

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Councillor Rebecca Harvey - Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety

Date: 22/01/2024

Subject: Contract Award for Co-Located IDVA Service

Report author: Caterina Giammarresi, Victims Programme Coordinator

Responsible director: Bram Kainth, Strategic Director of Environment

SUMMARY

In June 2023, Hammersmith & Fulham Council approved the procurement strategy to commission the Specialist Co-Located Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service by bringing together three existing independent co-located IDVA contracts. This is a joint commissioning exercise between Community Safety (Environment), Housing (Economy), and Children and Young People's Services (Children's Services).

The proposed integrated specialist co-located IDVA contract is for a minimum of two years, with the possibility of two 12-month extensions (4-year maximum contract length). The proposed contracts will commence on 1 April 2024 and will end on 31 March 2026, unless extended in which case the maximum contract end date is 31 March 2028.

The maximum contract value over the 4-year maximum contract length is £660,000 (£165,000 per annum).

The procurement was conducted through a competitive open procedure via the CapitalESourcing portal. The tender was published in September 2023 for a period of eight weeks and the tender submission date closed on 27th October 2023.

This report sets out the procurement process conducted and the rationale for the recommendations below:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note that **Appendix 2** and **Appendix 3** are not for publication on the basis that they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as set out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).
2. To approve the contract award to Advance Charity, for the specialist co-located IDVA service for an initial period of two years (with the possibility to extend for two additional years) effective from 1 April 2024 at a total cost of £660,000.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	The Council will work closely with the provider to ensure that the staff involved in delivering the service have suitable employment terms and conditions, including being paid a set minimum salary which is above the London Living Wage as outlined in the service specification. The Council will also monitor the social value commitments from the provider to be delivered in Hammersmith & Fulham.
Creating a compassionate council	The services proposed are designed to improve the experience and outcomes of victim/survivors of Domestic Abuse accessing support through H&F Homelessness services, Children's Social Care, and the Criminal Justice system. The service specification requires the service to be 'intersectional, trauma informed, needs-led, and inclusive of women with diverse identities, experiences, and needs.'
Doing things with local residents, not to them	Local service users, stakeholders, and third sector providers were consulted on the development of the service specification for this service.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	Investing in effective IDVA provision offsets the additional costs to other areas of the council which result from Domestic Abuse.
Taking pride in H&F	The services contribute to the Council's commitment to ending Violence Against Women and Girls and making H&F a safer and more equitable borough for residents.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	The impact of these services on the climate and ecological emergency will be neutral or minimal. The services provided will be embedded within existing services (Housing, Children's Social Care, and the Criminal Justice System) and therefore will not require additional building construction or a substantial number of additional resources which will negatively impact the environment.

Financial Impact

It is expected that the proposed contract award, with a maximum contract value of £660,000 (£165,000 per annum) will be fully funded from existing annual Council budgets (£29,000 in Community Safety/Environment and £61,000 in Economy) and external grant funding (£75,000). It should be noted that the external grant funding from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (London Crime Prevention Fund) is

only confirmed up to the end of 2024/25. As such, there is a risk that this funding will not be secured from 2025/26 (year 2 of the initial 2-year contract). To protect the Council's financial position, provisions will be included in the contract allowing the Council to terminate in whole or in part if funding is discontinued. A credit check has been undertaken for this organisation (dated 28th November 2023), and the minimum required standards have been met.

Kellie Gooch, Head of Finance (Environment), 28th November 2023
Verified by Andre Mark, Head of Finance (Strategic planning and investment), 28th November 2023.

Legal Implications

The Council is under a duty to provide support for victims of domestic abuse under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The services to be provided under this contract will assist the Council in fulfilling this duty.

These services fall under the "light touch" regime under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR). The maximum value of the contract is slightly below the threshold of (£663,540.00) for the PCR to apply. There are therefore no statutory requirements relating to this procurement.

This is a high value contract for the purposes of the Council's Contract Standing Orders. The procurement process that has been followed accords with the CSOs. CSO 18 has therefore been complied with.

Given that not all the funding is guaranteed to be available for the life of the contract, provisions will be included in the contract allowing the Council to terminate in whole or in part if funding is discontinued.

This is a key decision under the Council's constitution and needs to be included on the key decision list on the Council's website.

John Sharland, Senior solicitor (Contracts and procurement), 22nd November 2023

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Background

Service Summary

1. The specialist co-located IDVA service is designed to provide enhanced support to meet the varied and complex needs of women experiencing domestic abuse who are accessing statutory services.

2. The service is in addition to, and works collaboratively with, our standard IDVA service which is funded via a separate contract. Statutory services can often be difficult and confusing to navigate, particularly for women facing additional barriers as a result of domestic abuse and other intersectional barriers. Co-located IDVAs are physically present in the statutory services and have specialist knowledge in the subject areas (Criminal Justice, Housing, Children's Social Care), and thus are able to provide additional support for women navigating these systems in order to improve their experience and outcomes.
3. The service also provides training and consultations to professionals working across the co-locations (for example, police officers, housing advisors, and social workers) to ensure that they have the appropriate skills and expertise to support survivors, to facilitate joint working, and ensure a co-ordinated approach.
4. The co-location of IDVAs within statutory and essential services (specifically the Police, Magistrates Court, Housing, and Children's Social Care) is part of our Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Hammersmith & Fulham.

Procurement Summary

5. The existing co-located IDVA contracts are currently held independently by Housing, Children's Services, and Community Safety (Impact Project) as three separate contracts.
6. The extensions for all three current contracts will expire on 31 March 2024. A procurement exercise was undertaken to bring the contracts together and commission a new service from 1 April 2024.
7. The procurement was conducted through a competitive open procedure via the CapitalESourcing portal. The Tender was published in September 2023 for a period of eight weeks and the Tender submissions closed on 27th October 2023.
8. One tender was received.
9. The tender was evaluated by a Tender Appraisal Panel (TAP) comprising of representatives from the following Council departments: Community Safety, Housing, and Children's Social Care.
10. The tender was scored on cost (20% of total weighting) and quality criteria (80% of total weighting) as agreed in the procurement strategy due to the importance of having high quality service provision in this field.
11. Social Value (Added Value) was scored as 25% of the total quality score (which consisted of 80% of the overall score).
12. The bid received passed all aspects of the procurement process and it is recommended that the tenderer (Advance Charity) is awarded the contract.

13. Further information regarding the tenders and scoring can be found in Exempt **Appendix 2**.

Contract Management Summary

14. The service contract will be managed by Hammersmith & Fulham through a contract management panel led by Community Safety and consisting of commissioners/contract managers from Community Safety, Housing, and Children’s Social Care.
15. The service provider (proposed as Advance Charity) will have a dedicated service manager who will be the single point of contact responsible for the oversight, delivery, and contract management of this service and all three IDVAs. They will submit regular contract monitoring reports to Hammersmith & Fulham’s contract management panel and attend contract monitoring meetings as required.
16. The contract management regime will consist of clearly outlined key performance indicators (KPIs) and outcomes for each of the co-located IDVAs including number of referrals, engagement rates, number of training/consultations delivered to co-location staff, and reported increase of co-location staff’s knowledge and confidence in supporting survivors of DA. Targets will be added around vacancy rates to measure recruitment and retention issues and a mechanism will be introduced to reclaim payment for sustained vacancy periods. Monitoring will also include receiving feedback from service users, co-located IDVAs, and co-location staff directly to the commissioners to measure the impact and efficacy of the service.

Proposals and Analysis of Options

17. The members of the TAP sought advice from colleagues in Procurement, Legal, and each commissioning department regarding all options available.
18. These options and the reasons for recommendation are outlined in the table below:

Options	Reason
1. Award the contract to the bidder	<p>This is the recommended option:</p> <p>The bid from Advance Charity was evaluated as having met the criteria in all aspects.</p>
2. Do not award the contract and go out to tender again	<p>Not recommended:</p> <p>This option does not need to be explored as a suitable tender has been received.</p>

<p>3. Do not award the contract and bring the service in-house</p>	<p>Not recommended:</p> <p>Following a cost appraisal of an in-house service, it was deemed that this option would be more costly to the council as it would require more resources to deliver and manage. It is generally recognised across the VAWG sector that, wherever possible, IDVA services are best delivered by a specialist 'by and for' service from the Violence Against Women and Girls sector and Advance Charity has the specialist expertise in this field to deliver this service to a higher quality and has the infrastructure in place to manage associated risks.</p>
<p>4. Do not award the contract and do not bring the service in-house (no service provided)</p>	<p>Not recommended:</p> <p>Not providing this service at all would negatively impact the support offered to women experiencing domestic abuse and who come into contact with one or all of the collocated areas in Hammersmith & Fulham (Housing, Children's Social Care, Police/Courts). This would directly contradict the manifesto commitments to invest in VAWG services and improve outcomes for survivors of DA.</p>

Reasons for Decision

19. It is recommended that the contract for the co-located IDVA service is awarded to Advance Charity because the bid from Advance Charity was evaluated as having met the criteria in all aspects.

Equality Implications

20. An equalities impact assessment was completed whilst preparing the procurement strategy and has been reviewed following the completion of the tender process.
21. There are no direct negative equality implications, under the Equality Act 2010, for those service users from groups with certain protected characteristics by the approval of recommended options outlined in this paper. A positive impact on certain groups with protected characteristics (such as women) is anticipated by the commissioning / re-commissioning for this service supporting vulnerable residents.
22. This service is gender-informed and is designed to support women only. The impact on men is likely to be minimal as women are disproportionately affected by Domestic Abuse. The service will monitor the demand for equivalent support for men, and will signpost any men who need support to the relevant support services for men.

23. The service is specifically designed to be inclusive of all women, including transgender women, and non-binary individuals. Additionally, The service specification stipulates that the provider shall provide 3 FTE IDVA posts across the service and that the post-holders should be women to reflect the by-and-for nature of the service and due to the nature of the work. The occupational requirement under Schedule 9 (Part 1) of the Equality Act 2010 applies. This will have a positive impact on individuals with these protected characteristics.
24. The full Equality Impact Assessment is detailed in **Appendix 1**.
25. Consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders including service users, local authority partners and service providers in 2022 which influenced the service specification for this service. The outcome of these consultations reflected a strong need for the service to continue and in particular for the service to be trauma informed and to challenge the systemic and structural barriers when fae when accessing the co-location services, especially women experiencing multiple levels of disadvantage.

Risk Management Implications

26. As the service is being delivered by a third-party organisation and there are recognised staff recruitment and retention challenges within the Violence Against Women and Girls sector, there is a risk to the quality and continuity of service to women. This may be mitigated through reviews of individual performance and relationship building with affected women. Regular contract monitoring processes should be established to ensure a high quality of service provision for service users The performance at this level must be factored into all contract extension reviews.
27. There is a risk relating to the funding of the service. As mentioned above in the financial implications, the external grant funding from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (London Crime Prevention Fund) is only confirmed up to the end of 2024/25. As such, there is a risk that this funding will not be secured from 2025/26 (year 2 of the initial 2-year contract). To protect the Council's financial position, provisions will be included in the contract allowing the Council to terminate in whole or in part if funding is discontinued. If no alternative funding is found to continue running the service, the service will be terminated as per the contract break clauses, and anyone being supported by the service will be referred to the standard IDVA provision service which is funded through a separate contract.

Jules Binney, Risk and Assurance Manager, 19/12/2023

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

28. The impact of these services on the climate and ecological emergency will be neutral or minimal. The services provided will be embedded within existing services (Housing, Children's Social Care, and the Criminal Justice System) and therefore will not require additional building construction or a substantial number of additional resources which will negatively impact the environment. The service will aim to be paperless wherever possible.

Approved by Hinesh Mehta, Assistant Director Climate Change, 21/11/2023

Procurement Implications

29. The results of the evaluation process for itt__17431 have been verified against the e-tendering system and moderation document attached to capitalEsourcing for reference.
30. A contract shall be created in the contracts register and a signed copy of the contract uploaded, to ensure compliance with statutory transparency requirements.
31. Contract Award Notices shall be published via capE for FTS and Contracts Finder.

Waheeda Soomro, Commercial Manager, Commercial & Procurement 27/11/23

DIGITAL SERVICES & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

32. Digital Services supports the recommendations highlighted in this report to approve the procurement strategy to commission the Specialist Co-Located Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Service by bringing together three existing independent co-located IDVA contracts.
33. IM implications: if not already in place, a Data Privacy Impact Assessment (DPIA) should be carried out to ensure that all the potential data protection risks around IDVA are properly assessed with mitigating actions agreed and implemented.
34. In addition, if not already in place, a (Cloud) Supplier Security Questionnaire(s) should be completed, to ensure that all the potential data protection and information security risks around IDVA are properly assessed with mitigating actions agreed and implemented.
35. Any contracts arising from this report will need to include H&F's data protection and processing schedule. This is compliant with UK Data Protection law.
36. The supplier will be expected to have a Data Protection policy in place and all staff will be expected to have received Data Protection training.

Implications verified/completed by: Pierre Rogier, Strategic Relationship Manager, Digital services, tel. 07391 734087

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)

EXEMPT

Appendix 2: Summary of Tender Process, Technical Quality and Commercial Evaluation Scores
Appendix 3: Summary of Co-Located IDVA Service Commissioning History