

## **Cabinet – 8 February 2017**

### **Domestic Abuse Service Tender**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Diane Coughlan – Social Care

**Related portfolios:** Councillor Ian Robertson- Public Health

**Service:** Adult Social Care

**Wards:** All

**Key decision:** Yes

**Forward plan:** Yes

#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines proposals for the re-procurement of the current domestic abuse (DA) service funded by the Public Health Transformation Fund, which is a key decision because this service will affect all wards across the borough.
- 1.2 The current DA contract is a Walsall Council contract which was commissioned by the Adult Social Care (ASC) Directorate and expires on 31 March 2017.
- 1.3 A £50,000.00 saving has been proposed for 2017/18 against the current £238,886.00 annual Public Health transformation budget that funds this service.
- 1.4 Walsall Council is in the process of re-tendering this service.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet delegates authority to award the contract for the provision of DA services, for a period of two years, with the option to extend on an annual basis for a further period of up to two years, to the Executive Director of ASC. To ensure continuity of service, delegated authority is being requested because there will not be sufficient time within the procurement timeline to obtain cabinet approval following tender evaluation.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of ASC, to enter into the contract for the provision of DA services and to subsequently authorise the sealing of any deeds, contracts or other related documents for such services.

#### **3. Report detail**

- 3.1 The original DA service was commissioned in April 2014 with a total contract value of £826,152. The service was funded through the Public Health Transformation Fund, and commissioned and managed by Adult Social Care.
- 3.2 The commissioned service at April 2014 consisted of:

- 34 units of Emergency Accommodation (24 refuge spaces & 10 safe houses) with the provision of a children's & young person's support worker
  - A floating support worker
  - A Court Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)
- 3.3 In April 2016 the Court IDVA was decommissioned saving £29,997.00 per annum from the current contract for the provision of DA services. This released savings for the transformation fund and provided clearer pathways for service users with the introduction of the Children's IDVA service. The Children's IDVA service, which focuses on supporting victims to remain at home where it is safe to do so and provides support to obtain court orders/legal sanctions where appropriate. Only where risks cannot be managed will they refer to the Emergency Accommodation.
- 3.4 The current DA contract was extended in April 2016 for 12 months and it expires on 31 March 2017. It needs to be re-tendered in order to establish a compliant contract for the continued provision of DA services from 1 April 2017.
- 3.5 In October 2016 the Transformation Fund placed a £50,000.00 saving per annum against this service, which forms part of the Council wide budget savings due to be approved in February 2017.
- 3.6 A budget of £188,886 per annum has been confirmed by Public Health to fund the DA service from April 2017, subject to Council approval for the 2017/18 budget and subsequent year's budgets for the duration of this contract. ASC will be using the budget to commission a minimum of 27<sup>1</sup> units of emergency accommodation (refuge and safe house units) located in Walsall. This will tailor the service to the levels of occupancy experienced throughout the last 3 years. The current service is only 86% utilised reducing the number of units will remove waste. The service will continue to accommodate male and female victims of abuse, those with larger families and couples fleeing belief based crime (known as so called honour based crime). The service will be staffed seven days per week, with the provision of emergency on call. The emergency accommodation provider will work closely with the Childrens IDVA service to support victims moving on from the service who have ongoing DA risks which need to be managed.
- 3.7 The service aims to contribute to break the cycle of DA, reduce incidents of abuse and put an end to repeated victimisation. It will form part of the council's Violence & Abuse Pathway providing the emergency accommodation for high risk victims.
- 3.8 ASC and Children's Social Services are active members of the Toxic Trio<sup>2</sup> Leadership and Governance Group and are integrating the commissioning of Toxic Trio services to deliver a clear Violence & Abuse Pathway.

---

<sup>1</sup> The recommended number based on Walsall's current population (Warwick Business School say the recommended number of refuge spaces by population is 1 unit per 10,000 population).

<sup>2</sup> The term Toxic Trio is used to describe the co-existence of issues of mental health, substance misuse (drugs and alcohol) and domestic abuse. The existence of the Toxic Trio has been identified as common features within families where harm occurs. Research has found that the environment in which a child lives is crucial to their health, safety and well-being. The Toxic Trio are viewed as indicators of increased risk of harm.

#### **4. Council priorities**

- 4.1 The service will contribute to the addressing the challenges posed by DA through the Walsall's Safeguarding Board Toxic Trio Strategic Group priorities and as outlined in Walsall's Domestic Abuse Strategy (2014-16); *Standing together against Domestic Abuse* to ensure victims of DA and their children are adequately protected and supported.

It also links and contributes to the Council's corporate priority 'Lifelong health wealth and happiness':

- Children and adults are safe from harm
- Preventing and tackling ill-health, support greater independence

#### **5. Risk management**

- 5.1 There are inherent risks to all public sector funded projects as additional savings are required to be made each year. Any significant future savings from this budget will need to be consulted upon along with the other proposed savings but no investment remains immune from this established budget setting process. This will need to be factored into the contractual arrangements with the external provider to allow for flexibility and any changes to the financial context in a manner that is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 5.2 To mitigate the £50,000 reduction in the transformation budget, Children's Services separately commissioned an IDVA service in April 2016, which will be available to support service users with DA risks that require support when moving on from the refuge/safe houses once the Floating Support service with Accord ends on 31 March 2017. This will promote closer working arrangements between the two DA providers (Accord Housing and Black Country Women's Aid) in Walsall to streamline the DA pathway. Emergency accommodation staff will continue to support service users and their children, but there will not be a dedicated children and young person worker. However, the Council have submitted a cross authority bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government to secure 12 months funding for 2017/18 to give the current provider time to identify and secure long term funding. The Council will be notified of the outcome of this bid by March 2017.

#### **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 The new service will be funded by the Public Health Transformation Fund at a maximum value of up to £188,886.00 per annum, for a period of up to 4 years subject to Council approval of the 2017/18 budget and subsequent year's budgets for the duration of this contract.
- 6.2 During 2017/18 Childrens Services will be investing £340,000.00 in commissioned Toxic Trio services. These services will support victims of DA, their family and work with perpetrators.

#### **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1 Legal Services and Procurement will work with the service area to ensure the conduct of a compliant procurement process and that appropriate written

agreements in a form approved by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services shall be made and executed in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules.

## **8. Procurement Implications/Social Value**

- 8.1 The procurement exercise will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Social Value Policy.

## **9. Property implications**

- 9.1 No Walsall Council property assets are implicated by the proposals in the report.

## **10. Health and wellbeing implications**

- 10.1 The new service will ensure victims of DA and their children are adequately protected and supported. It also links and contributes to the council's corporate priority 'Lifelong health wealth and happiness', helping to create safer and inclusive communities.
- 10.2 Reducing inequalities, as set out in the Marmot Report (2010), is an explicit objective of the Strategic Needs Assessment, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Council's Corporate Plan. Public Health investments seek to maximise improvement in health and wellbeing including narrowing the gap in outcome between the most deprived and least deprived in the Borough.

## **11. Staffing implications**

- 11.1 There are no direct staffing implications for the Council; however TUPE may apply between outgoing and incoming providers in the event that the tender results in a change of service provider. The Council will facilitate the dispatch of TUPE information which has been received from the existing Provider as part of the procurement process to enable bidders to consider and respond accordingly.

## **12. Equality implications**

- 12.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and attached as **Appendix A** to this report. It recommends that the Council continues with its proposals but undertakes two actions listed below:
- Commissioner supports the refuge provider to identify alternative sources of external funding to fund a Children's & Young Persons Worker.
  - Commissioner monitors the working relationship between the refuge/safe house provider and Children's IDVA provider to ensure move on support is provided where victims moving on from the refuge/safe houses have ongoing DA risks.

## **13. Consultation**

- 13.1 Consultation about the revised budget/model which is subject to Council approval took place with the current provider, members of the Toxic Trio Leadership and Governance Group, colleagues in Supported Housing and Children's Services Directorate Management Team. The consultation raised concerns about the loss of the children and young person's worker and the services available for service

users with complex needs. Both of which will be required to be monitored closely to ensure the needs of the vulnerable service users are met.

## **Background papers**

### **Author**

**Tracy Simcox**

**Lead Commissioner for Older People and Vulnerable Adults**

☎ 602454

✉ [Tracy.simcox@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Tracy.simcox@walsall.gov.uk)



**Paula Furnival**  
**Executive Director**

18 January 2017



**Councillor Diane Coughlan**  
**Portfolio Holder Social Care**

27 January 2017

### Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	<b>Reduction in the Public Health Transformation Fund Investment in Domestic Abuse (DA) Services</b>		
Directorate	Economy and Environment		
Service	Public Health		
Responsible Officer	Dr Barbara Watt		
EqIA Author	Claire Hammonds/Adrian Roche		
Proposal planning start	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016	Proposal start date (due or actual)	April 2017

<b>1</b>	<b>What is the purpose of the proposal?</b>		<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>New / revision</b>
	Policy		<b>Y</b>	<b>New</b>
	Procedure			
	Internal service			
	External Service		<b>Y</b>	
	Other - give details			
<b>2</b>	<b>What are the intended outcomes, reasons for change? (The business case)</b>			
	<p>Accord Housing Association has stated that they can only deliver an emergency accommodation service for the reduced contract value £188,886 per annum. This will result in the loss of the floating support worker and children &amp; young person worker. Children's Services Commissioned an IDVA service in April 2016, this should be used to support service users with DA risks that require support when moving on from the refuge/safe houses once the Floating Support service with Accord ends on 31.3.17. This will promote closer working arrangements between the two DA providers in Walsall streamline the DA pathway. Emergency accommodation staff will continue to support service users and their children, but there will not be a dedicated children and young person worker. However, the Council have submitted a cross authority bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government to secure 12 months funding for 2017/18 to give the current provider time to identify and secure long term funding. The Council will be notified of the outcome of this bid by March 2017.</p>			
<b>3</b>	<b>Who is the proposal potential likely to affect?</b>			
	<b>People in Walsall</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Detail</b>	
	All	<b>Y</b>	This is a universal service available to all Walsall residents.	
	Specific group/s	<b>Y</b>	It is likely that groups with protected characteristics will be affected by the proposal.	

	Council employees	Y	The services are available to all employees.	
	Other			
4	Evidence, engagement and consultation (including from area partnerships, where relevant)			
4.1				
	Type	Contract negotiations	Date	29.11.16 & 6.12.16
	Audience	Accord Housing Association – current provider		
	Protected characteristics	All		
	Feedback			
	<p>Consultation as part of contract negotiations and future retender has taken place with Accord Housing Association (Accord HA). This contracted service ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and will be retendered during 2017/18. Due to the timescales involved it is likely that the Council will issue a 6 month transitional contract for the period 1.4.17 to 30.9.17 on the reduced contract value £188,886 per annum. Accord HA has stated that they can only deliver an emergency accommodation service for this value if they removed the floating support service and remove the Children &amp; Young Person's worker. Accord HA will continue to deliver the emergency accommodation service during the transitional contract period but, have stated that they will only bid for the service if they feel that they can deliver a 'safe' service which will realistically mean reducing the number of units currently provided and that the tender is completed within the 6 month time frame. Accord HA like neighbouring domestic abuse refuge providers are taking more referrals that are presenting with complex needs (mental health and substance misuse issues which account for 51% of referrals). Walsall removed sleeping night staff in April 2014 which released a £50k saving but with the complexity of referrals increasing it presents the provider with management issues resulting in some referrals being refused if referrals cannot be managed safely. During 2015/16 140 victims were placed in the Walsall refuge/safe house, 52 (37% were in borough referrals) 88 (63% out of borough referrals). The newly commissioned service will require the provider to prioritise referrals from Walsall referrers then our Black Country Councils to improve access to refuge placements across the Black Country. However, dedicated support to children and young people may be lost.</p> <p>Children's Services Commissioned an Independent Domestic Abuse Advocacy service in April 2016, this should be used to support move on from the refuge/safe houses once the Floating Support service with Accord ends on 31.3.17. This will promote closer working arrangements between the two domestic abuse providers in Walsall to streamline the DA pathway.</p>			
	Type	Public Consultation	Date	24.11.16
	Audience	General Public- self advocacy meeting at Goscote Greenacres		
	Protected characteristics	All		

## Feedback

Direct service user consultation was not conducted but the provider was encouraged to use the corporate consultation link and encourage service users to express their view on the proposed change. Service user consultation was conducted during the summer 2016 to gather information on quality and effectiveness of the existing service to inform new service specifications.

However, from a self advocacy meeting conducted on 24.11.16 at Goscote Greenacres, a member of Walsall Disability Forum stated they would not be in favour of the proposal they knew someone that had worked in a DA women's refuge and were aware of the effect DA has on children and future generations. Stating the council, 'won't know the effect on them for year yet'.

Type	Feedback from West Midlands Police	Date	12.12.16
Audience	Walsall Neighbourhood Policing Unit Commander		
Protected characteristics	All		
Feedback			
Walsall Police state that they were concerned that a reduction in funding will result in a reduction in provision, thus increasing the risk to victims of domestic abuse and their families. Domestic abuse is an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) factor and if not appropriately addressed, reduces the life chances of families and increases demand on public services.			

Type	Information sharing session	Date	9.11.16
Audience	Children Services senior Managers & Toxic trio group members		
Protected characteristics	All		
Feedback			
In early November 2016 discussions took place with Children Services senior managers and the Toxic Trio Strategic Group with regards the interim plans and to inform the future service model.			

## 4.2 Concise summary of evidence, engagement and consultation (including from area partnerships, where relevant)

Savings can be made but it will result in the loss of the dedicated Children's & Young Persons support worker who supports parents and their children affected by DA to help prevent the cycle of DA. Both the police and public were not in favour of any reductions that may affect DA victims.

## 5 How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative or neutral.



	Characteristic	Effect	Reason	Action needed Y or N
	Age	Negative	The dedicated Children's & Young Persons worker will be lost due to the proposed savings proposal and could impact upon children and young people.	Y
	Disability	Neutral		N
	Gender reassignment	Neutral		N
	Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral		N
	Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral		N
	Race	Neutral		N
	Religion or belief	Neutral		N
	Sex	Neutral		N
	Sexual orientation	Neutral		N
	Other (give detail)			
	Further information			
	<b>6</b>	<b>Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative affect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details below.</b>		
<b>7</b>	<b>Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation suggest you take? (Bold which one applies)</b>			
	<b>A</b>	<b>No major change required</b>		
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality		
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact		
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal		

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
January – March 2017	Support the refuge provider to identify alternative sources of external funding to fund a Children's & Young Persons Worker.	Commissioner	April 2017	Dedicated Children's & Young Persons Support retained.
January 2017	Monitor the working relationship between the refuge/safe house provider and Children's IDVA provider to ensure move on support is provided where there are going DA risks to improve flow from the refuge.	Commissioner	October 2017	Dedicated DA support is provided through the Children's IDVA Service to support to victims moving on from the refuge and safe houses with ongoing DA risks.

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail