

## **Cabinet**

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**Date of Meeting:** 10 July 2018

**Report Title:** New Domestic Abuse Commission 2019 - 22

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Jos Saunders - Children and Families,  
Cllr Janet Clowes - Adult Social Care and Integration

**Senior Officer:** Mark Palethorpe - Acting Executive Director - People

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### **1. Report Summary**

- 1.1 The Council commissioned a whole family domestic abuse service from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019, providing interventions for children, those who harm and those who are harmed. The three year initial term of this contract will end on 31 March 2019 and this report recommends a re-commissioning for the service rather than taking the option to extend, as this will allow the Council greater flexibility to change the delivery model to meet need.
- 1.2 Local people have been safer as a result of this commission but learning from contract management, consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and changes in local and sub regional provision indicate that re-commissioning is required to achieve best value for the Council and best support for its citizens to live free from abuse and its effects. The commissioning of whole family domestic abuse services has a positive impact on the safety, health and wellbeing of our adults and children, and supports our local communities to be strong and supportive. The procurement process will ensure that the Council continues to deliver efficiency and effectiveness through its commissioning activity. This specialist commission works within the context of other services with a focus on Domestic Abuse and in partnership with other agencies.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. To seek Cabinet approval to commence procurement of a whole family domestic abuse service.
- 2.2. To authorise the Executive Director – People, to award the whole family domestic abuse contract.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1. The whole family domestic abuse commission is integral to the delivery of the Cheshire East Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy. The strategy recognises that domestic abuse is a cross cutting issue which requires preventive and early intervention strategies across our Council and partnership workforce that work together with dedicated expert provision from the specialist sector.

The model of specialist service we require is therefore one which:

- Supports the prevention agenda through participation and delivery of campaigning and awareness work in schools and communities
- Offers information and consultation to community and professionals to identify and support adults and children at the earliest stages of need
- Delivers bespoke interventions to adults and children where the resources of community and professionals working in universal services are no longer appropriate
- Provides the range of services needed for immediate and longer term physical safety and emotional wellbeing (refuge, legal clinics, peer support, recovery programmes)
- Addresses the heart of the problem through engaging those who harm in accountability and change

This Strategy is bringing about change as we see a reduction in new high risk cases together with an increase in earlier recognition and support to families, not least to those who harm.

3.2 The Cheshire East Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership (CEDSAP) have delivered savings of some 8% in the last three years and have worked with partners at sub regional level to ensure that citizens of Cheshire East benefit from collaboration in attracting further funding for enhanced services, including an innovative provision for our most complex victims who often make repeat demands across all agencies. The Council, through CEDSAP, will continue to ensure best use of resources and close contract monitoring to ensure this critical service delivers good quality and innovative approaches to its work.

3.3 Through consultation with professionals and co-production with families the single model of delivery will be captured and in particular the siting of any specialist service to children and young people will be considered. Essentially the pervasiveness of domestic abuse is such that a relatively limited resource

can only ever reach a small number of those affected. This means that a greater percentage of children and young people may benefit more from equipping Children's Services and Schools staff to respond more fully as part of the work they are already undertaking and providing direct support to the most complex and high risk cases only. We have evidence that co-locating staff in Council teams has very positive benefits for delivering a more integrated service to the whole family, as well as building sustained change and confidence in the wider workforce to intervene effectively.

#### **4. Other Options Considered**

4.1. The current commission has been effective in delivering the adult elements of the service, (refer paragraph 5.4), however we now require a different approach to delivering the children's offer (paragraph 5.5). It is therefore appropriate that we use the learning from the last 3 years and sharpen our whole family offer of support where domestic abuse is an issue to ensure that it is meeting the local need.

4.2. The main alternative to Commissioning would be provision within the Council. Reasons for not pursuing this route are:

- Providers in the voluntary sector have demonstrated their greater flexibility to attract additional funding to benefit service users and maximise Council spend
- Service users value the clear independence of voluntary sector providers
- The Council and other partners benefit from the strong and independent voice of the community formed by the voluntary sector provider (service users and staff) in review and development of their own provision
- This will enable Cheshire East to take advantage of shared commissioning opportunities across the wider sub regional footprint, where this was in the interests of Cheshire East residents.

4.3. It is also possible that a decision could be made not to fund or to significantly reduce funding for these services. This would be counter to the Council's core values and objectives in the following ways:

- People in need would be without a key service that enables them to be safe in their homes and families
- People in need would present more frequently to other Council and partner services as their health, wellbeing, employment, housing are negatively impacted

- Council and partner services would be without recourse to the advice and collaboration that enables them to perform their existing roles

It is a reflection of the Council's understanding of the far reaching impact that Domestic abuse has, and the demand it creates for services, including those of partner agencies, like the police and health services, that the Council have supported a whole family approach to tackling this issue.

4.4. The Council's officers and services are fully involved in the development of sub regional projects which enhance local delivery and recognise the advantages these bring. As this sub regional work grows there may interest in and capacity to commission some service elements at a Cheshire level and the Council would work with partners to realise any benefits this would afford. Current contract arrangements across the region are not aligned, so this is not a viable option at present. However the delivery plan would ensure sufficient 'flex' over the period of the commission to enable joint working where this was in the interests of the population of Cheshire East and brought quality for best value. This has been demonstrated previously for example with a joint campaign across the four Cheshire local authorities and key stakeholders.

## 5. Background

5.1. In 2016 the Council procured a new whole family domestic abuse commission. This service provides a key element of the partnership response to the issue in the Borough. The partnership model includes:

- A 24/7 single point of access to information, consultation and referral for communities and professionals. This provision, **Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub**, is sited with the Council's Integrated Front Door. The Hub receives all referrals and takes next steps to engage the most appropriate service. The Hub also acts as a helpline to victims and, less frequently, to those who harm
- High risk referrals are sent immediately to the Council based **IDVA service** to engage victims in planning for their and their children's safety and engage partners in providing the range of interventions required to address their needs. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) is a key mechanism for co-ordinating high risk victim interventions
- Lower risk referrals or those with a specified need that is within the remit of the **Commission** (refuge, adult and children's change and recovery programmes, clinics, peer support) are routed to **Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Service (CEDAS)** for appropriate support. There are

bases in Macclesfield and Crewe but the service is delivered on an outreach basis across the Borough. CEDAS is currently delivered through a partnership of Barnardo's and Cheshire Without Abuse

5.2. This model is considered by service users, providers and partners to be highly effective in affording speedy and easy access to tailored support that is delivered in partnership with public and other voluntary sector services. There has been a steady decline of some 17% in high risk MARAC referrals over the last three years combined with a parallel increase of self and early help referrals to the Hub. In some cases information, advice and liaison with existing service providers is sufficient to provide early intervention and prevent further harm. In other cases a referral to commissioned services is necessary to bring about lasting change

5.3. The model of single point of access and routing to high risk Council or lower risk commissioned services is funded in the following way:

Council based IDVA provision costs some £400k and is 25% partnership funded by CCGs, Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner;

Commissioned Services are entirely Council funded at a level of £600k with significant added value from providers in the form of peer mentors, volunteers and receipt of voluntary sector grants;

Additional funding for enhanced interventions has been secured through sub regional working.

5.4. There is a strong evidence base over the first two years of the contract of the effectiveness of service delivery and innovative work with adults, including with those who harm. This includes:

- Outcomes data showing victims are safer
- Increased referrals to change programmes for men who harm who do not meet the criteria for Probation or the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
- Bespoke interventions for women who harm and who are often also victims (22 for 2017-18)
- Well established peer support groups and mentoring programmes to reduce isolation and ensure victims' voices shape service development
- Increased partnership working with Adults Services colleagues to ensure citizens benefit from the resources of statutory and specialist services
- Enabling people with complex needs to secure accommodation for the longer term

The evidence of effectiveness in relation to children and young people has been more variable, which has evidenced the need for us to review the most effective model for delivery in the new commission. The benefit of this going forward has been that we have been able to review what has worked and where weaknesses have been evident ie:

- Speed of response to referrals
- Managerial oversight of decision making
- The extent to which children's voices inform their journey and wider service development
- A reactive focus to individual demand rather than a proactive focus on developing confidence, tools and skills in partner agencies
- Insufficient developmental work on the growing issues of child to parent abuse and teen relationship abuse

5.5 Demand for services for children and young people has been almost twice that anticipated as domestic abuse continues to be a factor in some 40-50% of cases which come to the attention of Children's Services, including those on a child protection plan. While the Supplier is working together with commissioners to improve response to this level of need we think there may be a better model of delivery involving placing our dedicated specialist support in the teams already delivering targeted support across the range of issues impacting on children. Staff would implement a tiered response providing consultation, training, tools and delivering direct family work for the most complex and high risk cases. Any changes to the model of delivery will be considered and tested through consultation with professionals and co-production with families ahead of the invitation to tender and the service specification will clearly set out the Council's requirements going forward for an effective and sustainable service. Both Commissioning Clinical Groups and the wider partnership will lead the co-production and procurement of the service.

5.6 The indicative procurement timeline for this re-commission is as follows:

Market engagement / consultation – late June / early July 2018

Tender issue date – 3/9/18

Submission deadline – 4/10/18

Tender evaluated – w/c 8/10/18

Negotiations – if required – 22/10/18

Final bids deadline – 2/11/18

Final bids evaluated – 5/11/18

Intention to award – 12/11/18

Final Award letter – 23/11/18 (following standstill)

Contract preparation & signing – December 2018

Mobilisation – January- March 2019

## **6. Implications of the Recommendations**

### **6.1. Legal Implications**

6.1.1. The procurement process will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Contract Procedure Rules. Legal Services will continue to support the commission of new services. .

### **6.2. Finance Implications**

6.2.1. The proposed term of the contract for whole family domestic abuse is six years (four years plus the option to extend for two years) at a maximum cost of £600,000 pa ie £3.6m over six years. The Children's and Families base budget contains £600,000pa after a 8% reduction over the last two years for the whole family domestic abuse service.

6.2.2. It is recognised that this is a time of pressure for Council budgets and savings of 8% have already been made within the current envelope. However effective provision of domestic abuse prevention, early intervention, risk management and recovery services saves money. This includes the estimated £1m incurred in relation to a domestic homicide, the significant cost of taking children into care where behaviour change has not been possible, interventions by Adult and Children's Social Care as well as earlier help services to manage risk and need, demand on housing services and financial support to those whose employment has been impacted. The provision of a whole family domestic abuse service that reduces harm and builds resilience, will also generate savings to the public purse in the form of reductions in demand to police and health services

### **6.3. Equality Implications**

6.3.1. All public sector authorities are bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out and the Council will need to take into account the needs of persons with protected characteristics as set out in equalities legislation during the course of the commissioning process.



#### **6.4. Human Resources Implications**

6.4.1. There are no human resources implications for the Council. If there is a change in supplier then it will be for the outgoing and incoming suppliers to work through any TUPE implications.

#### **6.5. Risk Management Implications**

The key risks related to commissioning are:

- Failure to deliver services which protect life
- Failure to use Council resources in the most effective way
- Reputational damage to the Council as commissioner and contract manager should a serious incident occur

These risks are managed through the Cheshire East Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership (CEDSAP) Board risk register

#### **6.6. Rural Communities Implications**

6.6.1. It is important that providers promote service provision to people who experience isolation whether that is geographic or social. Domestic abuse is an isolating experience and it is important that barriers to provision are identified and surmounted in order to increase safety and recovery for additionally vulnerable people. This includes improved use of technology, working through local communities and networks

#### **6.7. Implications for Children & Young People**

6.7.1. There are direct, significant and lasting implications for children and young people. Children's safety, health and wellbeing are damaged by domestic abuse at the time of their exposure. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) research shows the implications for future life chances, including mental health, substance misuse and chronic illness. It is critical that the Council provides and funds the right combination of services that enable adults and children to experience lasting change. Options for achieving this goal are included in this report.

#### **6.8. Public Health Implications**

6.8.1. Domestic abuse is a public health issue in relation to its scale and impact across communities as well as interdependencies with key public health commissioning responsibilities such as substance misuse, mental ill health, health visiting etc. The effectiveness of this commission and the strategy within which it sits has a direct impact on Public Health work and vice versa.



## **7. Ward Members Affected**

- 7.1. All wards are affected. There is some correlation between areas of social deprivation and police reporting of domestic abuse but families across the whole demographic and geographic range are affected. Although evidence remains strong that women are disproportionately impacted domestic abuse damages the health, wellbeing and life chances of families across our Borough.

## **8. Consultation & Engagement**

- 8.1. This work is driven by both ongoing consultation and specific engagement about this commissioning cycle.
- 8.2. Stakeholder involvement in shaping service delivery is a strong feature of our partnership work to address domestic abuse. Our Strategy 2017-20 was produced by the Cheshire East Domestic and Sexual Abuse Board following widespread consultation and sets out the broader landscape and key priorities within which provision sits. Service users are formally consulted every quarter prior to Board meetings about their experience of service delivery by specialist and public services and their voices are captured in regularly monitoring and Authority wide events.
- 8.3. Our plans in respect of this proposal are:
- Hold dedicated meetings with all service user groups – adults who harm and who are harmed, children and young people – to understand what works well and should continue, what is problematic and what needs to change
  - Engage children and young people through the Council’s participation team about need and accessibility in particular
  - Use Domestic Abuse and other Partnership Board members (Local Safeguarding Adults and Children’s Boards, Safer Cheshire East Partnership) as senior sector leads to elicit professional views through a discussion paper and survey
  - Visit key teams who work in partnership with the specialist sector to check that our intentions build on and develop robust multi-agency intervention
  - We will also hold a market engagement event to ensure potential bidders are informed and able to offer early reflection on the scope of our commission

## **9. Access to Information**

9.1. Cheshire East Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy link:

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/staying-safe/domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence/cheshire-east-domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-partnership.aspx>

9.2. Equality Impact Assessment will be published.

## **10. Contact Information**

10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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