

**Report of Head of Public Health**  
**Report to Director of Public Health**  
**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

**Subject: Extension of contract for a 24 month period with Leeds Mind for the Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service DN300557 in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 21.2 (contract extensions).**

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**

- Following a competitive procurement exercise, Leeds Mind was awarded a contract to deliver the Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service (LSBS), which provides one-to-one support, peer support groups, family support and counselling for people bereaved by suicide in Leeds.
- The current contract started on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018 for a period of four years with the option to extend up to a total of 24 months. The value of the contract is £101,908 per annum. The initial contract period is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 and it is necessary to take a decision regarding extending the contract to avoid uncertainty and disruption to service delivery.

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

- This service provision addresses the Best City priorities of:
  - *“Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing”;*
  - *“Being responsive to local needs, building thriving, resilient communities”;*
  - *“Supporting self-care, with more people managing their own health conditions in the community”;*

- *“Working as a system to ensure people get the right care, from the right people in the right place”;*
- and, through its family support, *“Supporting families to give children the best start in life”.*
- It will support the outcomes of helping people in Leeds to *“Be safe and feel safe”* and to *“Enjoy happy, healthy, active lives”.*

### **3. Resource implications**

- The cost of the contract extension is £101,908.00 per annum. There is provision within the Public Health budget for this contract extension.

### **Recommendations**

- a) The Director of Public Health is recommended to approve the available two year contract extension for the existing Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service contract, provided by Leeds Mind, with effect from 1st June 2022 for a maximum value of £203,816.00 across the two years (£101,908.00 per annum).

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to extend the Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service contract with Leeds Mind for a period of two years.

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

- 2.1 Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service is a peer led postvention service commissioned by Public Health as a part of the wider suicide prevention workstream and approach in Leeds. Postvention is supporting people bereaved and affected by a suicide to avoid long-term negative health and social outcomes, and plays a critical part in preventing further suicides. The service does this by providing timely peer support in a variety of forms including for individuals, families, and groups.
- 2.2 The service operates on a peer support model, meaning all staff and volunteers have lived experience of being bereaved by suicide.
- 2.3 The service demonstrates wider benefits, for example added social value to Leeds, as many service users have subsequently chosen to volunteer in the service and some have gone on to have paid practitioner roles within the organisation.
- 2.4 The service model is flexible and adapts to meet the needs of those bereaved during the course of the contract in agreement with the commissioner.

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

- 3.1 The service is meeting its Key Performance Indicators and provides regular evidence of good quality, person-centred practice.
- 3.2 Through quarterly contract monitoring the service has demonstrated positive health outcomes of people accessing support. This includes service users reporting reduced

thoughts of taking their own life, and a reduction in their use of alcohol, drugs and self-harm to cope with their bereavement as a result of the support they received. Service users have also reported improved mental health and social networks. This in turn helps to reduce impact on acute mental health services.

- 3.3 LSBS staff take an active role in the city's wider suicide prevention work and ensure the service offer meets need and reflects the latest evidence base. The service works closely with the Public Mental Health Lead and Public Health Analysts in relation to real time surveillance (RTS) intelligence and is a valued member of the RTS steering group and the Strategic Suicide Prevention Group. This approach helps the service plan targeted activity, understand real time surveillance needs and work with the wider suicide prevention partners in the city, ensuring a timely and specialised response is provided for our citizens.
- 3.4 The service delivers training to partners in the city and runs campaigns to reduce the stigma around suicide among organisations and the public. The service has also worked in partnership with other agencies to support communities affected by suicide.
- 3.5 LSBS adapted rapidly to meet the changing needs of service users during the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to deliver high quality one-to-one and group support, workshops and events using digital platforms. Officers have been in regular contact with the service and have taken a flexible approach to support them to maintain service continuity in the changing situation during this time. Despite the challenges of the pandemic the service almost always achieved or exceeded its Key Performance Indicators and service user feedback was very positive. Leeds Mind is best placed to continue to deliver this work through the Covid-19 recovery period, maintaining strong, trusted relationships with the community and partners, and providing stability.
- 3.6 Approval is being sought to extend the contract for the full two years available because this would provide assurance to the provider, enabling them to maintain good performance and stability of provision for service users in times of change. The service is performing well, achieves positive health outcomes and meets the requirements of the contract. If this decision is not taken, the provision will end in May 2022, which will remove a valuable preventative health service from the city and have a significant negative impact on citizens' mental wellbeing.
- 3.7 Officers have reviewed the performance framework to ensure that it is still fit for purpose and accurately representing the work of the service. Only minor changes need to be made to the monitoring documentation and these do not affect the key performance indicators or nature of the provision.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Consultation was carried out as part of the initial procurement process with strategic partners, providers, council officers and the relevant Executive Member.
- 4.1.2 Consultation regarding the contract extension has taken place with Leeds Mind, the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing, the Director of Public Health, Public Health Programme Board and Procurement and Commercial Services (PACS).

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

4.2.1 The Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration screening has been reviewed and updated 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 Continuity of the service will support the delivery of key Public Health priorities, which will help to deliver:

- Suicide Prevention Action Plan
- Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21, by supporting people to build their emotional resilience and cope with their loss;
- Citywide Mental Health Strategy
- Best Council Plan 2020-25
- Leeds being a Child-Friendly City by improving children's social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing and supporting families to give children the best start in life.

#### Climate Emergency

4.3.2 During the Covid-19 pandemic the service has been delivering one-to-one and group support virtually which has been found to be effective, and so the service plans to offer a combination of virtual and face-to-face support for the duration of the remaining contract which would reduce travel by staff and service users to access venues. The need for transport is also reduced as staff deliver postvention work in local communities to ensure easy access, and so service users do not need to travel to benefit from the interventions. This helps to reduce carbon emissions and environmental pollution which contributes to city actions around air quality.

4.3.3 Through supporting mental health and suicide prevention, the service helps to prevent the need to use resource-intensive (and high footprint) health and care services.

4.3.4 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 The recommendation relating to the extension is in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 21.2 as it is in accordance with its original terms and proves to deliver Best Value.

4.4.3 The impact of Covid-19 and the national restrictions on those bereaved is complex and the specialised support offered by LSBS is needed more than ever. The service is already seeing an increase in requests for support for historical bereavements, and for recent bereavements the grieving process is disrupted by the restrictions, such as around funerals and access to

the faith sector. We know through monitoring and case studies from the service that this has compounded both the complex issue of traumatic grief already faced by those bereaved by suicide, and the stigma around suicide. There have been no uplifts for the past three years, and it would not be possible to make efficiencies without a detrimental impact on this service which is deemed a key Public Health priority in the city.

- 4.4.4 Previous evaluations of the service have demonstrated that this service and approach brings excellent return on investment (ROI). Outcomes included users of the service articulating the need for the service and that it has saved their lives. Both statutory services and third sector have fed back the usefulness and the need for this specialist service, and have been able to refer into it appropriately. Leeds Bereavement Forum have cited that it fills a gap in the pathway and provision. This service is seen nationally as best practice and has been replicated across Yorkshire Integrated Care System, and it has been a finalist in the Local Government Association awards twice.
- 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 ongoing monitoring of quality, performance and value for money.

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

- 4.5.1 This decision is a Significant Operational Decision due to its value and impact and is therefore not subject to Call In.
- 4.5.2 There are no grounds for treating the contents of this report as confidential within the Council's Access to Information Rules.
- 4.5.3 Although there is no overriding legal obstacle preventing the extension of this contract under Contracts Procedure Rule 21.2, 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 The approval of a two year contract extension will enable continuity of service provision and increased security for the service provider. This will help to retain skilled staff and enable continued innovation.
- 4.6.2 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, good value for money and meeting the aims of the contract.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Director of Public Health is recommended to approve the available two year contract extension for the existing Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service contract, provided by Leeds

Mind, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 for a maximum value of £203,816.00 over the two years (£101,908.00 per annum).

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

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.