



Report of: Head of Service Commissioning and Market Management

Report to: Director of Children and Families

Date: 23/03/2021

Subject: Tender for a Regional Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme

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 current Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme was modelled on a Cornerstone pilot project that was rolled out in 2015 across 11 local authorities over 18 months. The scheme comprises one to one peer mentoring, group mentoring, a helpline and information and signposting and for all newly approved adopters and adoptive families post order.
- The role of the volunteer Peer Mentor is to provide support and share experiences and encouragement to potential and experienced adopters as they move through the adoption process from assessment through to placement and beyond.
- At present, the three Regional Adoption Agencies in Yorkshire and the Humber each hold individual contracts with Adoption UK for the Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme. All these contracts are due to expire between 31 March and 31 May 2021.
- On behalf of all the RAAs in the region, the Council wants to achieve significant improvements in quality and more efficient use of the resource across the wider region. To accomplish this a competitive tender will be undertaken to explore the wider market, with the intention of awarding a contract or contracts for Adoption Peer Mentoring provision to be delivered across the Yorkshire and Humber region from 1st October 2021.

- A commissioning project group has been established to develop the regional service specification with representation from each RAA. The specification and associated tender documentation will be approved by each RAA before publication.
- This report is seeking permission to waive contract procedure rule 15.2 and for the tender evaluation criteria to be based on 70% quality and 30% price rather than the standard approach of 60% quality and 40% price.
- Due to delays in commencing the tender process and the potential for TUPE, approval will be sought separately to extend existing arrangements OAWY has with the current provider Adoption UK from 1st June 2021 to 30th September 2021.

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

- This proposal provides strong support for the refreshed Children and Young Peoples Plan and the Council's ambition to be a Child Friendly City. The outcomes delivered through this contract will contribute to a number of the outcomes and priorities within the plan, including the outcome to ensure all young people are safe from harm and the priority to help children live in safe and supportive families.
- This proposal also supports the 2020-25 Best Council Plan priority make Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in.
- The Contractor will be required to consider the environmental impact of their approach to service delivery.
- The winning bidder will be required to commit to delivering Social Value. Commitments will be scored as part of the tender and monitored as part of contract management but will not be done so through the Social Value Portal, as agreed with regional partners.

3. Resource Implications

- The maximum budget available for this provision is £114,790 per annum. This is a pooled budget with contributions from all three RAAs. The contract(s) will be awarded for two years initially, with the option to extend a further 12 + 12 months. The maximum total value of the service is therefore approximately £459,160.
- OAWY's maximum contribution to the overall value of the new tender is £40,000 per annum.
- It is anticipated that by awarding a regional contract efficiencies and savings will be made for each RAA.

Recommendations

The Director of Children and Families is recommended to:

- a) Note the content of this report and approve permission for LCC to procure a regional Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme on behalf of One Adoption West Yorkshire, One Adoption North and Humber and One Adoption South Yorkshire via a competitive tender.

The contract will commence 1st October 2021 for two years initially to 30th September 2023, with the option to extend for a further 12 + 12 months. The maximum annual value of the service is £114,790, therefore the total value for the initial 2 year term is £229,580, or £459,160 if all extensions are taken up. This is a significant operational decision.

- b) Approve the receipt of income of £1,514 from One Adoption North and Humber and One Adoption South who will contribute an equal 1/3 share of the commissioning and contract management costs to LCC for this regional tender.
- c) Waive contract procedure rule 15.2 and for the tender evaluation criteria to be based on 70% quality and 30% price rather than the standard approach of 60% quality and 40% price.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to procure a contract to deliver a regional Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme across the Yorkshire and Humber region. The contract will be between 1st October 2021 and 30th September 2023 with two 12 month extension options and the total estimated value is £459,160. It also seeks approval to waiver CPR 15.2 and for the tender evaluation criteria to be based on 70% quality and 30% price.

2. Background information

Regionalisation reforms for adoption services

- 2.1 The Government's regionalisation reforms were introduced in 2017 to reduce the large number of agencies providing adoption services and create 25-30 Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs) to pool resources and provide:

- More targeted and efficient recruitment of adopters
- Speedier matching with a larger more diverse pool of adopters
- An improved range of adoption support services and regulatory compliance

- 2.2 In the longer term RAAs are expected to provide

- Better outcomes for children and adopters
- Reduced practice and performance inconsistencies
- More effective strategic management of the service delivering efficiency savings
- A culture of excellence in adoption practice through strong partnerships with the Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA)

- 2.3 One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) became the country's first Regional Adoption Agency when the regionalisation reforms were launched - bringing together all of the adoption services from Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. Within its second year of operation the agency had already demonstrated that it is leading the way for newer regional agencies by winning two national awards.

Collaboration with Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs)

- 2.4 Throughout the Yorkshire and Humber Region there are currently three separate established Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs), these are:

- One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) – This covers the areas of Leeds, Calderdale, Bradford, Wakefield and Kirklees, hosted by Leeds City Council with one single management structure;
- One Adoption North & Humber – This covers the areas of York, North Yorkshire, East Riding, Hull, and North East Lincolnshire, hosted by York with budgetary responsibilities for independent adoption support services retained by each Local Authority.
- One Adoption South Yorkshire – this covers the areas of Barnsley, Sheffield, Doncaster and Rotherham.

- 2.6 Since its launch, OAWY has worked in collaboration with other RAAs, local authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) throughout the Yorkshire and

Humber region to create a new model of service delivery for adoption services, in line with the Education and Adoption Act 2016 and Adoption Regionalisation agenda.

Development of a Peer Mentoring Scheme

- 2.7 In 2015 an end-user led approach to adoption was piloted by the Cornerstone Partnership across 11 local authorities over 18 months and the results evaluated in two studies: Coram and the University of Sussex. In both these evaluations the findings were consistent:
- placements for children with more complex needs were accelerated;
 - social worker capacity was freed up;
 - adopters felt more confident about the task of adoptive parenting;
 - peer mentoring had the effect of “normalising” adoptive parents situation;
 - parenting strategies changed to become attuned to children and their early life trauma, and with that relationships between child and parent improved; and
 - a number of placements which were at risk of breakdown were stabilized.
- 2.8 This model was based on the principle of co-production. Furthermore the model was predicated on introducing support right at the start of the adoption journey rather than tagged onto the end. Peer mentors would be matched with and support a family from the point of commencing their assessment through to adoption order and beyond.
- 2.9 In many of the local authorities, Ofsted inspection reports have subsequently recognised and highlighted the impact of the Cornerstone model.
- 2.10 In all cases the local authorities that were part of the pilot scheme generated income from adopters who were sought by other Agencies because they were well trained, prepared and supported (ranging from £68k to £486k).
- 2.11 The model is closely aligned to a large number of important national and regional strategy, policy and priorities in Children and Families. It helps in reducing looked after children by supporting families to ensure children do not enter care post adoption. Research undertaken with adoptive families within Yorkshire and Humberside indicated this was a gap in provision and adopters requested that the agencies look at developing this approach.
- 2.12 Peer Mentoring across OAWY was previously delivered by a 0.5 FTE Social Worker employed by OAWY and an Adopter Voice Coordinator employed by Adoption UK. Adoption UK were commissioned by Barnardo’s to deliver Adopter Voice provision for the region.
- 2.13 The current Peer Mentoring Scheme was developed from this work and has been guided by the expertise of the Cornerstone model. The scheme comprises one to one peer mentoring, group mentoring, a helpline and information and signposting and for all newly approved adopters.
- 2.14 The role of the Peer Mentor is to provide support and share experiences and encouragement to potential and experienced adopters as they move through the adoption process from assessment through to placement and beyond.

- 2.15 At present, the three RAAs each hold individual contracts with Adoption UK for the Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme. All these contracts are due to expire between 31 March and 31 May 2021 and so will all need to be extended to end of September 2021 to allow for the tender to be completed.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 On behalf of all the RAAs in Yorkshire and the Humber region, the Council wants to achieve significant improvements in quality and more efficient use of the social work resource across the wider region. To accomplish this a competitive tender will be undertaken to explore the wider market, with the intention of award just one Peer Mentoring Scheme contract to be delivered across the region

- 3.2 A commissioning project group has been established to develop the regional service specification with representation from each RAA and South Yorkshire local authority. The specification and associated tender documentation will be approved by each RAA before publication.

- 3.3 The service will be delivered in two separate Lots and may result in awarding two separate contracts to two different organisations.

Lot 1: Advice, Information and Peer Mentoring

Subscription based access to advice, information and community support for new adopters

Volunteer Peer Mentoring - one to one and group based support

Lot 2: Enhanced Activity – paid mentors, one to one and group based specialist support

- 3.4 The evaluation process will be based on a 70% quality / 30% price split. The contract(s) will be awarded to the bidder(s) with the highest score(s).

- 3.5 The tender evaluation will comprise of written tender questions and interviews.

- 3.6 The evaluation panel will include representation from each RAA.

- 3.7 The evaluation process will be based on a 70% quality / 30% price split for which a waiver of CPR 15.2 is required. The contract(s) will be awarded to the bidder(s) with the highest overall score(s). A price / quality split evaluation is recommended over the price / quality separation method due to the complexity of the services procured. The specification is wide ranging and there are many elements to assess within the evaluation. The nine questions and interview have been carefully weighted to prioritise the most important elements whilst covering the service as a whole, including user involvement and social value.

- 3.8 The evaluation panel would like the weightings to carry forward into the overall score to ensure that the quality scores and priority themes count in the final round and a provider is not simply selected on the lowest price if they pass the minimum quality thresholds.

- 3.9 A 70/30 price quality weighting is considered the best option to ensure that price and value are effectively considered. There is a limited market of experienced

providers of this type of service, and the maximum available budget will be published in the tender. Based on experience, suppliers are likely to bid close to the budget given the complexity of the service and the level of likely demand so savings are unlikely to be significant relative to the overall value for money of procuring the highest quality service

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The proposal to procure a contract has been agreed by all five Local Authority members of OAWY and all Yorkshire and Humber RAAs.
- 4.1.2 The Executive Member for Children and Families has been consulted about the decision to procure.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening document has been completed and is attached at Appendix 1. This demonstrates there is no impact on equality and diversity, cohesion and integration because this tender will formalise existing arrangements.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 This proposal provides strong support for the refreshed Children and Young Peoples Plan and the Council's ambition to be a Child Friendly City. The outcomes delivered through this contract will contribute to a number of the outcomes and priorities within the plan, including the outcome to ensure all young people are safe from harm and the priority to help children live in safe and supportive families.
- 4.3.2 This proposal also supports the 2020-25 Best Council Plan priority make Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.3 The Contractor will be required to consider the environmental impact of their approach to service delivery.
- 4.3.4 The winning bidder will be required to commit to delivering Social Value. Commitments will be scored as part of the tender and monitored as part of contract management but will not be done so through the Social Value Portal, as agreed with regional partners.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 This is a new regional procurement with an overall maximum budget of £114,790 pa.
- 4.4.2 The contract will be awarded for two years initially, with the option to extend a further 1+1 years. The maximum total value of the service is therefore £459,160.

- 4.4.3 One Adoption West Yorkshire's contribution to the overall value is approximately £40,000 per annum.
- 4.4.4 Leeds City Council will receive income of £1,514 from One Adoption North and Humber and One Adoption South Yorkshire to undertake this commissioning and provide a contract management service throughout the term of the contract.
- 4.4.5 Each RAA will pay the contractor directly for services.
- 4.4.6 It is anticipated that by awarding a regional contract efficiencies and savings will be made for each RAA
- 4.4.7 Performance will be overseen by the OAWY team based within Leeds City Council. Support for contract management will be provided by the Leeds City Council Commissioning and Market Management team as required.

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

- 4.5.1 The total estimated value of the contract will be £459,160 and so approval to procure is a significant operation decision. This decision is not subject to call in.
- 4.5.2 This report is also seeking permission to waive contract procedure rule 15.2 and for the tender evaluation criteria to be based on 70% quality and 30% price. This methodology is preferred by regional partners rather than the standard requirement to use a quality / price separated approach or the 60% quality / 40% price split (see paragraphs 3.7 to 3.9).
- 4.5.3 The contract(s) will need to satisfy the requirements of all regional partners, ensure adopters and families are safeguarded and achieve positive outcomes through the delivery of a varied package of support. Additionally, the tender will set maximum prices for each Lot and state anticipated volumes within available annual budgets throughout the life of the contract. Due to these factors, price is considered by regional partners to require a lower weighting when compared with quality than is standard.
- 4.5.4 Approval will be sought separately to vary existing contracts with the current provider for OAWY peer mentoring provision, Adoption UK to extend them from 1st June to 30th September 2021.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 The timescales are very tight and there will be no mobilisation period between contract award and service commencement. This is why it is proposed existing contracts with Adoption UK are extended to allow more time to complete the tender and mobilise the new contract(s). The contract team will work closely with the Contractor to implement their delivery plan.
- 4.6.2 This service is part core delivery and part draw down, where the value is based on previous usage and costs. The risk to this service is that it could overspend. The risk will be mitigated by setting the maximum available budget and maximum prices for each Lot and then regularly monitoring the budget to identify at the earliest stage whether any overspend is likely to occur, so appropriate action can be taken.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This report seeks approval to procure a regional contract for delivery of an Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme
- 5.2 This contract will help enable Yorkshire and Humber RAAs to provide more efficient and consistent support to potential and experienced adopters at different stages off their adoption journey

6 Recommendations

The Director of Children and Families is recommended to:

- 6.1 Note the content of this report and approve permission for LCC to procure a regional Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme on behalf of One Adoption West Yorkshire, One Adoption North and Humber and One Adoption South Yorkshire via a competitive tender.

The contract will commence 1st October 2021 for two years initially to 30th September 2023, with the option to extend for a further 12 + 12 months. The maximum annual value of the service is £114,790, therefore the total value for the initial 2 year term is £229,580, or £459,160 if all extensions are taken up. This is a significant operational decision.

- 6.2 Approve the receipt of income of £1,514 from One Adoption North and Humber and One Adoption South who will contribute an equal 1/3 share of the commissioning and contract management costs to LCC for this regional tender.
- 6.3 Waive contract procedure rule 15.2 and for the tender evaluation criteria to be based on 70% quality and 30% price rather than the standard approach of 60% quality and 40% price.

7 Background documents¹

- 6.1 None.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment screening document

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.

APPENDIX 1

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions. Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being or has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Children and Families	Service area: One Adoption West Yorkshire
Lead person: Catherine Henderson	Contact number: 0113 3785430

1. Title: Tender for a Regional Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme
Is this a: <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
This screening is of a decision for LCC to procure a regional Adoption Peer Mentoring Scheme on behalf of One Adoption West Yorkshire, One Adoption North and Humber One Adoption South Yorkshire via a competitive tender.

Adoption Peer Mentoring

In 2015 an end-user led approach to adoption was piloted by the Cornerstone Partnership across 11 local authorities over 18 months and the results evaluated in two studies: Coram and the University of Sussex. In both these evaluations the findings were consistent:

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The role of the Peer Mentor is to provide support and share experiences and encouragement to potential and experienced adopters as they move through the adoption process from assessment through to placement and beyond.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies and policies, service and functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater or lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Also those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being.

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?		x
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		x
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		x
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?		x
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment• Advancing equality of opportunity• Fostering good relations		x

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

- **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?** (**think about** the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key findings (think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions (think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)

<p>5. If you are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you will need to carry out an impact assessment.</p>	
Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	
Date to complete your impact assessment	
Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	

<p>6. Governance, ownership and approval Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening</p>		
Name	Job title	Date
Sarah Johal	Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire	
Date screening completed		09/03/2021

<p>7. Publishing</p> <p>Though all key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council only publishes those related to Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions or a Significant Operational Decision.</p> <p>A copy of this equality screening should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council. • The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions. • A copy of all other equality screenings that are not to be published should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk for record. <p>Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached screening was sent:</p>	
For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to Governance Services	Date sent:
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk	Date sent: