


London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham CABINET 5 MARCH 2018		
DOMESTIC ABUSE REFUGES DIRECT CONTRACT AWARD		
Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care: Councillor Ben Coleman & the Deputy Leader of the Council: Councillor Sue Fennimore		
Open report A separate report on the exempt part of the Cabinet agenda provides financial information.		
Classification - For Decision		
Key Decision: YES		
Wards Affected: ALL		
Accountable Director: Lisa Redfern, Director of Adult Social Care		
Report Author: Julia Copeland Strategic Commissioner	Contact Details: Tel: 020 87753 1203 E-mail: Julia.Copeland@lbhf.gov.uk	

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for a waiver of the Contract Standing Orders in order to directly award a one-year contract from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 with the option to extend for up to a further 12 months from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, for the provision of refuge accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic abuse.
- 1.2 For safety reasons, LBHF residents do not access local refuges; they access refuges provided by other councils. However, as a socially responsible and compassionate council LBHF is providing this service. The Council provides a range of support and services for borough residents experiencing domestic abuse who stay in LBHF, as set out in the report.
- 1.4 The Council is committed to reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse and the two refuges in LBHF support this strategic priority by providing safe accommodation, onward referrals to specialist services and practical and emotional support to help women and children who have had to leave their homes because of domestic abuse, to rebuild their lives.

- 1.5 The services are well-utilised; achieving good outcomes and valued by residents. Benchmarking with other councils indicates the contract is still competitively priced and represents good value for money.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve a waiver of the Contract Standing Orders requirement to seek competitive tenders prior to contract award to enable the Council to directly award a contract for the provision of refuge accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic abuse for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 with the option to extend for up to an additional 12 months.
- 2.2 To approve a direct award of a contract for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 with the option to extend for up to an additional 12 months.

3. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 3.1 A waiver of the Contract Standing Orders requirement for competition is necessary as there are no further extension provisions available in the contract.
- 3.2 A direct award of a contract will enable the Council's new Public Services Reform department to review the refuge services alongside a range of other domestic abuse services funded by the Council while maintaining service continuity. A strategic review is more likely to achieve better outcomes for residents and value for money in the longer term.

4. PROPOSALS AND ISSUES

Background and National Strategic Context

- 4.1 Refuges were forged out of the feminist movement in the 1970's, to provide safe accommodation and support for women and children experiencing domestic abuse; the very first UK refuge was opened in 1971 in Chiswick. For safety reasons, refuges operate as confidential addresses and on the basis that women and their children should not move to a refuge in the area where she has experienced abuse, therefore LBHF residents are not accommodated in the LBHF refuges.
- 4.2 Support for women experiencing domestic abuse is advertised nationally and locally. Nationally women are directed to Routes to Support and will be given a variety of information to meet their needs. Locally, information is shared regularly with key agencies and professionals including solicitors, GP's housing providers, social workers.
- 4.3 In 2003, most of the revenue funding for refuges was incorporated into the Supporting People programme and local authorities acquired the responsibility for their commissioning and contracting. In 2009, the ring-fence on the Supporting People budget was removed and local authorities could choose how these monies were spent. In recent years, Women's Aid, a national umbrella organisation for refuges, and other bodies have raised considerable concerns

about the national reduction of refuge provision and funding. Nationally, a 38% reduction in funding since 2010 is reported.¹

Strategic Importance

- 4.4 The Council is committed to addressing the harm caused by domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls. The Council has a strong track record of working in partnership with statutory and non-statutory partners to deliver our collective ambitions of tackling violence against women and girls, and of supporting survivors of abuse. Locally, we have adopted the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women, which defines violence against women as:

'Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women [or girls], including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.'
(1993, Article 1)

Outcomes

- 4.5 One of the main objectives of the services is to enable residents to move on successfully and rebuild their lives; the contract KPI target for planned moves is 78%. In the last 2 ½ years a cumulative rate of 85% planned moves has been achieved. In the same period, there have been only five evictions and three abandonments which is very low for these types of services.
- 4.6 In 2016-17, nine of the fourteen women living in the refuges at the time responded anonymously to the Hestia annual resident satisfaction survey as follows:
- 78% agreed and 22% strongly agreed with the statement I am satisfied with the service.
 - 56% agreed and 44% strongly agreed with the statement staff are good at linking me into services to help me.
 - 56% agreed and 44% strongly agreed with the statement I am treated by staff with dignity and respect.

5.0 OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

Allow Existing Contracts to Expire on 31 March 2018

- 5.1 This option is not recommended.

Undertake a Procurement and Award a Shorter Contract to Hestia

- 5.2 This option is not recommended.

- 5.3 It is proposed to extend the refuge contract by one year with the option for up to an additional 12 months. The initial one year extension will enable officers in the new Public Services Reform department and from elsewhere in the Council to review the refuges and the VAWG services and develop a procurement strategy

¹ The Independent. 7.3.17

to achieve better outcomes for residents and deliver council strategic priorities.. For these reasons, this option is recommended.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The service provider has confirmed its willingness to continue to provide services as set out above. Further engagement with residents, suppliers and other stakeholders will be undertaken as part of the service review and the development of the procurement strategy.

7.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There will be no adverse equality implications for protected groups as a result of the extension of these contracts. Overall the impact on women is adjudged as neutral or positive as service continuity will be secured. A strategic review will be undertaken to determine future service provision for women experiencing domestic abuse aimed at improving outcomes.

7.2 Implications verified by Peter Smith, Head of Policy and Strategy, tel. 020 8753 2206.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 These are set out in the exempt part of the Cabinet agenda.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 These are set out in the exempt part of the Cabinet agenda.

10.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 These are set out in the exempt part of the Cabinet agenda.

11.0 COMMERCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 These are set out in the exempt part of the Cabinet agenda.

12.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS - LOCAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VALUE

12.1 These are set out in the exempt part of the Cabinet agenda.

13.0 IT IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no direct technical implications for the council, as the provider will be using their own IT systems, platforms, hardware and software, and will not interact directly with the council's IT infrastructure. However, there may be information implications. IT advise that the mandatory privacy impact assessments are undertaken by the department to accurately assess whether information sharing agreements and privacy notices need to be implemented or

revised, and whether security checklists need to be completed for the three organisations awarded the contracts outlined in the report and Procurement Strategy. This will ensure compliance with current data protection legislation and the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

13.2 Implications verified by: Veronica Barella, interim Chief Information Officer, 020 8753 2927.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT

No.	Description of Background Papers	Name/Ext of holder of file/copy	Department/ Location
	None		

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