

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

DATE TBC

SUBJECT:	COMMISSIONING OF SERVICES – LESSONS LEARNT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report presents to the Committee the lessons learnt following the evaluation of the process used for the commissioning of Children's Services. As with previous commissioning processes this report is has been drafted to identify improvements in any future commissioning activities.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 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.

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.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

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.

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.

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.

2.5 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 April 2013 – 31 March 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 outcome of the evaluation and proposed contract awards are detailed in Appendix One.

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. Appendix 1 lists all applicants.

Priority	Number of service areas	Number of tenders	Numbers interviewed
PA 1-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	2	7	3

Programme			
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2.6 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.

2.7 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.

Following the full commissioning process 19 organisations were successful with some being successful in more than one service area.

3.0 Lessons Learnt – Positive Feedback

3.1 Feedback from the Link Forum (report is attached as Appendix A) reflects that improvements have been made to the commissioning process. The areas of positive feedback are listed below and there is a separate section for the areas for improvement:

3.2 Workshops and briefing sessions provided an opportunity for providers to clarify requirements. Accessing documents from the Chest was simple and the requirements were clear. The posting of questions and answers on the Chest was straightforward and answers were prompt with all providers having the same access to information. The Documentation and pricing was much more straightforward and the online questionnaire was an easier way of submitting information than previous Pre Qualifying Questionnaires.

3.3 The interview process was better than the previous round with the information and requirements for the interviews being clear and helpful. The interviews were reported as being relaxed and supportive however the heating was not working in the building which resulted in people being cold and uncomfortable. The timescales for the submission of tenders was adequate and within the set timescales.

4.0 Lessons Learnt – Areas for Improvement

Area	Comment	Response
Consultation	Lack of consultation with existing providers	<p>Consultation was undertaken with stakeholders, providers and service users.</p> <p>The priorities for this commissioning were set in response to a number of other priority developments which determined the service areas to be commissioned.</p> <p>Providers not involved in the Early Intervention Grant Commissioning were not specifically consulted.</p> <p>All providers were advised that the contracts would terminate on 31st March 2013 this was later extended to 30th April.</p> <p>Recommending that future commissioning runs from 1st September to enable consultation to start with budget setting process.</p>
Uploading tenders	Difficulties uploading tenders and lack of clarity over re-submission	Will agree with Procurement the process in advance for dealing with this in the next round.
Pricing	Provide overall service cost available	Have commissioning process follow the budget settlement date for available budgets to be known.
Timescales	Too long gap between panel recommendation and Cabinet approval	Move commissioning process to take place after budget decisions.
Timescales	Delay between Cabinet decision and cabinet minutes being posted, this prolongs the call in period	Discuss with Legal the need for minutes to be posted promptly after Cabinet
TUPE	Lack of information from current providers	Procurement now produce a template for providers to complete regarding TUPE information
Contracts	12 month contracts too short	This is currently being discussed.

Smaller Organisations	Lack of capacity in small organisations to bid	VCAW have been contracted by Wirral Council to provide capacity building support to small organisations. Youth Federation have been funded by Children and Young People's Department to work with small organisations and develop capacity.
Design of services	Involve third sector groups, children, young people and families in the design of services in next commissioning round.	This has been done previously but will be further developed in the next round. The Chest can be used as a means of wide consultation for future commissioning.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 Evaluation of processes is essential if we are to ensure that we are constantly to identify areas for improvements in the commissioning process.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 The use of The Chest as a means of consultation and evaluation is being considered for future commissioning rounds.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The link Forum has been consulted as part of preparing this report. Please see attached Appendix A the Link Forum Report.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 This report is responding to comments from the Voluntary Community and faith Sector and it is intended that the response will have positive implications for the voluntary Community and faith Sector Groups.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising from this report.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact is attached – <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising from this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The Committee note the report.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 The report is for information only.

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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Delegated Decision	5 September 2012
Overview and Scrutiny	11 September 2012
Cabinet	14 March 2013