

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD

26TH JUNE 2020

LSCSB UPDATE: DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE RE-PROCUREMENT

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress and plans in relation to the re-procurement of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services (DSVA) for Leicestershire. Commissioning partners are Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, Rutland County Council, and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Background

2. Responsibility for the commissioning of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services (DSVA) transferred from LCC Children and Families to LCC Public Health in September 2019. The current contracts for DSVA services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) continue until 31st March 2021.

Notable developments and challenges:

Past Year

3. Prior to the transfer, commissioning partners established a LLR Domestic Abuse Redesign and Recommissioning Group, now including Public Health. The Group meets on a regular basis and is responsible for the project plan and project workstreams. The Group reports to the LLR Vulnerability Executive on a regular basis.
4. Initial Stakeholder consultation sessions took place towards the end of 2018 to understand the strengths and challenges of the current provision. Feedback from these sessions informed the development of future service provision.
5. A Public Consultation took place September to November 2019 across LLR. There were 28 responses that were specifically from County residents. Across LLR key points from the consultation included questions about opening hours and extending opening hours to include Sunday's, Bank Holidays and/or 24/7; ensuring accessibility particularly for the accommodation/refuge service, longer term support required, and more specialist counselling support required. However, overall there was strong support for all elements of service provision.
6. The funding envelope for each partner has been finalised and the different service provision 'Lots' has been agreed. The different service provision will include the Helpline and Engagement Service, Locality Domestic Abuse Support service, Sexual Violence Support service, Safe Accommodation/Refuge service, Perpetrators Programme (and for the City only a Children's Support service).
7. Current ongoing workstreams are;
 - Writing and refining of the service specifications for each service;
 - Compiling Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments for the overall model;

- Completion of the Joint Working Agreement to underpin the ongoing relationship management between commissioning partners with the support of LCC Legal Team;
- Completion of Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) with the support of the LCC Information Governance Lead;
- Completion of tender documentation with support of LCC Commissioning Support Unit.

Coming Year

8. Until March 2020 it was still expected that the tender would go out to the market in June 2020 for services to commence on 1st April 2021. However, the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic made it unrealistic to progress procurements for a range of reasons, specifically the capacity of commissioning authorities and provider organisations to undertake business as usual.
9. Subsequently a decision has made by partners to postpone procurement for period of 12 months and extend current contracts for 12 months. The new service contract start date will now be 1st April 2022.
10. An Exception to Contract Procedural Rules COVID-19 Report has been completed and fully signed off with input from LCC Legal and LCC Commissioning Support Unit (CSU) to allow for the extension to existing contracts and postponement of procurement for the 12-month period.
11. The existing Joint Working Agreement between all commissioning partners had been amended and agreed. The contract lead (City Council) has formally notified the provider (UAVA) of the intention to extend the contract for 12 months and the provider has agreed in principle. Now awaiting final negotiation before contract signature.
12. The LLR DSVAs Redesign and Recommissioning Group are now reviewing and preparing new project timescales. Work will continue on drafting and reviewing service specifications, and other preparations for the procurement of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services.
13. **Challenges**
 - The key challenge will be the speed to which commissioning partners and the provider market are able to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and return to business as usual.
 - The challenge for commissioning partners remains that the existing financial envelope is not sufficient to address all the suggestions from the feedback (eg 24/7 helpline, open-ended counselling support, more accommodation in more locations)
 - Challenge to ensure each authority has the service it needs for residents whilst ensuring a seamless pathway of service provision and efficient contract management/assurance for each partner.

Key issues for partnership working or affecting partners

14. Whilst there are challenges to an approach involving 4 commissioning partners, adopting an LLR approach where practicable will allow economies of scale and a co-ordinated pathway across different service provision and different geographical areas.

Recommendations for the Board

15. The Board is asked to note the work being undertaken to recommission the domestic and sexual violence and abuse services for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland .

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