

EXTENSION OF CONTRACT – COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE (REF: ASC0013)

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Long (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Housing)

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Executive Summary:

The Council is strongly committed to challenging all forms of domestic abuse, which requires a clear and consistent approach to resourcing. The requested contract extension supports the commitment made to supporting domestic abuse services in the Council Plan 2016-20 and maintaining services at their current level. This report is seeking approval to extend the current contract for the provision of Comprehensive Support for Victims of Domestic Abuse currently provided by MK ACT.

The service commenced on 1 September 2014 and provides a domestic abuse service delivering prevention, crisis intervention and refuge provision for victims of domestic abuse. The contract is due to expire on 31st August 2017.

The recommended extension term is for two years expiring on 31/08/19. This is based on the satisfactory performance of the current contract and the limited value to be gained from tendering the current service given the small number of providers of specialist domestic abuse services. Two years will also provide time for a new domestic abuse strategy for Milton Keynes to be agreed and a new service model based on the strategy to be developed if required.

The annual value of this contract is £524,994 per annum. The value of a two year extension is £1,049,988

Procurement & Commissioning previously awarded this tender at the meeting held on 1 July 2014 and agreed that the tender could be awarded for three years with the option to extend for up to two further years.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Contract for Domestic Abuse Services delivered under the current contract by MK ACT be extended for two years until 1 July 2019.

2. Context

2.1 The extension of this contract affects the whole population in terms of providing services to victims of domestic abuse as well as supporting perpetrators or domestic abuse to change their behaviour.

2.2 The key requirements of this contract are to provide:

- (a) Information, advice and crisis intervention to victims of domestic abuse (One Stop);
- (b) Confidential refuge provision for 28 women and any accompanying children at risk of domestic violence; and
- (c) A programme to support perpetrators of domestic abuse to address their behaviour while supporting their partners (Fresh Start).

2.3 Achievements, Outcomes and Improvements

One Stop

- 310 people received a service through One Stop during 2016/17 of which 137 people were new to the service.
- 100% of new referrals were responded to within 24 hours and 67% of new referrals were provided with support and safety planning within 48 hours.
- 65% of new referrals went on to receive a full needs and risk assessment.

All of these figures represent an increase on previous quarters.

A key outcome is reducing the risk of domestic abuse for people who access the service. Cases closed during the quarter showed 62 risk scores decreased, 5 risk scores stayed the same and no scores increased. Outcomes recorded by individual service users included: 'ended relationship with their abuser; better understanding of domestic violence, learned strategies to help keep themselves and their children safe, increase in confidence, steps taken to move-on e.g. training, voluntary work and employment.

Refuge

During 2016/17 Quarter 3 the refuge had 99% occupancy with 28 women and 36 children (majority 0-3 years) living in the refuge at end of quarter. The average stay is currently 10 months. Outcomes data completed by women on leaving the refuge reported positive outcomes in relation to health, financial, parenting, immigration and criminal justice.

Fresh Start

For Quarters 1-3 2016/17 Fresh Start had 84 referrals of which 42 attended for assessment and 29 were accepted onto the programme. In Quarter 3 17 people were actively engaged with the programme. Following concerns from commissioners regarding low numbers of perpetrators actively engaging with the programme MK ACT has recently employed a new development worker and divided the programme into modules, significantly reducing waiting times to access the programme.

When perpetrators join Fresh Start their partners and ex-partners are referred to the Partner Support Service which offers risk assessments and safety planning as well as ongoing support and advice. There were 21 people using this service at the end of Q3

A full outcomes report for all individuals involved with the Fresh Start programme for 2016/17 will be produced by MK ACT in April 2017.

3. **Background**

3.1 The award or the original contract was agreed by Procurement and Commissioning on 1 July 2017 as a three year contract with the option to extend for up to a further two years.

3.2 Contract Management

- (a) The Senior Client Officer for this contract is the Assistant Director (Joint Commissioning). The contract adheres to the Council's standard terms and conditions as maintained by the Council's legal services team.
- (b) The key governance processes include:
 - (i) Quarterly Monitoring Information, workbook collection and analysis
 - (ii) Quarterly outcomes monitoring : Key Performance Indicators
 - (iii) Quarterly contract monitoring meetings
 - (iv) Annual Quality Assessment
 - (v) Break Clauses
 - (vi) Escalation process
 - (vii) Contracted service delivered within the agreed contract value.
- (c) The Quality Assurance visits were undertaken during Year 2 of the contract in 2016. The following quality scores were achieved:
 - Refuge - 83% then 90% following action plan
 - Crisis Intervention - (One Stop) scored 87% then 94%.following action plan
 - Perpetrator Programme - (Fresh Start) 83% then 94% following action plan

Actions following quality visits were predominately in relation to staff training, supervision and appraisals. There were no serious concerns from the visits and the action plans were responded to in full including the introduction of a new training plan and increased training for staff.

4. Options

4.1 Option 1: Extend the existing contract

The contract is still relevant as it supports the Council's commitment to tackling domestic abuse in Milton Keynes and supporting victims of domestic abuse.

An extension will enable the continuation of services as well as providing time for outcomes and evidence to be gathered for the new perpetrators programme.

4.2 Option 2: Extend the existing contract with variations

As the contract specification is still relevant there is no need to vary the contract.

4.3 Option 3: Re-tender

There is a high risk that a re-tender would not result in any additional gain in terms of quality, value for money or financial savings to the Council. There are a limited number of organisations with the experience and expertise to provide specialist domestic abuse services: when the contract was tendered in 2014 nine expressions of interest were received of which two providers submitted a full tender.

4.4 Option 4: De-commission

De-commissioning is not an option as the need for the service remains high and is supported by the Council's commitment in the Council Plan 2016-20 that domestic abuse services would not be reduced.

5. Implications

5.1 Policy

The Council has committed to supporting domestic abuse services in the Council Plan 2016-20 and maintaining services at their current level. The domestic abuse contract has been key to supporting the priorities of the Milton Keynes Domestic and Sexual Abuse Reduction Strategy 2013-15 to reduce offending and repeat offending rates through:

- Creating a climate in which domestic and sexual abuse is not tolerated.
- Developing early identification and responses
- Ensuring individuals are able to access support and feel safer
- Supporting a coordinated approach to domestic and sexual abuse across Milton Keynes

The Strategy requires updating and a two year extension would enable an effective domestic abuse service to be provided while any new strategic priorities resulting in a need for a different service model and new specification are established.

5.2 Resources and Risk

The costs of this contract are contained within the current revenue budget of £524,994 per annum. The value of a two year extension is £1,049,988.

The key opportunity secured by this contract is the fulfilment of the Council's commitment in relation to preventing domestic abuse, supporting victims of abuse and challenging the perpetrators of domestic abuse.

It is assessed that the extension and procurement of this contract provides a high likelihood that a high impact will continue to be delivered.

N	Capital	Y	Revenue	N	Accommodation
N	IT	N	Medium Term Plan	N	Asset Management

5.3 Carbon and Energy Management

Not applicable

5.4 Legal

The contract commenced on 1 September 2014. The terms and conditions provide for a contract term of three years with an option to extend for an additional two years.

5.5 Other Implications

Y	Equalities/Diversity	N	Sustainability	Y	Human Rights
N	E-Government	Y	Stakeholders	Y	Crime and Disorder
N	Carbon and Energy Policy				

Background Papers: None