

**Report of Head of Service Learning Inclusion, Children & Families**

**Report to Director of Children and Families**

**Date: 06/01/2021**

**Subject: Request to invoke Contract Procedure Rule 21.2 to extend the Barnardos 'Portage' contract DN304987 for a further 12 months to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022.**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
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 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**

**1. Main issues**

- The report seeks the approval of the Director of Children and Families Directorate in invoking Contracts Procedure rule 21.2 to extend the Barnardos Portage contract DN304987 for a further 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022.
- The current service has been in place since May 2018 and was awarded to Barnardos following a competitive tender process. The value of the service is £185,000 per annum. One option to extend this contract for 12 months has previously been taken up leaving two options to extend or a further 12 months each.
- The extension of the Portage contract will ensure that LCC is continuing to meet its duties for the delivery of services to children and young people in the most efficient and cost effective way whilst undertaking a wider review of the service.

**2. Best Council Plan Implications** (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The Portage Service is considered to be one of the first steps on the ladder in terms of educational support for children with SEND and fits within the 'A life ready for learning' and 'Think Family Work Family' agendas. The SEND Code of Practice [2014] recommends early intervention as the best method of closing the gap and improving outcomes for C&YP

with SEND. The Leeds C&YP Plan 2018 – 2023 also has a focus upon ‘A life ready for learning’, and ‘Think Family Work Family’.

### **3. Resource Implications**

- The extension of this contract represents best value for money by reducing disruption to the existing service and by ensuring continuity from 1st May 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (12 months), whilst the service is being further reviewed.
- There is a budget in place to cover the value of this extension
- There has been no increase in value of this service from Leeds City Council since 2018, so any increase in cost to deliver the service for the extension period (e.g. staffing and overheads) will be absorbed by the provider. The additional costs provided by Barnardos to deliver the service are evidenced via an annual service cost analysis form

### **Recommendations**

- a. The Director of Children & Families is recommended to agree the extension of the Portage contract for a period of 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022 with a value of £185,000 per annum, to ensure continuity of service delivery prior to being reviewed.

#### **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The report seeks the approval of the Director of Children & Families in invoking Contracts Procedure rule 21.2 to extend the Barnardos ‘Portage’ contract DN304987 for a further 12 months to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022, whilst undertaking a wider review of the service.

#### **2. Background information**

- 2.1 Children with complex needs are usually identified via HE-N (Health Education - Notifications). There will be approximately 150 HE-Ns each year and roughly one third of these children will need access to the Portage Service.
- 2.2 Portage is a home visiting educational service for young children with complex needs, and their families. The service benefits children and their whole family and aims to promote good educational outcomes for the children and increase parental confidence and skills. Portage Home Visitors (PHV) make regular two weekly home visits working in partnership with parent/carers to support and empower them to become teachers of their own children.
- 2.3 Up to 90 children per annum will receive service from the age of 6 months to 3 years.
- 2.1 The current service model has been in place since May 2018 when it was subject to a competitive tender process awarded to Barnardos for 2 years with 3 x 12 month extension at a value of is £185,000 per annum.
- 2.2 This service was previously extended from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021 in order to allow for a review to take place.

#### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The current budget position in Children’s Services has led to a detailed analysis, on a contract by contract basis, of whether the service purchased continues to be required and represents good value.

- 3.2 The Portage Service has been developed to include all current requirements for a high quality portage service which includes registration with the National Portage Association. It has been developed with the approval of the parents who been part of the service improvement and National Portage Association.
- 3.3 The current provider has worked flexibly and adapted their approach to Portage by offering drop-in sessions and a more tailored approach to help and further empower parents to become teachers of their children and have also addressed the increasing waiting list reducing this from 25 to 5. Barnardos have also revised their approach to Portage during the current Covid 19 Pandemic in order to ensure families are still supported.
- 3.4 Enacting the available 12 month contract extension with Barnardos Portage Service will afford the time needed to review the current delivery model and commissioning strategy and ensure the local authority is still meeting the needs of this cohort in an effective manner and is providing best value for money. A project group has now been setup to complete an options appraisal which includes the possibility of TUPEing staff into Leeds City Council and delivering the service internally.
- 3.5 Consequently, the service lead has approved the decision to continue to fund the service in 2021/22 at the current value. This will ensure that LCC is continuing to meet its duties for the delivery of services to children and young people in the most efficient and cost effective way.

### **Consequences if the proposed action is not approved**

- 3.6 If a Portage service is not in place this would significantly impair the capacity in the city to identify and support families where the attachment and bonding is not optimal. Failure to address attachment and bonding in the first two years of life could have long term consequences in terms of poorer outcomes such as mental health, behaviour, attainment, attendance, criminal activity and breaking inter-generational cycles of abuse and neglect.

### **Advertising**

- 3.7 The Portage Service underwent a competitive tender process in 2018. The service is currently under review therefore an extension with the existing provider is currently the most appropriate action. Consequently this opportunity has not been advertised.

## **Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 The relevant Head of Service has been briefed on the proposal and the current provider Barnardos has been informed of our intention. They have indicated they would be willing to enter into a new contract for up to 12 months.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 An equalities impact screening has been completed and is attached to this report.
- 4.2.2 The extension of the current contract means that the current service delivery model will continue. The service will be to the same client group at the same value. The decision to continue delivery of current service arrangements will not have any adverse impact on any equality group.

### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

4.3.1 The Portage Service is considered to be one of the first steps on the ladder in terms of educational support for children with SEND and fits within the 'A life ready for learning' and 'Think Family Work Family' agendas. The SEND Code of Practice [2014] recommends early intervention as the best method of closing the gap and improving outcomes for C&YP with SEND. The Leeds C&YP Plan 2015 – 19 also has a focus upon 'A life ready for learning', and 'Think Family Work Family'.

#### **4.3.2 Climate Emergency**

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 Children and Families 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.

### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

4.4.1 The cost of the contract will be met by revenue funding from the Children and Families Directorate through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

4.4.2 The quality and value for money of the service will continue to be monitored by the Commissioning and Market Management Service, Children & Family Services. Intelligence gained through the contract monitoring of this contract will be used to inform the inclusion and advice options appraisal and a full market exercise will be undertaken to ensure the future service continues to deliver value for money.

4.4.3 The service is currently meeting all KPIs and has met over 72% of all targets set for children accessing the service.

4.4.4 The extension of this contract represents good value for money by reducing disruption to the existing service by ensuring continuity from 1st May 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (12 months), while the service is being reviewed.

4.4.5 There is a budget in place to cover the appropriate value of this extension

4.4.6 There has been no increase in value of this service from Leeds City Council since 2018, so any increase in cost to deliver the service for the extension period (e.g. staffing and overheads) will be absorbed by the provider. The additional costs provided by Barnardos to deliver the service are evidenced via an annual cost analysis form

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

4.5.1 The decision is a significant operational decision and will not be subject to call-in process under the Constitution.

### **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 There would be a risk of challenge to Leeds City Council if no service is in place

4.6.2 Through an annual detailed analysis, on a contract by contract basis, the project teams have identified risks and actions to mitigate these as part of the commissioning programme plan for each service.

4.6.3 The initial contract let allowed for an extension to the contract.

4.6.4 The current service provider has been informed of the intention to extend their existing contract.

4.6.5 Discussions have taken place with the Heads of Service and Service Lead to confirm proposed contract arrangements for service delivery.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The Director of Children & Families is recommended to note the contents of this report and approve the invocation of the contracts procedure rule 21.2 as detailed in this report.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 The Director of Children & Families is recommended to agree the extension of the Portage contract for a period of 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022 with a value of £185,000 per annum, to ensure continuity of delivery prior to the service being reviewed.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.