

PORTFOLIO: Children's Services

SERVICE AREA AND DIRECTORATE: Children's Services, Children's Commissioning

Proposal Title: Review of contracts for perpetrator and counselling services.

1. Financial Proposal

	2019 / 2020
	£
Estimated Saving	109,000
Revenue Investment	0
Net Saving	109,000
Capital investment	0

2. Description of the Proposal

- 2.1 This proposal seeks to cease two contracts for services commissioned as part of the 'Toxic Trio' investment approved by Cabinet in February 2016.

The two services affected by this proposal are:

2.2 A programme for perpetrators of domestic violence

The council has a contract to provide support to perpetrators of domestic violence intended to change behaviours, reduce safeguard risks to children and reduce admissions to care due to domestic abuse. The value of the contract is £79,000 per annum and is due to expire on 30 June 2019.

82 perpetrators have completed the programme since the service was commissioned in 2016. It is not proposed to renew the contract when it expires because measurable impact relating to the safeguarding of children has been difficult to determine and reductions in the numbers of children coming into care cannot be directly attributed to the programme.

Any impact resulting from the cessation of local arrangements for perpetrators will be mitigated by referring to a regional programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse, which was commissioned, by the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2017. This will provide a route to refer up to 12 perpetrators. Funding of this programme is currently secured until August 2019.

2.3 Counselling Service for children aged 5 to 11 years affected by domestic abuse.

The council commissioned a counselling service for 12 months for children aged 5 to 11 years who have witnessed domestic abuse. The service was

intended to improve emotional wellbeing, increase self-esteem and build resilience.

36 children have accessed this service to date, 10 of which currently receive support from the service. 7 children have fully engaged with the programme before exiting the service in a planned way. It is not proposed to renew the contract in April 2019 because children can now access similar support from other services, some which were not available when the counselling service was commissioned, for example:

- Children living with a parent receiving support from the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service (IDVA) commissioned by the council have access to a specialist young person's advocate who provides co-ordinated child and parent support.
- Four specialist school based children's domestic abuse workers are (from September 2018) providing 1 to 1 and / or group support to children and young people witnessing, or living with, domestic abuse, support in classroom and assembly settings, and training and support to teachers in schools across the borough.
- Victim Support Service working with victims of crime, including domestic abuse, offer specialist support to children.
- Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provide a range of counselling

2.4 In addition to the above, Early Help family support workers helps children at low risk of domestic abuse through individual direct work and social workers work directly with children deemed to be a Child In Need and children on a child protection plan. Child protection plans provide ongoing, specific direct work around safety planning, reducing and removing the risk of continued exposure to domestic abuse.

2.5 On Monday 29 October 2018, in its Budget Statement, Government announced an investment of £20 million into national Mental Health Services for both adults and children. The action plan for delivery and how this will extend to local services is yet to be developed.

2.6 **Options for consultation**

There are two options for consultation:

Option 1.

- Cease the local perpetrator service on the expiry of the current contract expiry and refer perpetrators of domestic violence to the regional programme.
- Cease the counselling service pilot for children witnessing domestic abuse and refer to alternative services.

Option 2

- Review all current commissioned domestic abuse services (for victims, and perpetrators) and explore alternative ways to provide whole family

support for families affected by domestic abuse in Walsall as part of Children's Services Transformation Programme.

3. Implications Associated With Proposal

3.1 Council Corporate Plan Priorities

To ensure that children & young people who are affected by domestic violence, have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well and perpetrators can positively contribute to their community.

3.2 Customers

This proposal takes into account victims, children and perpetrators with a history of domestic violence and abuse, or those considered at risk of perpetrating violence and abuse.

The perpetrator programme was intended to help perpetrators of violence recognise the impact of their actions, change their behaviour, and reduce risk to children.

The counselling service was intended to improve emotional wellbeing, increase self-esteem and build resilience.

3.3 Employees / Staffing

There are no staffing implications for this proposal.

3.4 Partners

There is no impact or responsibilities on other partner agencies regarding any domestic violence costs or services.

3.5 Economic Implications

There are no economic implications for this proposal.

3.6 Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications for this report.

3.7 Health and wellbeing implications

The most relevant Marmot principles for this proposal is the enabling all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives and give every child the best start in life while creating and developing healthy and sustainable communities

3.8 **Other Council Services**

These proposals will decrease some support service activity.

3.9 **Procurement / Social Value Implications**

A compliant procurement process will be followed if required following consultation.

4. **Associated Risks / Opportunities**

Any impact resulting from the cessation of local arrangements for perpetrators will be mitigated by the implementation of a robust exit strategy for those on the programme and by referring any new individuals to a regional programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse which was commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2017. This will provide a route to refer up to 12 perpetrators. Funding of this programme is currently secured until August 2019.

Robust transition planning and arrangements for those children currently in receipt of counselling services will be agreed between the council and the provider of services to minimise risk to children. All children will be successfully transitioned to other forms of assistance, appropriate to their needs.

5. **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications for this report.

6. **Consultation and Customer feedback**

6.1 The consultation plan will include consultation with;

- Parents/carers
- Service Users
- Providers
- Partners including Police
- Public consultation

6.2 Consultation information will be available:

- online via the Local Offer pages,
- council web site
- public meetings

7. **Reducing Inequalities Implications**

7.1 A full equality impact assessment is being carried out.