

PURPOSE: Key decision**MEETING:** Cabinet**DATE:** 07 February 2022

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| TITLE | Adolescent Exploitation Prevention Service | | |
| Ward(s) | All | | |
| Author: Gail Rogers | Job title: Head of Service Children’s Commissioning | | |
| Cabinet lead: Cllr Asher Craig | Executive Director lead: Abi Gbago Executive Director | | |
| Proposal origin: BCC Staff | | | |
| Decision maker: Cabinet Member | | | |
| Decision forum: Cabinet | | | |
| Purpose of Report: | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To seek approval to procure a Strategic Partner to deliver a specialist single adolescent exploitation prevention service model and statutory return home interviews for children and young people who have been reported missing from home or care to the Police. The partner will be procured on a seven-year basis (initial contract term of three years, with two options to extend for a further two years each time). Committed spend from Bristol City Council Core budgets will be £431,600 per year (£3.02m total) with an overall maximum contract value of £9.8m across the 7 years. The service will be jointly funded by South Gloucestershire Council, Health and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). | | | |
| Evidence Base: | | | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 and section 17 and 47 of the Children Act 1989, place a duty on the Local Authority to work with relevant partners / bodies to protect children and to take active steps to promote their well-being and prevent them from coming to harm, by: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s health or development; ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances. The Local Authority also has a statutory duty to provide Return Home Interviews (called Missing Return Conversations in Bristol) under the Statutory guidance for children who run away or go missing. All children who go missing are required to be offered a Return Home Interview by a person independent of their care on every occasion they go missing. Return Home Interviews must be undertaken within 72 hours of the children going missing. Many of these children are at risk of exploitation. There are several exploitation services currently being delivered in Bristol through various arrangements. These services support approximately 500 young people per annum. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sexual Violence described the demand for specialist sexual violence and abuse services as “unprecedented” even before the COVID-19 pandemic; and we anticipate that demand for exploitation services could increase as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and increases in poverty, which evidence shows provide the context of increased rates of crime and exploitation. As such, a review has been undertaken around current arrangements and capacity, to inform strategic planning and enable delivery of effective services to meet children and families’ needs. The number of children reported missing fluctuates quarter to quarter and we need a service that can respond to this fluctuating demand. However, demand in relation to the number of reported missing episodes each financial year is remarkably stable. Over the last two and a half years there is an annual average of 1,264 missing episodes for children in Bristol each requiring a statutory Return Home Interview. | | | |

5. The recently published Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (See background paper) recommends the introduction of a national guarantee to enable child victims of sexual abuse to access specialist support in a timely way. It recognises that recent research shows that early interventions are effective at reducing the impact of child sexual abuse and preventing significant mental health problems in later life, and conversely, delayed or inadequate support can have serious consequences, such as physical or mental health issues, dependency issues, or antisocial or criminal behaviours. The report states that as well as simplifying access to support services for all victims and survivors, there is an urgent need to provide specialist therapeutic support for children who have experienced sexual abuse.
6. The review and subsequent service design is informed by a research project that has been undertaken in collaboration with Barnardo's, who have over 26 years' experience working with exploited children and young people in Bristol.
7. The research recommends that we will benefit from a move away from the existing separate arrangements to a more coherent holistic offer. To take this forward, we will externally commission a strategic partner to deliver a specialist single exploitation service model that meets the needs of children, young people and families who are at risk of / have experienced high levels of extrafamilial harm, exploitation (including CSE and CCE) and/or effected by violence, to prevent further harm.
8. Bristol have tried multiple approaches to delivering the Return Home Interview service. In September 2018 Ofsted identified this as one of our six priority areas for improvement. While initiatives since 2018 have made improvements these have not been sustained and analysis has demonstrated that this is due to vulnerability linked to a dispersed delivery model. We are therefore recommending the establishment of a return home interview offer embedded within our independent specialist exploitation service.
9. The service will mainly be aimed at adolescents but will be available up to age 25. Having one partner will foster trusted relationships between young people and their workers. The workers will be supported by relevant wider multi-agency professionals to meet young people's holistic needs, e.g., health, substance abuse, employability, education, housing, criminal justice system. The staffing structure will be determined by the successful provider's bid and model. The expectation is that the model will be trialled, tested and developed throughout the life of the strategic partnership.
10. The service will be part of a broader fabric of delivery around preventing violence and will link into our wider preventing violence strategy.
11. The service will link in with supporting families and ensure that support for young people from ethnic minoritised backgrounds are supported. The service will take an intersectional lens and address disproportionality.
12. We will run a full open tender to procure a strategic partner, via a single provider framework contract, on a seven-year basis (initial contract term of three years with two options to extend for a further two). Part of the tender process will be around added value that the partner can bring to the city, as such the model should build additional capacity and drive forward developments in this area.
13. South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) will also be named on the contract and intend to use the service to meet the needs of their young people being sexually exploited. Available transport links mean it is generally easier for South Gloucestershire young people to get to Bristol city centre, than it is to cross the authority area, and where these young people have been significantly exploited, most of this has taken place in the Bristol area. SGC is therefore a natural partner for us to work together with, to address cross boundary issues.
14. A maximum contract value will be set at £9.8m across seven years, with the total committed BCC spend at £3.02m (£431k per annum). Bristol City Council's financial contribution will come from the General Fund and Public Health Grant. Additional funding will come from Health, the OPCC, South Gloucestershire Council and income from Grant funding.
15. It is expected the spend from all partners will be in the region of £6.3m across the seven years, however, as we intend to commission via a single provider framework, for procurement purposes only we are proposing to set a maximum contract value of £9.8m. This is because we must set a maximum contract price under procurement regulations, however in using a framework contract there is no obligation to spend to that level as a framework does not itself commit either party to purchase. In setting an increased upper contract limit, it provides maximum flexibility to utilise this arrangement with the successful provider should we attract additional grant funding, or increased funding from partners. Any proposed Bristol City Council spend above the committed value of £431,600 per annum will go back through the appropriate approval pathways.
16. We want the partnership to have the ability to respond to emerging needs. As part of the new service model,

it is expected that our partner will respond to new funding opportunities to bring in additional funding / capacity. Therefore we also seek approval for any subsequent contract variations across the life of the contract to be delegated to the Executive Director for Children’s Services. This will enable quick responses to emerging needs and ensure this is procured in line with regulations.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

1. Authorise the Executive Director People in consultation with Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Equalities to procure and award the contract(s) necessary for the implementation of a specialist single adolescent exploitation prevention service including Return Home Interview Service for 3 + 2 + 2 years, in-line with the procurement routes and maximum budget envelopes outlined in this report.
2. Authorise the Executive Director People to invoke any subsequent extensions/variations specifically defined in the contract(s) being awarded, up to the maximum budget envelope outlined in this report.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. Children and Young People – Child Friendly City - The service will help to keep children and young people safe from and supported to overcome violence, abuse, and other adverse childhood experiences, whatever the circumstances of their birth.
2. Health, Care and Well-being The service will contribute to helping tackle the causes of poor mental health and wellbeing such as adverse childhood experiences and trauma.

City Benefits:

1. This service will improve outcomes for children and young people and their families by protecting children from exploitation, violence and harm. Children and young people will be supported and connected to relevant support services which has a positive impact on health and social development / transition not adulthood.

Consultation Details:

1. The service has been codesigned through engagement with a range of young people, professionals and community / youth groups. The expectation is that the model will be trialled, tested and developed throughout the life of the strategic partnership in consultation with service users and professionals.

Background Documents:

Research Project – this will be available once formally published

[The Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse | IICSA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[H.3: Improving support services | IICSA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing](#)

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| Revenue Cost | £3.02m BCC Contribution over 7 years (£431,600 per year). | Source of Revenue Funding | Bristol City Council General Fund, Public Health Grant and Serious Youth Violence Funding. |
| Capital Cost | £0 | Source of Capital Funding | N/A |
| One off cost <input type="checkbox"/> | Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> | Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/> |

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: This report seeks approval to procure a strategic partner to deliver a specialist single adolescent

exploitation service model. The partner will be procured on a seven year basis (initial contract term of three years, with two options to extend for a further two), at maximum contract value of £9.8m across the 7 years.

This service will be jointly funded by Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Bristol North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (BNSSG ICB) and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Bristol City Council contribution per annum will be £431,600 to be funded from the General Fund budgets and Public Health Grant (c£50,000).

Finance Business Partner Andrew Osei, Finance Business Partner, 19/01/2023

2. Legal Advice: The procurement process must be conducted in line with the 2015 Procurement Regulations and the Councils own procurement rules. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the conduct of the procurement process and the resulting contractual arrangements.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor 14/12/2022

3. Implications on IT: IT support this proposal and are keen to be engage, when necessary, as I.T. for this type of partner working can be challenging.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Senior Solution Architect 13/12/2022

4. HR Advice: This report seeks approval to contract a partner to deliver an adolescent exploitation service including return home interviews. The procurement route could trigger TUPE for existing internal BCC employees who work in the service. Once Cabinet have made a decision further work will need to be done to establish whether TUPE will apply and to ensure the process is followed in accordance with the Councils internal policies.

HR Partner: Lorna Laing, HR Business Partner, 13/12/2022

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| EDM Sign-off | Hugh Evans | 14/12/22 |
| Cabinet Member sign-off | Cllr Asher Craig | 14/12/22 |
| For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off | Mayor's Office | 13/01/23 |

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| Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal | NO |
| Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external | NO |
| Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny | NO |
| Appendix D – Risk assessment | NO |
| Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal | YES |
| Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal | NO |
| Appendix G – Financial Advice | NO |
| Appendix H – Legal Advice | NO |
| Appendix I – Exempt Information | No |
| Appendix J – HR advice | NO |
| Appendix K – ICT | NO |
| Appendix L – Procurement | NO |