Leeds Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2018 – 2021 by delivering health promotion and helping to increase the number of successful completions from drug and alcohol treatment programmes to support recovery
- Leeds Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2022; sex working women are now a priority group highlighted within the strategy.

4.4. Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1. Undertaking a procurement exercise will help achieve value for money through the receipt of competitive and high quality tenders. The tender submissions will be evaluated based on 100% quality to ensure that the service delivers to all the requirements set out in the tender documentation and to make use of the available budget to meet increasing demand.
- 4.4.2. The budget for the service is £188,000 per annum, which comprises funding from Public Health (£36,500), Resources and Housing directorate (£61,500), Communities and Environment directorate (£45,000) and Clinical Commissioning Group (£45,000).
- 4.4.3 There will be resource efficiencies in terms of streamlined contract and performance management.

Climate Emergency

- 4.4.4 This service will provide support and advice to women who are sex working and operate in areas and communities where they are working with aim to improve access and engagement, and reduce the need to travel. The service aims to help the women improve their health and well-being and exit sex work into sustainable lifestyles, including accessing employment, training and education opportunities and connecting with positive social networks. This will maximise social value.
- 4.4.5 The service specification requires the service to meet all Legislation, Guidance and Good Industry Practice in environmental management and the objectives of the Authority's sustainability policies. Officers from Adults and Health will work with the service through the established contract management process to ensure the service is proactively seeking to minimise its carbon footprint and thereby support the Council in achieving its ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

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

- 4.5.1. Due to the contract value and the waiver of Contract Procedure rule 15.2, the authority to procure decision will be 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 (PACS) to ensure compliance with legislation and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 4.5.3. The decision to award is a significant operational decision and is not eligible for call in.

4.6. Risk management

4.6.1. The Adults & Health Commissioning Team is working closely with PACS to manage the risks associated with the procurement. The risks to the existing organisation (Basis Yorkshire) in respect to this procurement are being closely monitored by the project team.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1. The review identified that a service is needed to provide women involved in sex work with essential support and assistance with sexual health and drug addiction, but also to meet wider needs, including more acute physical and mental health needs, housing needs (including emergency accommodation), financial needs (including benefits) and educational, training and employment support and advice.
- 5.2. This report seeks the authority to procure a single service to meet the needs of women who are sex working. The service will prevent and divert individuals considering or newly engaged, away from sex working; provide advice and support to the women to ensure they can access the services they need; develop trusted relationships with the women and work with them to change their behaviour and make positive choices; provide intensive support programmes for the women with the most complex needs; co-produce a package of support with women who seek to exit sex work, and work in partnership with other organisations to improve access to services and implement initiatives aimed at safeguarding women who are sex working.
- 5.3. This report also seeks authority to waive CPR 15.2 in order that the tender evaluation be awarded on a 100% quality basis to ensure that the highest quality and specialist proposal is successful and the service makes full use of the budget available to meet demand without compromising on quality.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Director of Resources and Housing is recommended to approve:
 - The procurement of the service to support women who are sex working using the open procedure;
 - The contract period being three (3) years, with the option to extend for up to 36 months with a budget of £188,000 per annum;
 - The waiver of CPR 15.2 to enable the tenders to be evaluated on the basis of 100% quality.

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.

