



Executive Director/Director Non-Key Executive Decision Report

Author/Lead Officer of Report Helen Sweaton
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Report to: John Macilwraith - Executive Director People
Date of Decision: 12 February 2020
Subject: Recommission Fresh Start Service

Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? People – Children & Families

Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Children, Young People & Family Support

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes No

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? **69**

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

*“The (**report/appendix**) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (**insert relevant paragraph number**) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”*

Purpose of Report:

Fresh Start is a service for mothers who have had one or more children recently removed by the local authority (incl. Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs)). The service aims to support women in order to cope with their loss, build resilience, increase well-being and develop new skills for future living.

Fresh Start is now in its 3rd quarter of the 2nd year of delivery which ends in April 2020.

This report is to approve the recommission the Fresh Start Service.

Recommendations:

1. To approve a tender to recommission the Fresh Start Service for a further two years with the same level of funding of £88,000 per year.
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Children and Families in consultation with the Director of Finance and Commercial Services and the Head of Procurement & Supply Chain to:
 - a) determine the appropriate procurement strategy for the provision for an updated Fresh Start Service;
 - b) award the contract for the Fresh Start Service in accordance with the procurement strategy;
 - c) take such steps, where no existing authority exists under the Leader's Scheme of Delegation to meet the aims and objectives of the report.

Background Papers:

Fresh Start - April 2019 to September 2019 Report. Project 6/SASS

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Andy Bray
	Legal: Janusz Siodmiak Equalities: Bashir Khan
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	Lead Officer Name: Helen Sweaton
	Job Title: Assistant Director of Early Intervention and Prevention
Date: 6/02/2020	

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Continue delivery of a Fresh Start Service in Sheffield.

Context

Every local authority within the UK has women with complex and challenging needs to whom multiple children are born and subsequently removed into the care system under child protection proceedings. These women are typically young, disadvantaged and living with intersecting and numerous social, emotional, environmental and health related challenges. Outcomes for children in care are less positive than children who never enter the care system; however where children become looked after due to maltreatment outcomes are generally better for them if they remain looked after rather than return home. This is particularly so if the family issues relating to the maltreatment have not been addressed.

The numbers of women in Sheffield may be relatively small, however they may give birth to several children whose life course and outcomes are significantly marginalised. These children are often born with short or long-term physical and emotional difficulties and many become vulnerable adults requiring significant interventions from public services throughout their life course.

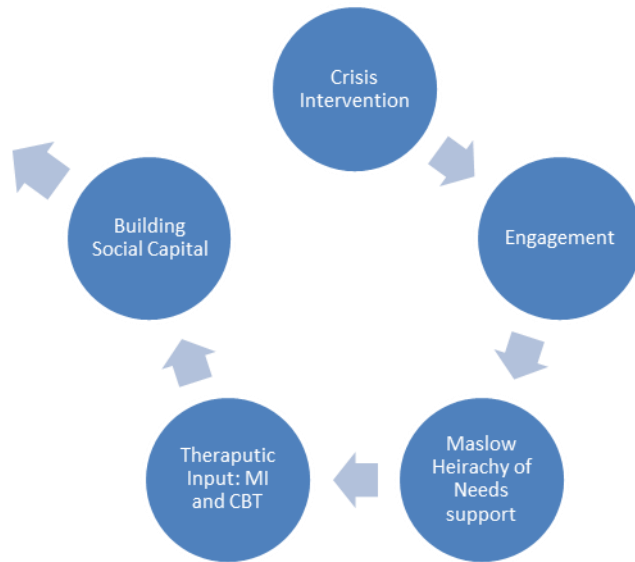
Analysis of Sheffield families who had children under 2 years of age removed in 2015 indicates there is a 31.5% chance of a parent having a subsequent child removed in the next calendar year and a 36.8% chance in the second calendar year.

Service Delivery

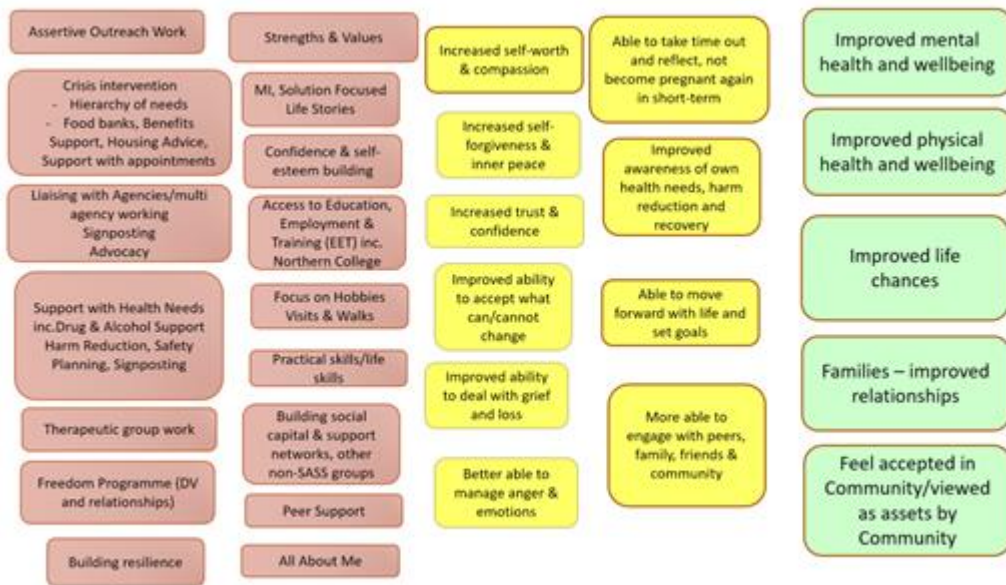
Fresh Start is a service for mothers who have had one or more child recently removed by the local authority (incl. SGO's). The service aims to support women in order to address their loss, build resilience, increase well-being and develop new skills for future living.

They work collaboratively with women for approximately 9 months towards making sustainable changes, addressing the multiple and complex risks in their lives e.g. substance misuse, mental health, domestic abuse, parenting capacity, adverse childhood experiences and unsafe housing conditions.

The Fresh Start Team continue to work in both a therapeutic and practical way to support women through 1:1 session with their key worker, therapeutic group work and peer support groups.



1.2 Impact and Outcomes



There is a perceived need for this type of service in responding to the current strain experienced by varying services these women may be in contact and/or accessing. For several of the women, a major benefit of Fresh Start was the support received in coping with identified threats, known to trigger CP involvement i.e. housing, basic needs, finances and health ailments. However, despite such benefits several of the women also highlighted a need for greater resources for the programme and the importance of timing in maintaining this provision

Aims and objectives of service

Aim

Women who have previously had children removed are supported to make sustainable change to address the multiple and complex risks in their lives e.g. substance misuse, mental health, domestic abuse, parenting capacity, adverse childhood experiences and unsafe housing conditions

Objectives

Intervention at a point when women have no children in their care so these women can be supported to take control of their lives and develop new skills and responses.

Encourage partner agencies (e.g. criminal justice and drug and alcohol services) to think differently and put aside previous assessments and preconceptions.

Potential Cost Savings

For 25 women who access programme and don't get pregnant there are potential savings of approximately £1,684,725 each year. This saving is due to a child not needing social care with potential cost savings from reductions in levels of domestic violence, harmful alcohol use, and Class A drug use.

The cost benefits shown may not reflect the actual costs and benefits for Sheffield but are indicative of the potential wider benefits of the programme.

Outcomes

Between May 2018 and March 2019, 35 referrals were made to the service. Of these 4 did not engage with the service. Of the remaining 31 only 1 became pregnant since their referral.

Between April 2019 and December 2019, 18 referrals were made to the service. Of these 5 did not engage with the service. Of the remaining 13 none became pregnant since their referral.

The service is to be recommissioned on the basis of the same service specification to meet the objectives of the service expecting similar or better outcomes.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 Delivery of a Fresh Start service in line with this proposal will reduce inequalities and contribute to the Sheffield Safeguarding Children's

Partnership outcome Priority 5. This decision will help with developing robust responses to emerging safeguarding issues whilst at the same time ensuring the Council maintain an effective response to all areas of abuse and neglect.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 There is no statutory requirement for consultation nor does any element in this re-procurement trigger a requirement for consultation with regard to the ongoing provision of the Service.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which identifies the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation.

An EIA has been carried out and highlights that families and individuals on the edge of the care system face multiple and complex issues which often focus around substance misuse, mental health, domestic violence, parenting capacity, their own adverse childhood experiences and unsafe housing conditions.

It is well known that outcomes for children in care are less positive than children who never enter the care system. Fresh Start creates multi-agency support packages to reduce the number of children, specifically aged under 2, that are taken into care by working with families and individuals to avoid further pregnancies, reduce risk factors associated with child removal to avoid subsequent child removals and improve families' chances of successful contact arrangements with their children.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The contract value is £88,000 per year for two years which equates to

£176,000 for the term of the contract. This contract was previously funded as part of the Strengthening Families investment activities however this funding has now been made permanent in 2020/21 business planning

- 4.2.2 With reference to paragraph 4.3.2 below, it is recommended that the service be procured in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Contract Standing Orders.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The Council does not have a specific statutory duty to maintain this Service, however, power to proceed is provided through the General Power of Competence in Part 1 of Localism Act 2011. It also has the power to deliver the project, under s.111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 4.3.2 The Services that are the subject of this Report are social care services covered by the “light touch” regime set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. However, the value of the proposed contract is below the threshold set out in those Regulations, although the Council does have a duty to act in accordance with its general European Treaty principles of transparency and fairness during procurement. The procurement exercise will comply with the Council’s own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as ‘Contracts Standing Orders’ (CSOs).

- 4.3.3 There are no further legal implications arising directly from this report or the proposed contract.

4.4 TUPE - Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

- 4.4.1 TUPE may apply where there is a change in service provider. If as a result of this contract award TUPE applies, the implications would only affect the existing and any new Providers but not the council; though the Council will use provisions in the existing contracts to facilitate and encourage the transfer of information between outgoing and new service providers. The Council will take reasonable steps available under the contract to encourage compliance with TUPE.

- 4.4.2 Current Service Providers will be advised to take their own legal advice on TUPE and its application.

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 Not to recommission the service. This proposal was rejected because this service will reduce inequalities and contribute the Sheffield Safeguarding Children’s Partnership outcome Priority 5. To develop

robust responses to emerging safeguarding issues whilst at the same time ensuring we maintain an effective response to all areas of abuse and neglect.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Delivery of a Fresh Start service in line with this proposal will reduce inequalities and contribute the Sheffield Safeguarding Children's Partnership outcome Priority 5. To develop robust responses to emerging safeguarding issues whilst at the same time ensuring we maintain an effective response to all areas of abuse and neglect.