

Officer Non Key Executive Decision

Relevant Chief Officer (Decision Maker):	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
Relevant Cabinet Member (for consultation purposes):	Councillor Lynn Williams, Deputy Leader (Children)
Report Author (Officer name and title):	Jenna Douthwaite, Senior Corporate Procurement and Projects Officer
Implementation Date of Decision:	3 June 2020

DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT SERVICE FOR ADULT VICTIMS OF MEDIUM AND HIGH RISK ABUSE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To approve the appointment of Fylde Coast Women's Aid as the contractor for the provision of a domestic abuse support service for adult victims of medium and high risk abuse, following completion of an OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) tendering exercise.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve the appointment of Fylde Coast Women's Aid of Bispham, Blackpool as the contractor for the provision of a domestic abuse support service for adult victims of medium and high risk abuse. The contract is for a period of 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years (on a 1 year + 1year basis) subject to budget and satisfactory review.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 A formal OJEU tendering exercise was undertaken between March and May 2020 to select a contractor to provide the domestic abuse support service. The Council invited tenders through its e-tendering portal (The Chest), in a single stage process (Open Tender).

23 suppliers registered an interest and three submitted a tender response. After the evaluation Fylde Coast Women's Aid provided the best overall tender for the requirement and it is the Council's intention to enter into a formal agreement.

- 3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience".

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional, controlling behaviour, coercive behaviour, so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

5.2 Research has shown that many people who present to domestic abuse services have experienced multiple unresolved traumas which have been compounded over time by further experiences and/or patterns of violence and abuse.

5.3 We know that there are significant barriers for people in accessing and engaging with support. Past experiences of trauma and complex needs can sometimes lead to conditioned behaviours, which serve as a psychological defence or coping strategy for women but may feel very difficult to understand for an untrained worker.

5.4 Our data tells us that incidents of Domestic Abuse are higher in Blackpool than in other areas of the country.

5.5 The Council, like other local authorities, is responding to complex challenges by reshaping its services and ensuring that resources are targeted where they can have the greatest impact. The Council recognises that a whole system approach which involves a full participation of partners is crucial in achieving better outcomes.

5.6 The Domestic Abuse Support Service will deliver a response that facilitates engagement between services and service users and can flex to fit with both local provision and service users' needs. The service will be delivered by a specialist team of experts, linking in with partner agencies and work together with service users to

utilise their personal strengths to improve safety and wellbeing.

- 5.7 The Domestic Abuse Support Service will provide a holistic Trauma-Informed model and promote a culture of engaging with service users to address the gaps and challenges in the co-ordinated response to domestic abuse for people at medium and high risk of harm including those who want to remain in their relationships or have complex needs.
- 5.8 It will Provide an approach that places service users at its heart, focusing on the safety and wishes of individuals, utilising their personal strengths to move forward and thrive, to a life free from abuse.
- 5.9 The service will deliver the following key elements:
- A service provided by a specialist team of expert practitioners who provide direct support to people who are one or more of the following:
 - At medium or high risk of harm
 - Remaining in their relationships
 - Have complex needs
 - Rebuilding or recovering from abuse
 - A framework and principles that links voluntary and statutory services with the needs of adults experiencing any or all of the above to provide a truly collaborative multi-agency response.
 - A range of programmes to support direct work with service users and links group work and peer support; service user led groups to inform and influence service delivery.
- 5.10 The service will be based in Blackpool.
- 5.11 The Council aims to offer support at the right stage, preventing the escalation of needs wherever possible, and reducing the likelihood of problems emerging in the first place. Services we commission will be focused on aiming to improve the resilience and well-being and ensure support is provided at the right time in the right place.
- 5.12 The Council wishes to work in partnership with a local organisation/s, building a relationship based on trust and transparency to develop a domestic abuse service embracing a culture of creativity and flexibility.
- 5.13 Ongoing conversations with all stakeholders, encouraging continuous improvement and ongoing development will ensure our families receive the right support at the right time. Through collaboration and support with local organisations our aim is to ensure services commissioned have a positive impact and achieve improved outcomes.

5.14 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.15 List of Appendices:

None.

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 The procurement exercise has been carried out in line with the Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015 and authority has been sought from the Head of Procurement. The Council will enter into a formal contract with the successful service provider.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 TUPE information was made available as part of the tender documentation and the change of provider may give rise to a transfer of staff.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The funding for the service will be met from within existing budget.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There will be significant risk to service users should the support service cease or be unavailable as a result of the Council not approving the decision to award the contract at this stage. The incumbent provider has confirmed that they are not in a position to continue to provide the service.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Key internal stakeholders were engaged on the evaluation panel.

The Cabinet Member for will be consulted as necessary by the Commissioner.

13.0 Decision of Chief Officer

13.1 To approve the appointment of Fylde Coast Women's Aid.

14.0 Reasons for the Decision of the Chief Officer

14.1 Fylde Coast Women's Aid provided the most economically advantageous tender through offering the lowest priced and highest quality proposal. They fully demonstrated their experience, capability, capacity and commitment to delivering the Council's requirements in line with the specification.