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| Report Title: | PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS FOR AN AFTERCARE SERVICE FOR SURVIVORS OF RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT |
| Report of: | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CONSULTANT IN PUBLIC HEALTH |

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides details on Public Health's intention to jointly commission an Aftercare Service for Survivors of Rape and Sexual Assault across Merseyside with the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), NHS England and Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and St Helens Councils.

The joint commission will be led by the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), who will take overall responsibility for the tender process, contract award and contract management.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The decision requested is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS (DECISION)

The Director of Public Health is recommended to agree to jointly commission with the Merseyside PCC, NHS England and Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and St Helens Council a three-year contract (1st April 2022 – 31st March 2025) with the option of two one-year extensions, within the approved budget of £250,000 (£50,000 per annum) for the provision of a Merseyside Aftercare Service for Survivors of Rape and Sexual Assault.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To allow Public Health to implement the commissioning intentions for Aftercare Service for Survivors of Rape and Sexual Assault as outlined in this report.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Wirral Council, through the Public Health ring fenced grant currently commission RASA Merseyside (Rape and Sexual Abuse Support) to provide a Specialist Sexual Violence Counselling and Support Service. This contract is due to end on the 31st March 2022 but has the provision of two possible 1 year extensions. The option to activate the extension was considered but this proposed joint commission provides the opportunity to pool investment with key commissioners across Merseyside to enable resources to be most effectively utilised to meet the needs of service users and improve pathways, it will also streamline monitoring arrangements for the benefit of service providers and support further collaboration between commissioners.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 RASA Merseyside is the current provider of the specialist sexual violence counselling and support service in Wirral. The service provides evidence-based counselling and support to Wirral adult residents that have been affected by rape and sexual abuse. The service is commissioned to reduce or prevent medium to long term psychological impacts on survivors, which will in turn reduce demand on mental health services in Wirral.
- 3.2 A five-year contract was awarded to RASA Merseyside by Wirral Council following a tender process in 2016. This contract is due to end on the 31st March 2022 although there are two one year extension options available within the contract. The current contract value is £49,920 per annum. It is acknowledged that the service provider also accesses other sources of funding to fund its service.
- 3.3 The Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner also commissions with other Merseyside Local Authority Commissioners, an aftercare service for survivors of rape and sexual assault across Merseyside. The providers for this service are RASA Merseyside and RASASC Cheshire & Merseyside (Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre). The contract was awarded from 1 April 2018 and ends on 31st March 2022. The service is an all age service and therefore includes provision for children and young people and has an additional focus on the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) role and support within the criminal justice system.
- 3.4 The total budget for the joint recommission is capped at £552,500 per annum to be delivered pan Merseyside. The Wirral Council investment for this commission totals £250,000 (£50,000 per annum) to fund additional counselling support for Wirral residents who are survivors of rape and sexual assault. The OPCC will manage the tender process but will engage and consult with partners on the selection of the successful provider. Contract management will be co-ordinated by the OPCC but will involve participation, to a jointly agreed outcomes framework, by all partners.
- 3.5 The current Public Health contract will continue during the recommissioning process and a period of service mobilisation will be built into the tender process to ensure

there is no loss of service and a seamless transition for existing service users is maintained.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Public Health grant will fund the Wirral Council contribution of this contract. The value and availability of the Public Health grant for 2022/23 onwards is not yet known.
- 4.2 The budget has been allocated for the services highlighted based on the grant funding being consistent with this financial year. Should the grant vary and be reduced then contract amounts would be varied, and the proposed tender exercises will consider appropriate mitigating measures.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under the Public Contract Regulations once a contract has reached its term limit the contract must end and be retendered in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations.
- 5.2 The recommissioning of the service detailed within this report will be undertaken in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations; this process will be managed by the OPCC who will take lead responsibility for the tender process, contract award and contract management.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (T.U.P.E.) may be applicable. The OPCC will gather this information for inclusion in the tender if appropriate.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There are several risks relating to a joint commissioning approach and potential changes in service. This includes:
- 7.2 There is potential for disruption to service provision during service redesign, recommissioning and commencement of new services. To mitigate against this and minimise disruption, adequate time to plan for, and implement the mobilisation of new services, is built into the procurement process between contract award and commencement.
- 7.3 In the current challenging financial climate, the impact of any future reductions in budget or policy implications on the amount of funding available for Public Health is unknown. The value and availability of the Public Health grant for 2022/23 onwards is not yet known. This risk will be mitigated by the insertion of appropriate termination clauses in the contract.
- 7.4 There is also the potential risk of partners having different service requirements and/or policies and procedures which could result in difficulties for the implementation and ongoing service delivery of the contract. To mitigate this the OPCC will manage the tender process but will engage and consult with partners on

the selection of the successful provider. Contract management will be co-ordinated by the OPCC but will involve participation, to a jointly agreed outcomes framework, by all partners.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Engagement and consultation has been led by the integrated engagement team within the OPCC. There has been extensive engagement with the third sector during the pandemic to understand issues affecting local services and the needs of the local community. A victim needs assessment was also conducted earlier in the year; this needs assessment was informed through wide engagement with service providers supporting victims of crime. The findings have been used to better understand the needs of victims and has supported the service review process.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 As part of the recommission an equality impact assessment (EIA) will be undertaken by the OPCC to ensure all equality impacts are considered and relevant actions are taken to mitigate any potential negative impacts.

9.3 Equality implications will be part of the commissioning process; the winning provider will be expected to demonstrate an inclusive service and comply with all equality legislation.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no direct impact on emissions of carbon dioxide

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Public Health Grant 2021-22

RASA Wirral Council Public Health Contract 2017 - 2022

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|------------------------|-------------|
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