

Report of Head of Public Health

Report to Director of Public Health

Date: 2nd December 2020

Subject: Extension of contract for a 24-month period with Touchstone for the Mentally Healthy Leeds service in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 21.1 (contract extensions)

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:	
Appendix number:	

Summary

1. Main issues

- Following a competitive procurement exercise, Touchstone was awarded a contract to deliver the Mentally Healthy Leeds (MHL) service, which began on 1st April 2018 for an initial period of three years, with provision for extensions for up to a total of 24 months. The value of the contract is £293,974.00 per annum.
- The purpose of the service is to reduce mental health inequalities and improve mental wellbeing, through reducing social isolation, increasing resilience and reducing stigma and discrimination.
- The initial contract period is due to expire on 31st March 2021.

2. Best Council Plan implications (see the [latest version of the Best Council Plan](#))

- This provision addresses the health and wellbeing priorities of “*Reducing health inequalities and improving the health of the poorest the fastest*” and “*Supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles*”.

3. Resource implications

- The cost of the contract extension is met by revenue Public Health funding and there is provision within the Public Health budget for this contract extension.
- In light of the council's current financial situation, it is acknowledged that efficiencies may be required in future on this contract and these would be the subject of a contract variation or reflected in the final contracting documentation.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Public Health is recommended to approve the available extension of two years to the existing contract with Touchstone-Leeds for the Mentally Healthy Leeds service, with effect from 1st April 2021 and to the value of £293,974.00 per annum (total value £587,948.00).

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to extend the Mentally Healthy Leeds contract with Touchstone-Leeds for a period of two years.

2. Background information

- 2.1 In 2017 Leeds City Council commissioned a service for reducing mental health inequalities and improving the mental wellbeing of communities most at risk of poor mental health. After a competitive procurement exercise, the contract was awarded Touchstone. The contract started on 1st April 2018 for an initial period of 3 years, with provision for extensions for up to a total of 24 months. The initial contract term expires on 31st March 2021.

- 2.2 The aims of the service are met through:

- promoting and maintaining positive relationships: e.g. reducing social isolation through volunteering and peer support programmes, attending social groups
- promoting community and social capital: e.g. community engagement and outreach to identify local need and co-produce activity
- promoting community resilience through the use of local community assets and recognised spaces (both built environment and green space) which feel safe and familiar: e.g. environmental projects, outdoor physical activity
- addressing the stigma and discrimination of mental illness by raising awareness of how and why stigma affects people accessing services and feeling unable to seek help, and supporting the leadership and activity of the city-wide Anti-Stigma Group
- supporting the wider workforce to become more skilled and confident working within at risk communities by providing training focusing on the wider determinants of health that positively influence mental health
- ensuring effective signposting for 1:1 support for the individual to a wide range of services including clinical health care and specialist third sector support.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The service is meeting its Key Performance Indicators and provides regular evidence of good quality, reflective practice. Case studies submitted as part of performance management detail activities and what has been learned from them. Examples include:

“The greatest outcome of this work has been the emotive discussions had, where those participating have felt confident enough to share personal experiences and talk through their issues in a safe space such as a loss of a parent.”

“People were given the opportunity to explore what stress is and how it presents for different people, the difference between healthy pressure and stress, capacity for stress, and strategies for recognising and reducing stress, including prioritising skills. People felt they had an increased awareness and better insight into themselves after the session.”

- 3.2 Annual service cost analysis forms are completed by the provider as part of the contract management process and demonstrate that the service continues to deliver value for money. There have been no increases in the contract funding over the delivery period and the modelling within the initial commissioning exercise ensured that outcomes were maximised. The service will be reviewed during the extension period with a view to future recommissioning, which will include benchmarking against other core cities.
- 3.3 Therefore, approval is being sought to extend the contracts for the full 2 years that are available. If this decision is not taken, the provision will end in March 2021, which will remove a valuable preventative health service from the city.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 Consultation has taken place with the Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, the Director of Public Health, Public Health Programme Board and Procurement and Commercial Services (PACS), who are all supportive of the approach.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Impact Screening has been completed in relation to this decision and is attached for information as a background document. There are no issues to be addressed.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 These services support the best Council Plan priority of supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles.
- 4.3.2 They also contribute to the Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21 themes of prevention and promoting mental and physical health equally.
- 4.3.3 This provision relates to the ‘prevention’ strand of the ‘Leeds Health and Care Plan’.
- 4.3.4 It is also relevant to “Supporting people to live longer and have healthier lives” which is a key aspiration of the Leeds vision ‘to be the best city in the UK by 2030’.

- 4.3.5 More targeted strategies to which this work contributes are the Mental Health Framework for Leeds, Suicide Prevention Action Plan for Leeds and Public Mental Health Service Plan.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.6 The services operate in local communities to ensure easy access for service users, and therefore minimising the need to travel and encouraging the use of public transport. This helps to reduce carbon emissions and environmental pollution which contributes to city actions to better manage air quality.
- 4.3.7 Through preventing ill health, the provision helps to ensure we better manage our use of resource intensive (and high footprint) health and care services.
- 4.3.8 The service specification requires that all legislation, guidance and good industry practice in environmental management and the objectives of the Council's sustainability policies are met. Officers from Adults and Health work with the providers 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.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 The cost of the contract extension is met by revenue Public Health funding and there is provision within the Public Health budget for this contract extension.
- 4.4.2 In light of the council's financial position, it is acknowledged that efficiencies may be required in future years on this contract and these would be the subject of a contract variation.
- 4.4.3 The recommendation relating to the extension is in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 21.1 as it is in accordance with its original terms and delivers Best Value given it is a preventative health service.
- 4.4.4 The recommendation relating to the revised specification and performance framework is in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 21.7 as it is within the scope of the original contract.
- 4.4.5 The service will continue to be contract managed by officers in Adults and Health Directorate. Robust contract management processes allow for the on-going monitoring of quality, performance and value for money.

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

- 4.5.1 As a consequence of the previous decision, in December 2017, to award the contract, this is a Key Decision and is subject to Call In.
- 4.5.2 The recommendation within this report is in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rules 21.1 which allows a contract to be extended before its expiry date where it is in accordance with its terms and proves to deliver value for money.
- 4.5.3 There are no grounds for treating the contents of this report as confidential within the Council's Access to Information Rules.
- 4.5.4 Although there is no overriding legal obstacle preventing the extension of this contract the contents of this report should be noted. In making their final decision, the Director of Public Health should be satisfied that the course of action chosen represents best value for the Council.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 If the contract extension period is not approved there is a risk that the existing service will either cease or continue on an implied basis that will not provide any reassurances of service delivery.
- 4.6.2 The approval of a 2-year contract extension will enable continuity of service provision and increased surety for the providers. This will help to retain staff and enable continued innovation.
- 4.6.3 Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to identify and mitigate identified risks including regular contract management meetings, overview of contract risk and reporting to the Public Health Programme Board where appropriate.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 A contract extension is required to ensure continuity of the current service which is high quality, performing well and meeting the original aims of the contract.
- 5.2 There is provision within the terms of the existing contract to extend for a period of up to 24 months from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2023.

6. Recommendations

- a) The Director of Public Health is recommended to approve the available extension of two years to the existing contract with Touchstone-Leeds for the Mentally Healthy Leeds service, with effect from 1st April 2021 and to the value of £293,974.00 per annum (total value £587,948.00).

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening

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.