

INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – SERVICE CHANGE

Department	Children's Services, Policy and Development Division, Play and Extended Services
Service	Family Support Services for 5-13 year olds and their families
People involved	Head of Service and Service Managers, Commissioned organisation, schools, Multi-agency teams, service users (children, young people and families).

1. What are the aims of the service and what changes are being proposed?

The Play and Extended Services Section currently holds contracts with Family Action and Welcare to provide family support services to children and young people aged 5-13 and their families. It is usually the case that children and families are referred to these services by Multi Agency Panels (MAP) in schools or a Team Around the Child (TAC), or as a result of a Common Assessment (CAF), although the providers are occasionally the first point of contact for families. These providers offer family support as part of a multi-agency approach that is delivered in and around schools, or through home visits. The following outcomes are required by the contract: -

- (a) ensure that parents and families have the necessary skills and engagement to contribute to the safeguarding of their children and the promotion of their welfare;
- (b) ensure that parent and families are able to provide appropriate levels of stimulation and support to their children;
- (c) ensure that parents and families are able to provide emotional warmth in a way that supports self-efficacy and esteem within the child and/or young person;
- (d) ensure that parents and families are able to understand and provide appropriate boundaries and structure for children and/or young people; and
- (e) ensure that parents develop the required social capital to maximise support available to them by engage with mainstream support services as necessary.

The current contracts are due to end in March 2012. It is proposed to extend the current contracts by 12 months to enable a procurement exercise to put in place new contracts from March 2013. However, due to financial pressures the financial envelope available to deliver the service will be reduced by £60,000 annually from April 1 2012.

In addition to the contracts described above, the Council also holds a further five contracts relating to family support under the Early Years Section and Children's Specialist Services. These are also provided by either Welcare, Family Action along with Share a Family or Contact a Family.

The contracts fall into three broad categories- support services for children and young people including those caring for other family members (young carers), parent/family support, play provision for children with disabilities and enhanced or preventative health services. These contracts will be re-tendered jointly with those currently under Play and Extended Services described above to gain flexibility and economies of scale with the new contracts beginning in April 2013

For financial year 2012-2013 contracts with existing providers will be extended to March 31st 2013. These contracts will be unchanged, although discussion is underway with the current providers on ways of planning across the 0-13 age range in order to achieve some flexibility during 2012-13.

From April 1st 2013 the number of contracts let will be reduced through amalgamation of contracts to remove duplication and reduce management costs associated with maintaining multiple contracts and achieve some value from the larger scale. These opportunities and economics of scale will offset the financial reduction

The outcomes of activities provided through the 5-13 family support will remain unchanged. Delivery models may change e.g. There may be less group work and more home visits. However this will be agreed through a 'negotiated procedure', during which the council will negotiate with the provider to develop the best possible delivery methods to ensure maximum value for money

2. What is the rationale behind these changes?

Over the course of the past 8 years the previous Government introduced a number of initiatives and new Council requirements each with a ring-fenced grant. This has led to somewhat fractured approach with a large number of separate contracts each concerned with providing 'Family Support'- though some with a particular specialism. Rationalisation of these contracts will avoid artificial age-restrictions, which are unnecessary under new grant arrangements and ensure a more flexible, integrated and cost effective service.

Reductions in funding are due to Council-wide budget pressures. However, efficiencies will be made from 2013 through procuring fewer separate contracts and through increased economies of scale

3. What information do you have on the service and the potential impact of your service change in relation to the following?

List information you have. Do not put what the information shows you

The existing three contracts currently work with approximately 301 children and young people and their families per year. Information on

gender, ethnicity and age of the children and young people accessing the services is included below

Race

Annual percentage of service users in each ethnicity category:

Any Other White: 6%

White British: 51%

Any other Ethnic Group: 1%

Information not obtained: 3%

White and Black Caribbean: 7%

White and Black African: 2%

Any other mixed background: 3%

Black Caribbean: 6%

Black African: 9%

Any other Asian: 1%

Any Indian: 1%

Chinese: 0%

Black other: 5%

White and Asian: 0%

Pakistani: 3%

White Irish: 1%

TOTAL BAME 40%

Gender

Annual percentage of service users by gender:

Males: 67%

Female: 33%

Disability

Not disclosed

Age

Percentage of service users by age:

4 years: 1%

5 years: 5%

6 years: 12%

7 years: 15%

8 years: 20%

9 years: 16%

10 years: 16%

11 years: 9%

12 years:4%

13 years: 1%

14 years: 1%

Faith Not currently collected

Sexual Orientation Not currently collected

4. Thinking about each group below please list the impact that the service change will have

	<u>Positive</u> impacts of service change	Possible <u>negative</u> impacts of service change
Race	<p>As a service with similar outcomes will be commissioned, a change in provider is likely to have little impact. The commissioning process will include the Council's standard PQQ relating to equality and the standard contract clauses on equality. The new providers will be monitored in terms of the protected characteristics and action plans developed if service user profile does not reflect the local population</p>	<p>Throughout the period during which the current contracts will be extended, the service should remain largely unchanged apart from more efficient planning across the 0-13 age range. The reduction in funding for the new contract on frontline service delivery, therefore, should have minimal impact in terms of proportionate use by different ethnic groups. The contract will be monitored quarterly, and negative variations in respect of race will be addressed with the service provider and action plans delivered</p>
Gender	<p>The number of girls accessing the service is disproportionately low, possibly because girls are more likely to display passively resistant behaviours than boys and are therefore less likely to be identified as in need of support. A new contract from 2013 could specify work focussed on girls, or awareness-raising with schools if stakeholders felt there was a need.</p> <p>Working more easily across age boundaries could mean that female siblings in a family identified through a child/young person in another settling could access services more easily.</p>	<p>Throughout the period during which the current contracts will be extended, the service will be largely unchanged. The reduction in funding should have minimal impact on the gender take up of services. The contract will be monitored quarterly though and negative variations in respect of gender will be addressed with the service provider and action plans developed to address any shortfall</p>

The commissioning process will include the Council's standard PQQ relating to equality and the standard contract clauses on equality. The new providers will be monitored in terms of the protected characteristics and action plans developed if service user profile does not reflect the local population

Disability	Not disclosed. A requirement to collect this data will be included in the new contracts
Age	There is a peak in referrals to the current service during the last few years in primary school. Working across age boundaries between Early Years and Primary School is likely to lead to increased access for children at KS1, as well as service continuity. A new contract could emphasise more the importance of early intervention and the need to prioritise support to those at KS1, if stakeholders felt this would be beneficial. Work will also be undertaken with school staff, particularly Special Educational Need Co-ordinators (SENCO) to raise awareness of this issue
Faith	No data collected. A requirement to collect this data will be included in the new contracts
Sexual orientation	No data collected

5. Is a full EIA required? No

Comments - Please give the rationale here for not undertaking a full EIA

The reduction in funding for this service can be to a large extent offset in 2012/13 through planning with similar services across the 0-13 age range to gain efficiencies in delivery. From 2013 there will be the flexibilities and economies of scale arising from fewer small scale contracts.

6. Through the initial EIA have you identified any actions that needed to be implemented to improve access to the service or monitoring of the service? (please list)

To continue to monitor the profile of service users throughout the period during which the current contracts are extended to enable any negative variations to be addressed with providers and action plans developed accordingly

To facilitate discussion around equality of access throughout the negotiating –procedure with potential providers but also with those making referrals to the provider

To add into the new contracts a requirement to collect data on disability and faith.

The commissioning process will include the Council's standard PQQ relating to equality and the standard contract clauses on equality. The new providers will be monitored in terms of the protected characteristics and action plans developed if service user profile does not reflect the local population

Signed

Date: 2nd November 2011

Approved by:

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