



CABINET – 23RD MARCH 2021

RECOMMISSIONING OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE SERVICES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed model for the procurement of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services (DSVA), the outcome of the consultation on the proposed model, and to seek approval to delegate authority to the Director of Public Health to proceed with the procurement process and appoint the preferred bidder for the provision of certain elements of the model, noting that relevant partner organisations will be commissioning other elements as appropriate.
2. The current service model involves a single funding pot, to which all partners - the County Council, Leicester City Council, Rutland Council, and the Police and Crime Commissioner - contribute, with Leicester City Council leading on the contract management of a single service. The new model would see the commissioning and procurement of 5 separate elements by the individual partners, illustrated in the Appendix to this report.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Cabinet;
 - (a) Notes the outcome of the consultation on the proposed model for Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Services (DSVA);
 - (b) Approves the new model for the provision of DSVA as detailed in this report, noting that the model will also require approval of the commissioning partners;
 - (c) Authorises the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources to award contracts for the elements of the DSVA model relating to the provision of domestic violence and abuse locality support service and domestic abuse accommodation related support with effect from 1 April 2022;

- (d) Notes that the commissioning and procurement of other elements of the new DSVa model will be carried out by Leicester City Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner as set out in this report.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. Following a review of the current service model, combined with a review of need across the sub-region, a revised delivery model is proposed across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, with the aim of meeting future demand within available resources.
5. Delegation to the Director of Public Health will ensure that procurement is completed to timescale and contracts will be in place for 1 April 2022.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report on the plans for the recommissioning of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services at its meeting on 18 March 2021 and its comments will be reported to the Cabinet.
7. The commissioning partners: the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Leicester City Council, and Rutland County Council, are currently seeking approval through their respective governance processes for the recommissioning of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services to ensure project timescales are met and new contracts are in place for 1 April 2022.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. The provision of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services aligns with Outcome 3 of the County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022; Keeping People Safe: People in Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm.
9. The provision of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services is in line with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Domestic Abuse Strategic Intentions 2018-2021.
10. The Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 is currently in the final report stage and expected to receive Royal Assent by 1 April 2021. The Bill places additional statutory responsibilities on the local authority in relation to the provision of support services to victims of domestic abuse and their children.
11. A report was previously brought to Cabinet on 8 February 2019 by the Director of Children and Family Services that outlined the recommissioning work undertaken to date and sought approval to consult on the proposed structure for domestic and sexual violence and abuse services to be commissioned across Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland. The consultation process and the results of the consultation are set out in Part B of this report. (Overall strategic and operational work for these services is

carried out by the Community Safety team within Children and Family Services and the Public Health Department now leads on commissioning).

Resource Implications

12. The Public Health annual funding envelope for domestic and sexual violence and abuse services is currently £385,907. Within this total £119,919 funds domestic abuse refuge accommodation support services, £257,168 funds the existing commissioned DSVA service and there is also an administrative cost payable to Leicester City Council for contract management of £8,820.
13. On 12 February 2021 it was announced by central Government that there would be additional funding for all Tier 1 and Tier 2 authorities for 2021/22 for domestic abuse safe accommodation. The allocation for Leicestershire is £1,127,205.
14. Early guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) confirms that additional financial resources will continue beyond 2021/2022. Proposals on how this additional money will be allocated to supplement the new model will be submitted to the Cabinet at a future date.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

15. None.

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PART B

Background

16. The County Council jointly commissions a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DSVAV) Service with Leicester City Council, Rutland Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Leicester City Council currently manages the contract on behalf of all the commissioners. The service is provided by a consortium of voluntary sector providers known as UAVA (United Against Violence and Abuse), which includes: Living Without Abuse, FreeVa, and Women's Aid Leicestershire. The service provides support to survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence over the age of 13 through the provision of:
- A telephone helpline for professionals and the public;
 - Individual and group support for high risk and medium risk victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence;
 - Therapeutic interventions, or counselling;
 - Awareness raising, training and education for professionals and the public.
17. The total value of the current contract across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area (LLR) is £1,024,570.
18. In addition to the main contract, across LLR there are a range of other contracts and projects being undertaken to address domestic abuse and sexual violence. For example, the County Council has previously funded
- The Domestic Abuse Family Recovery Service (£40,000). This service works with children and young people and their families to reduce the harmful impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence upon the child. This contract began on 1 October 2018 and ended on 30 September 2019.
 - Safe Places and Support for Domestic Abuse Service (£119,919). This service provides tailored support for female victims of domestic abuse within a refuge setting. This includes but is not limited to: development of domestic/life skills, setting up a home or tenancy, gaining access to other services, managing finances and benefit claims, establishing personal safety and security, social contact and activities, enabling access to employment, education and training opportunities, and developing the skills and knowledge to be able to recognise and form healthy relationships and break the behaviour patterns associated with abusive relationships.
 - Perpetrator Programme (£10,000). This is a voluntary programme working with perpetrators of domestic abuse in order to address their abusive behaviour; the programme also works with young people who

are perpetrating child on parent abuse. This funding enables the spot purchase of limited places on the respective programmes.

19. There has been an increase in demand on domestic abuse and sexual violence services across LLR with limited resources within existing service provision to meet the growing need; on average the volume of domestic violence offences increased 17% each year in the last three years. This is a national trend.
20. Following a review of the current service model, combined with a review of need across the sub-region, a revised delivery model is proposed across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, with the aim of meeting future demand within available resources.
21. Current contracts for all domestic and sexual violence and abuse services were due to end on 31 March 2021 and have been extended to 31 March 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Consultation

22. A 12-week consultation took place between 24 September 2019 and 24 November 2019.
23. The consultation was web-based, accessible via the County Council's website. The web-based survey was supplemented in Leicestershire (as well as in Leicester and Rutland) by hard copy surveys and open public engagement events. These events took place in children's centres, libraries and district council offices. A range of advocacy groups were consulted including Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), district councils, providers, the Police, County Council staff and service users themselves.
24. The consultation on the proposed model for domestic and sexual violence and abuse services took place between 11 September 2019 and 24 November 2019. There were 28 responses in total. Of these the majority were female (82%). Over half the respondents were aged 36-45 (54%). There were 20 respondents who identified as white; 5 respondents who identified as Asian/Asian British; 1 respondent who identified as Black/Black British, and 2 who 'preferred not to say'.
25. In relation to the role of the respondents, 12 (43%) respondents either currently or had previously used domestic and sexual violence and abuse services, 4 (14%) identified as a member of the public, 3 (11%) identified as a provider/professional of non-domestic and sexual violence and abuse services, 2 (7%) as a family member of someone who has used domestic and sexual violence and abuse services, and 1 (4%) as a domestic and sexual violence and abuse service provider/professional.
26. 75% (21 of 28) of respondents rated the accommodation service proposal as Very Good or Good, 78% (21 of 27) respondents rated the domestic abuse locality service proposal as Very Good or Good; 89% (24 of 27) respondents

rated the Helpline service proposal as Very Good or Good, 68% (17 of 25) respondents rated the sexual violence service proposal as Very Good or Good, 62% (16 of 26) rated the domestic abuse perpetrator service as Very Good or Good, and 50% (13 of 26) respondents rated the counselling service as Very Good or Good.

27. Most respondents did not leave any other comment on equality aspects of the proposed services. There were comments on culture and race being a barrier to accessing services and more work was needed to ensure victims come forward, and ensuring services are accessible to people with disabilities.
28. Respondents were less positive in relation to the proposals for the counselling services that would be delivered by existing specialist counselling services via a grant system from the Police and Crime Commissioner. The proposed model will provide more emotional support and therapeutic support through the other elements of the domestic and sexual violence and abuse services. Dependent on future levels of funding it may be possible to review whether a separate counselling service should be provided.

Progress to Date

29. The joint recommissioning project is being undertaken by The County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council.
30. While the overall strategic and operational function for domestic and sexual violence and abuse sits with the Community Safety team within Children and Family Services, the Public Health Department is leading on the commissioning of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services.
31. The Leicester, Leicestershire, Rutland (LLR) Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Recommissioning Group (consisting of officer representatives from the various commissioning partners) meets monthly to ensure the Project Plan timescales are maintained and that the workstreams are progressing. Key aspects of the recommissioning process, including contract length and award criteria.
32. Soft market testing was carried out in November 2020 to explore learning from Covid and to test the market for a Case Management and Tracking System which has further informed the system model.
33. Subject to approval of the new model, the next two months will see the final versions of service specifications completed, key performance indicators agreed, and preparation of the Invitation to Tender (ITT) documentation.
34. It is expected that the procurement will commence in May 2021 with the Evaluation Stage in late summer (August/September) and contract award in October/November 2021, allowing a five-month Mobilisation period for new services.

Proposed Model

35. The approach taken to recommission the full service across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland also allows partners to retain control of specific elements of commissioned services for their locality including contract management and performance monitoring whilst ensuring a co-ordinated approach to delivery.
36. The model comprises 5 service elements with Leicestershire's funding contribution totalling £385,907 (Appendix A summarises the service model and summarises each party's contribution);
 - a. Helpline and Engagement Service – an LLR-wide service with a single specification. The PCC will lead on procurement of this element. This is the 'front-door' that all potential service users will engage with. The service will be responsible for assessment, referral to other parts of the service system relevant to needs identified, assertive engagement and support and maintaining a case management system.
 - b. Domestic violence and abuse locality support service – 2 Lots (Lot 1 – Leicestershire and Rutland, Lot 2 – Leicester City) with a single specification. Leicestershire County Council will lead on procurement of this element. This service will provide more intensive and specialist support tailored to individual need and will include support throughout the criminal/civil justice system.
 - c. Sexual violence and abuse support service – an LLR-wide service with a single specification. The PCC will lead on procurement of this element. This service will provide more intensive and specialist support tailored to individual need and will include support throughout the criminal justice system.
 - d. Domestic abuse accommodation related support service – 2 Lots (Lot 1 – Leicestershire, Lot 2 – Leicester City) with separate specifications and procurement leads. This service will provide a variety of accommodation for victims without safe housing, and intensive on-site support to maintain safety, and enable move-on.
 - e. Domestic violence and abuse Perpetrator Interventions – a single lot with a single specification. Leicester City Council will lead on procurement of this element. This service will deliver short-term and longer-term programmes with perpetrators to address abusive behaviour. Leicestershire County Council will not currently contribute to this service but will spot purchase capacity, as is the current practice. This will enable a further review of the evidence and reach of the perpetrator element to be commissioned in Leicestershire utilising additional funding as detailed in paragraph 13 above.

Conclusion

37. The consultation showed broad support for the proposed model. The proposed model allows for greater control for each commissioning partner whilst retaining the overall service system and economies of scale that commissioning with partners allows.
38. All commissioning partners are now securing agreement for the model and agreement to proceed with procurement through their respective governance procedures throughout February and March 2021 in preparation for the tender publication in May 2021.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

39. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening assessment has been carried out and a full EHRIA will be completed prior to procurement to review the impact of the new service model. Based on procurement exercises previously carried out for domestic and sexual violence and abuse services, it is not expected that there will be any areas of concern.

Health Implications

40. DSVA has wide reaching implications on the health and wellbeing of victims and those around them such as their children. Victims and others affected are more likely to experience health inequalities and poor health outcomes. Children who are victims or witnesses are more likely to have poor educational attainment which will further exacerbate health inequalities. Drug and alcohol, and mental health issues may feature in the profile of both victim and perpetrator so linkages into the specialist agencies are key to ensuring a holistic, person-centred and recovery focussed approach.

Crime and Disorder Implications

41. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires councils to take account of community safety implications. The service will contribute to meeting this requirement. Providing these services is central to ensuring victims are responded to swiftly and appropriately to ensure their safety and security.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

42. Adopting a Leicester, Leicestershire, Rutland (LLR) approach involves additional complexities in working with multiple partners. Robust partnership relationships with criminal justice services are important to ensure that victims are responded to swiftly and appropriately to ensure their safety and security.

Appendix

Service Model and summary of each commissioning partners' contribution

Background Papers

Sexual and Domestic Violence and Abuse Needs Assessment for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (2017) <http://lrsb.org.uk/llr-dasv-strategic-docs>

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (2018-2021) <http://lrsb.org.uk/llr-dasv-strategic-docs>

Report to the Cabinet on 8 February 2019 Recommissioning of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services and minutes of that meeting
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5600&Ver=4>

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