

**Report to: Lucy Butler, Director of Children Young People and Learning
August 2022**

**Award of contracts to assist delivery of the Family Safeguarding Model
– provision of Alcohol and Drug Use support workers and Domestic
Violence Perpetrator support workers**

Report by: Daniel Raux, Assistant Director, Corporate Parenting

Electoral divisions: All

Summary

As part of the redesign of Children's Services the Council is implementing a Family Safeguarding Model of practice. The model requires specialist staff to deliver services to support Adults in families open to Children's Social Care, with the aim of addressing the behaviours which impact on the child(ren) and create the risks which if not addressed could lead to the child(ren) coming into the care of the local authority.

Whilst the Council and Health provides some of these specialist services, the Family Safeguarding model is an integrated approach with co-located teams made up of all the services required to provide an effective intervention to the family. Therefore, it will be necessary to work with partner service providers to contribute to delivering elements of the wrap-around support for families, particularly those facing issues with mental health, domestic abuse and alcohol and drug use.

The partner service providers will be those already delivering mental health support (Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust and Sussex Community Foundation Trust), alcohol and drug use support (Change, Grow, Live), and domestic abuse perpetrator support (the Probation Service), in line with nationally recognised best practice.

The focus of this report is to confirm the arrangements for the delivery of two of these elements – alcohol and drug use support and domestic abuse perpetrator support.

Recommendation

(1) The Director of Children, Young People and Learning is asked to approve the award of contracts for the provision of specialist staff to:

- Change, Grow, Live – for Alcohol and Drug Use support workers
- The Probation Service – for Domestic Violence Perpetrator support workers

Both contracts are to commence on 1st September 2022 for an initial period until 31st March 2025. There is an option to extend the Contracts by up to 2 years until 31st

March 2027 should the delivery and performance of the providers be satisfactory and subject to funding.

Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 Practice and structural team changes are being implemented across Children's Services as part of a programme called Family Safeguarding. Family Safeguarding aims to keep families together, where it is safe to do so, through a more collaborative way of working delivered by multi-disciplinary teams. This aims to motivate parents to identify the changes needed within their own families. In addition to social work support, the model incorporates parental work with adults to address:
- mental health
 - alcohol and drug use
 - domestic abuse
- 1.2 The model was developed by Hertfordshire County Council in 2015, has been proven to deliver improved outcomes for children and their families and been complimented by Ofsted. The model has now been adopted by other local authorities and has been seen to reduce demands and costs where implemented. It is also recognised by Ofsted and the DFE as a model of good practice.
- 1.3 The [Family Safeguarding Model](#) (FSM) is being implemented by the County Council to assist in delivering improvements in Children's Services and supports the County Council's vision. It aligns particularly strongly with our aims to:
- keep people safe from vulnerable situations
 - help people and communities to fulfil their potential
 - make the best of our resources.
- 1.4 The Family Safeguarding Model mainly involves those whose role is to work with the parents of children on Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) Plans, with the aim of addressing the behaviours which impact on the child(ren) and create the risks which if not addressed could lead to the child(ren) coming into the care of the local authority. The roles required for effective delivery of the FSM model are as follows:
- Domestic abuse practitioners
 - Domestic abuse officers
 - Alcohol and drug use practitioners
 - Mental Health Workers
 - Psychologists

- 1.5 Statutory responsibility for the three workstreams (mental health alcohol and drug use and domestic abuse) is not wholly owned by Children’s Services. Therefore, implementation of the FSM requires a partnership approach from partners in Public Health, Probation, and NHS Sussex (formerly known as the Clinical Commissioning Group).
- 1.6 Currently there are core services that are designed to meet the type of need identified for individuals in West Sussex, but often parents and carers working with family safeguarding teams will not meet thresholds for service. If they are met, the need is addressed by the individual organisations through statutory or commissioned pathways. However these operate independently of the Family Safeguarding Teams who provide a holistic approach to working with parents or carers that takes account of the family circumstances to keep children safe from harm and provide a restorative and solution focused path to achieving this.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 There is a need to increase the numbers of specialist staff from those roles listed in paragraph 1.4 to support implementation of the Family Safeguarding Model. It is proposed that the County Council commissions existing partners to provide the specialist staff required to meet this need.
- 2.2 Working in collaboration with existing partners is a key aspect of the FSM and supports the rationale for direct award of these services rather than undertaking a wider procurement process.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the named providers in the table below are awarded contracts for provision of specialist staff for the service types listed:

Service Type	Providers
Alcohol and Drug Use Workers	Change, Grow, Live
Domestic Violence Perpetrator Workers	The Probation Service

- 2.4 The contracts will commence on the 1st of September 2022 for an initial period until the 31st March 2025 with an option to extend by up to 2 years should the delivery and performance of the providers be satisfactory and subject to funding.
- 2.5 Discussions with partners are ongoing to source provision of specialist staff to deliver mental health support; once these are concluded and arrangements are made a further key decision will be taken to formalise the proposal.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 Contract variation of the core Public Health contract with Change, Grow, Live was considered but the core contract is also due for renewal and because the Family Safeguarding Model is new and untested in West Sussex it was felt to be an unviable option.

- 3.2 For the domestic abuse workers, the Probation Service and Probation Officers have a statutory obligation to deliver this type of work and therefore is the only agency able to deliver this work.
- 3.3 A full procurement exercise was also considered however it would not have been viable to procure other providers and for them to mobilise within the timescales required. In addition, Family Safeguarding is being adopted from the Hertfordshire fidelity model where it has been shown that working in collaboration and partnership with existing partners is key to success because of the interdependencies. Using the fidelity model is a key requirement of the Department for Education who are providing grant funding for some of this programme.
- 3.4 The possibility of employing staff directly within WSCC was also considered. For the reasons set out above, and due to the specialist nature of the staff required, such as alcohol and drug use workers requiring clinical line manager supervision and probation officers with access to The National Probation Service systems, this was also rejected.

4 Consultation, engagement, and advice

- 4.1 The County Council have established a Partnership Board led by the Director of Children, Young People and Learning. This is made up of key stakeholders in Children’s Services, Public Health, Education, Police & Probation, Adult Services and also includes specialist providers. They are working in collaboration with the local authority to co-design the West Sussex Family Safeguarding Model. Sub-groups are focusing on each of the workstreams including high level discussions with specialist providers about the most effective methods of delivering the model.
- 4.2 The County Council are actively working with representatives from Hertfordshire County Council in the implementation model for West Sussex, which is a requirement of the Department for Education. WSCC officers are also engaging with other local authorities who have successfully implemented the Family Safeguarding model to ensure lessons learned are taken account of as we move forward with our own implementation.

5 Finance

5.1 Revenue consequences

	Current Year 2022/23 £'000m	Year 2 2023/24 £m	Year 3 2024/25 £m	Year 4 2025/26 £m	Year 5 2026/27 £m
Alcohol and Drug Workers	£0.12m	£0.33m	£0.43m	£0.43m	£0.43m
Domestic Abuse Workers	£0.10m	£0.21m	£0.27m	£0.27m	£0.27m
Totals	£0.22m	£0.54m	£0.70m	£0.70m	£0.70m

Please note this doesn’t include the mental health element which is out of scope for this officer key decision. Recommendations will be forthcoming in due course.

5.2 The effect of the proposal:

a. How the cost represents good value

Direct award and oversight will provide assurance of the competence of individual providers, to help ensure that the required quality of provision is met, and the desired outcomes are achieved.

b. Future savings/efficiencies being delivered

The evidence from other local authorities where Family Safeguarding has been implemented has seen a reduction in the number of children coming into the care system of up to 20%, which in turn delivers significant savings by avoidance of providing placements and associated services to Children and Young People, as well as achieving better outcomes for them and their families.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Risk of challenge by other providers in the market due to the direct award of these contracts	Mitigated by the undertaking of market research and detailed discussions with other providers in the market. There is also a requirement from the DFE to work to the fidelity model established by Hertfordshire. Whilst this doesn't extinguish the risk, it is considered that the risk is low.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

7.1 Legal implications –

The Council is a Contracting Authority as defined in the Public Contract Regulations 2015 ("PCR") and as such is governed by those regulations. The value of the proposed contract is above the relevant thresholds as referred to in the PCR 2015 of £1.4m per annum for Social and other specific Services ("Light Touch Services").

Risks associated with a single tender were mitigated by the undertaking of market research and discussions with other providers in the market and have been accommodated due to the urgency of these service requirements.

The Council will enter into a services contract using terms and conditions approved by Legal Services and compliant with Standing Orders on Procurement and Contracts and PCR 2015.

There is a provision within the Public Contracts Regulations that allows for contracts to be awarded between public bodies (Reg 12) and so the risk of challenge to the contract with the National Probation Service is low as the Council are relying on this exemption.

7.2 Equality duty and human rights assessment

The Service enhances equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic i.e., disability, and people who do not share it, by enabling them to access relevant services to assist with their support needs.

7.3 **Crime and disorder**

The Service supports the Council's aim to improve community safety and to prevent crime and disorder. The service will provide opportunities to divert individual children, young people and their adult carers away from behaviour which may have anti-social implications.

7.4 **Social Value**

Annual contract reviews with providers will require reports detailing any contributions to Social Value by the supplier.

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Background papers - None