

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 26 MARCH 2013

COMMISSIONING of CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1.0 Background

This report presents to the Committee the results of the Commissioning of Children's Services which was undertaken in December 2012. The recommendations are for the awarding of contracts from 1st May 2013 for Early Intervention Services costing £2.4m for a 12 month period. The successful providers are listed in Appendix 1. The Trust is asked to note the report.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The Council contracts with providers of Early Intervention services to deliver services in the following areas:

- Family Support and Parenting
- Short Breaks for Disabled Children
- Services to support young people at risk
- A number of specialist support services

2.2 In September 2012 The Council decided to commission services for award of a 12 month contract.

2.3 The aims of previous commissioning rounds were to provide prompt, appropriate, effective services, centred on the family and the child. Providers were expected to work together with shared priorities to ensure there was no duplication or gaps in services. Most service interventions were at the lower level of need.

2.4 The current review of Family Support has suggested some changes in focus, with services targeting their work at children, young people and families with higher levels of need as follows:

To reduce the risk of family breakdown through supporting families at risk of poor outcomes and providing flexible support at the earliest opportunity, in particular at the higher levels of need.

To target services to young people, in particular by area, to tackle risk taking behaviour issues including alcohol, teenage pregnancy, NEET and anti social behaviour. This would effectively combine targeted and universal services to ensure young people have the means to engage with activities. This approach will have a wider reach and have more success in ongoing participation and reducing the level of need.

To improve the quality of life of disabled children, young people and their families through providing a range of Short Break Services appropriate to the needs of these children.

2.5 The commissioned service areas are aligned into three categories which form the framework for identifying commissioning priorities:

- *Early Intervention, Prevention and Support*: delivering outcomes that reduce needs from escalating, in particular reducing 'crisis' interventions by Social Care.
- *Statutory 'Duty'*: delivering outcomes that the Council has a duty to secure, but not necessarily deliver itself.
- *Targeted/Specialist*: delivering more focussed outcomes for specific individuals or families as determined by need.

2.6 Based on this framework, priority areas are:

Priority Area 1: Family support and parenting

The focus of this area is to reduce the risk of family breakdown and provide support to those families at risk of poor outcomes. Services will focus investment that supports families with more complex and higher levels of need. Tenders were sought for the following services:

- Family Support for Children on the Edge of Care
- Family Support for Domestic Abuse (5-13 years)
- Family Support for Black and Minority Ethnic
- Family Support for Young Carers

Priority Area 2: Short Breaks for children aged 0-18 with Disabilities.

The Short Break Services in Wirral has significantly enhanced the choice, range, volume and quality of services offered to children with disabilities. The aim is to sustain a range of services to meet the different needs of children and enable them to access Short Breaks that are appropriate for them. Tenders were sought for the following services:

- Creative Activity Club for Children with Disabilities
- Play Development Sessions
- Sports Based Activity for Children with Disabilities
- Weekend Activity Clubs
- Specialist Play schemes
- Activity Clubs for Children with Complex Health Needs
- Activity Clubs for Children with Autism
- Residential Weekends
- Short Breaks for Children with Autism (level 2 & 3)
- Short Breaks for Children with Autism (level 4)
- Friendship Support Service for Children with Autism
- Family Short Breaks

Priority Area 3: Youth Challenge

These services provide targeted support to young people at risk of becoming: NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), or offending or who are currently involved in the Youth Justice System. The age range is 10-19 but 80% of

the young people involved must be 13-19. This combines targeted and universal services to ensure young people have the means to engage with activities which have a wider reach and have more success in ongoing participation and reducing the level of need. Tenders were sought for the following services:

- Youth Challenge Targeted Support
- Youth Challenge Universal Support

Priority Area 4: Statutory Duties.

Children's Services have statutory duties to provide a number of services; some of which are provided through external contracts.

The four services in this Priority Area for which Tenders were invited are:

- Young Runaways/Children who are Sexually Exploited/Children who Sexually Exploit
- Parent Partnership Service
- Advocacy and Independent Visiting for Children in Care
- Post Adoption Service

Priority Area 5: Intensive Family Intervention Programme.

This programme is Wirral's response to the Government's policy to work with troubled families and help them move from high levels of need to one whereby they are self organised and require limited support. The approach involves agencies working together to provide targeted support which is personalised to the needs of the family and negotiated by a key worker. As families make progress other agencies and key members of the community will be involved to support the families engage, meet with the wider community and access universal services. Tenders were sought for the following services:

- Intensive Family Intervention
- Family Role Models

2.7 The Procurement Process

A full open EU Procurement process was conducted by Corporate Procurement via the Council's e-tendering portal, The Chest. Supplier workshops were included in the process to explain the structure of the tender and create an awareness of the procurement process for suppliers, including the use of the e-tendering portal (The Chest).

184 providers initially expressed an interest and 32 providers' submitted tenders for the 24 service areas (see the table below). Tenders were evaluated on 40% price, 60% quality. The quality criteria was evaluated by the use of method statements (50%) and an interview / Presentation stage (10%) and suppliers were required to provide evidence of key policies and procedures to demonstrate their capability.

These contracts award dates are from 1 May 2013 – 30 April 2014 with the option to extend annually up to 31 March 2016 subject to funding availability, satisfactory service monitoring and confirmation that the service remains in line with Council priorities.

The opportunity to Tender was opened on The Chest on 27th September and closed on Tuesday 13 November. The numbers of applicants that applied and were short-listed in each priority area are listed in the table below.

| Priority | Number of service areas | Number of tenders | Numbers interviewed |
|--|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| PA1 – Parenting and family Support | 4 | 12 | 6 |
| PA2 – Short Breaks for Disabled Children | 12 | 30 | 18 |
| PA3 – Risk taking Behaviour in Children and Young People | 2 | 4 Targeted services 4 Universal services | 5 |
| PA4 – Specialist Areas | 4 | 7 | 5 |
| PA5 – Intensive Family Intervention Programme | 2 | 7 | 3 |

2.8 The Interview consisted of a 10 minute presentation after which organisations would have to answer 4 questions which were set against the following criteria:

1. Planning process of the service.
2. Delivery process of the service.
3. Service user engagement.
4. Impact measurement and Outcome analysis.

2.9 A commissioning panel was established for each priority area including representation from partner organisations such as Health, Voluntary Community and Faith Sector organisations, together with colleagues from other council departments and service users. Each panel was chaired by an officer from the Children and Young People’s Department. Each application was assessed by a commissioner, a service user and either the Link Forum Liaison Worker or a seconded commissioner from Wirral Health. Commissioning panels met to validate which organisation should progress to interview.

2.10 At the interview stage all panel members were involved in the assessment process.

2.11 Following the full commissioning process 19 organisations were successful with some being successful in more than one service area. The successful organisations are listed in Appendix 1.

3.0 Service Specification Changes

3.1 Priority Area One, Parenting support.

3.1.1 This area took account of an ongoing Family Support Review and the Intensive Family Intervention Programme. Needs assessments highlighted that the most effective support is where intervention reduces family breakdown and the needs for specialist services.

3.1.2 Research with other local authorities suggests that Home Visiting Services are more effective if redesigned into an Edge of Care Service reducing the numbers of children in need and children on a child protection plan. In another area, the pilot project to support 16-18 year olds who were subject to relationship abuse did not produce the outcomes expected. In addition, the law has now changed and domestic violence cases involving young people aged 16-18 are to be referred to the Central Advice and Duty Team (CADT) for advice and guidance for children at risk and in need. Finally, evidence based parenting programmes have not been commissioned. There was duplication in this area with the work provided by Children's Centres and the Youth Offending Parenting Team.

3.1.3 The four areas which were tendered for were:

- PA1.1 Parenting support for children on the edge of care
- PA1.2 Family support for children who have experienced domestic abuse 5-13 year olds
- PA1.3 Family support for Black and Minority Families
- PA1.4 Family support for Young Carers

3.1.4 In PA1.2 there was only one organisation who tendered and they failed to reach the quality score. The organisation who are currently running this service, did supply a tender but they inadvertently uploaded a blank method statement and were not allowed to proceed. It is proposed therefore to extend the current contract for 12 months. In PA1.3 two organisations tendered for this service, the current provider and a new organisation. Neither of the two reached the quality score necessary to proceed to interview. The current provider continues to meet all performance measures but does require additional support with future tender applications. It is proposed that this is given in tender workshops provided through the Corporate Services contract with Voluntary and Community Action Wirral (VCAW) and that the current contract is extended by 12 months.

3.2 Priority Area Two, Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities.

3.2.1 The aim has been to sustain a range of services to meet the different needs of all children and enable them to access Short Breaks appropriate for them but change the service design for some of them based on consultation/feedback with service users and providers.

3.2.2 One existing service not put out for tender was the Direct Payment Support Scheme. This service provides support to families regarding the recruitment and HR implications when employing Personal Assistants funded through their Direct Payments award. Based on the low level of demand the need for this service to be commissioned specifically could not be supported. This activity will be picked up without the need for any additional investment by Wirral Council via its existing full time Directs Payments Coordinator and the Short Breaks Service. Twelve service areas under this priority area that were advertised are as follows:

- PA2.1 Creative Activity Club for Children with Disabilities
- PA2.2 Play Development Sessions
- PA2.3 Sports Based Activity for Children with Disabilities
- PA2.4 Weekend Activity Clubs
- PA2.5 Specialist Play schemes
- PA2.6 Activity Clubs for Children with Complex Health Needs
- PA2.7 Activity Clubs for Children with Autism
- PA2.8 Residential Weekends
- PA2.9 Short Breaks for Children with Autism (level 2&3)
- PA2.10 Short Breaks for Children with Autism (level 4)
- PA2.11 Friendship Support Service for Children with Autism
- PA2.12 Family Short Breaks

3.3 Priority Area 3, Risk taking Behaviour in Children and Young People.

3.3.1 This took account of the Family Support Review and the Intensive Family Intervention Programme. The service area was titled Youth Challenge, Targeted Support and Youth Challenge, Universal Youth Support. The Needs Assessment identified the 5 areas in the borough with highest levels of child poverty, anti social behaviour, risk taking behaviour in children and young people. The commissioning in PA3 focused on two service areas,

- PA 3.1 Youth Challenge Targeted Support
- PA 3.2 Youth Challenge Universal Support

Targeted services will provide timely and effective interventions with young people receiving one to one support. This will be complemented by the provision of Universal open access activities to provide opportunities for vulnerable and at risk young people to progress into developmental opportunities including opportunities for accredited learning. A key requirement will be for providers to develop a joint delivery plan thereby providing progression routes.

3.3.2 In the service area Youth Challenge, Targeted Support the Commissioning Panel decided to award to two providers. It was felt that a bespoke targeted service integrated with the Youth Justice System was necessary.

3.4 Priority Area 4 – Specialist Services

3.4.1 All tenders were accepted and scored appropriately to progress to the interview stage, with the exception of those submitted for PA4.1 Young Runaways/Children who are Sexually Exploited/Children who Sexually Exploit. In this service area there were not suitable assurances that the costs provided could be used for a like-

for-like comparison and the procurement process for this service area was stopped. This service area will be re-tendered.

3.4.2 Although not statutory (or no longer statutory) there are a number of existing services which are provided on behalf of the Council and have been reviewed as part of this wider programme of commissioning:

- **Choice Advisor:** The Choice Advisor service provides information for all parents at the school transition point for children and young people so that they can make informed choices.
- **Pupil Advocate:** This project provides individual support for children and young people with learning difficulties who are experiencing difficulties in school.
- **Involvement:** Engagement and involvement of children and young people with learning difficulties (SEN) and/or any disability and also engagement and involvement of parent/carer of a child with learning difficulties or any disability.

3.4.3 Reviewing these services in the context of other delivery and provision it has been identified that need for these services to be commissioned in their current form can no longer be evidenced. Aspects of the outcomes of the Choice Advisor and Pupil Advocate will still be delivered through other services and provision e.g. Children's Centres and other council information sources. In addition, the Choice Advisor contract will be continued until 30th June to enable the current provider to complete current transition requirements. Involvement services have not been identified as being required in their current form beyond 31 March 2013. Instead, the service specification for Parent Partnership has been expanded to include a new Involvement dimension. On this basis no tender has been made for the continued delivery of the services described above.

3.4.4 There are a number of existing statutory services that relate to supporting looked after children, that have previously been delivered via separate contracts. There are financial and operational benefits from joining these services up. The services affected are Advocacy for Looked after Children, Advocacy for Looked After Children (with disabilities), and Independent Visitors. These have been tendered as a single service.

3.5 Priority Area 5 the Intensive Family Intervention Programme

3.5.1 The service will be specifically targeted at working with families who have a history of non-engagement with services, or where positive change has been limited or not sustained. The service will work with families identified as having the greatest need and resistance to change and it will support the work of partner organisations whose Key Workers deliver a "light" FIP model. There are two service areas

- 5.1 Intensive Family Intervention
- 5.2 Family Role Models

3.5.2 In PA5.1 there were 4 organisations that had completed tender documents but only one organisation which proceeded through to interview stage. In PA5.2 there were 3 organisations who tendered but only two proceeded to interview stage. The reason for the organisations not proceeding was that they did not meet the required quality score.

3.6 Existing contracts one month extension

- 3.6.1 It has not been possible to implement the new contracts from 1st April and the proposal is to award for 12 months from 1st May. To ensure continuity of service for vulnerable children and families, a number of current contracts will be extended for one month until 30th April 2013.

3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 Following cabinet's decision to award the contracts, commissioners are working with providers to agree the detailed performance measures for monitoring purposes. Work is also being undertaken with unsuccessful providers who currently hold contracts to agree exit strategies and to provide support to organisations where possible.

4.0 Finance

- 4.1 The total amount awarded in this commissioning round was £2.4 million

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 This Children's Trust Board notes the report.

Appendices

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