

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee
DATE: 23 September 2010
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Adults & Community
SUBJECT: Additional IDVA Capacity for Halton Domestic Abuse Service
WARD(S) Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek agreement to enter into a temporary contract with Halton and District Women's Aid Association for provision of temporary additional Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 1. the Strategic Director, Adults and Community be authorised to enter into a contract with Halton and District Women's Aid in respect of temporary delivery of additional IDVA capacity to adults who are victims of domestic abuse in the sum of £16,000 between September 2010 and April 2011; and**
- 2. on this occasion, in the light of exceptional circumstances, due to the need to retain the service delivery gains made by the combining of three existing contracts and the time and spend conditions of the Home Office grant, Standing Orders 4.1 relating to Tendering for Contracts be waived pursuant to Standing Order 1.6**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Partnership was notified at the beginning of August 2010 that it had been successful in its bid for grant funding towards the provision of additional Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) capacity.

3.2 The area was awarded £16,000 of the requested £20,000 from its March 2010 bid. This revised grant value offers sufficient funding for a temporary increase in IDVA capacity. The life span of the post will depend on whether a full time or part time post is recruited but it is envisaged that these funds would offer additional capacity for a minimum of six months.

3.3 This financial input has the potential to offer much needed additional

capacity to the existing service in the short term. According to Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA), the leading national charity in this field, their IDVA capacity formula indicates that Halton requires 2.5 full time IDVAs. Currently, the area has one and there is not funding to provide any additional capacity. Thus, this grant allows us to temporarily move closer to the areas required provision and offer the current IDVA some much needed additional support.

- 3.4 Alongside the additional capacity, this post will be able to undertake the additional duties of developing working relationships with minority and excluded groups within the community that may be experiencing barriers to engaging with the service. For example, a recent data review indicated that the area should be having greater levels of referrals for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans gender individuals. Similarly, our current black and ethnic minority representation is below CAADA expectations. This post would undertake IDVA duties alongside promoting the services available to such groups to develop the local networks and identify and remove barriers to access.
- 3.5 At the time of going to tender for the new Halton Domestic Abuse Service in 2009 this grant was not available so could not be offered as part of the tender package. Subsequently, the contract has now commenced and the area has additional funds to add to the contract as a temporary addition to value.
- 3.6 Under current regulations this additional capacity needs to be put out to tender. This process takes approximately 3 months for contract values under £50,000 which would leave the area with less than three months to spend the allocated grant within Government Office North West grant conditions.
- 3.7 If current tender requirements are waived the current service could advertise and recruit a temporary post within potentially a 4 week period. Thus, ensuring we are able to utilise the funds available within the deadline of 31st march 2011.
- 3.8 Inclusion of this post within the current service also offers best utilisation of the additional capacity as they will be situated alongside an already embedded service which can ensure the post is supported by experienced specialist staff to respond to need immediately. Likewise, working alongside the existing IDVA will ensure that our current IDVA is able to ensure provision is in line with CAADA guidelines. It is a reality that for such a short post we will not be able to train this individual formally for the role.

4.0 BUSINESS CASE FOR WAIVERING TENDERING SO'S

4.1 VALUE FOR MONEY AND COMPETITION

Whilst the post will not have been market tested for value for money it is likely that this will achieve the best value for a one off, small financial input for a number of reasons. Firstly, the new Halton Domestic Abuse Service has brought a number of services together to ensure cost savings are made via back office and management costs as opposed to posts. Thus, inclusion of this temporary post into the existing structure should ensure these savings are maintained across this post. If the post is allocated to another provider there will likely be management costs that reduce the actual amount of capacity offered. Secondly, the current service provider as of November 2009, the contract awarding date, offered the most competitive and cost effective option for provision of an IDVA, floating support and Sanctuary Scheme service. There is currently no evidence to suggest that this is no longer the case.

4.2 TRANSPARENCY

These proposals are open to scrutiny via internal and external audit and via the Freedom of Information Act.

The contract would be awarded based on grant approval and roles endorsed by central government.

4.3 PROPERTY AND SECURITY

The usual integrity clauses will be built into the contract document and only staff with a need to know will have information about the contract.

The contract, if approved, will fully comply with HBC's Standing Orders.

4.4 ACCOUNTABILITY

This remains with the Operational Director, Prevention and Commissioning, in conjunction with the relevant portfolio holder.

All matters will be scrutinised by internal/external audit and the relevant Policy and Performance Board.

4.5 POSITION OF THE CONTRACT UNDER THE PUBLIC CONTRACTS REGULATIONS 2006

The contract is fully compliant, and subject to fundamental transparency and non-distortion of competition requirements.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This proposal will support the Safer Halton priority through provision

of additional IDVA capacity for a temporary period. This will allow additional support capacity to victims of Domestic Abuse and assist the area to achieve its target to reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse.

- 5.2 The role will also undertake additional duties to engage the more socially excluded members of our communities who may be experiencing barriers to accessing such services, such as black and minority ethnic groups or lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans gendered individuals. This will be a focus of the forthcoming revised Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy and following Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are currently limited financial implications for this proposal as the contract value will be met through an already identified Home Office Grant of £16,000.

- 6.2 This funding is a one off grant that may not be available for bid in 2011 and is unlikely to be a successfully bid for in future due to this years success. It is also expected that government grants will be a rarity in the future. Therefore, the opportunity for long term service expansion does not exist.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children & Young People in Halton

This proposal helps to support robust safeguarding children arrangements through identification of children living within domestically abuse environments and safety plans implemented to enable parents to provide a safer environment.

7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None identified.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

This proposal supports the delivery of services that address health inequalities through supporting those socially excluded to access support to improve their general health and well being.

7.4 A Safer Halton

The additional IDVA capacity should ensure better provision of support services to enable victims of domestic abuse to reduce risk and improve their safety.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.6 The proposed post is part of the support services within Halton that contribute to the areas selected National indicators - PSA 23 'Making communities Safer' priority action No. 1, which is to '*Reduce the most serious violence, including tackling serious sexual offences and domestic violence.*' This includes the following National Indicators:

NI32: Repeat incidents of domestic violence

NI34: Domestic violence murders

Thus, the additional capacity will assist towards positive performance against these targets.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 Due to the time constraints on spend of the allocated grant (March 2011) failure to approve the request could lead to reduced utilisation or loss of the allocated finances.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 This temporary post will have the specific function of promoting a more diverse range of service users. Thus, this proposal will support the areas aims to address equality and diversity issues.

9.2 Agencies providing the service are expected to comply with the Council policies relating to Ethnicity and Cultural Diversity as well as promoting inclusion.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None Identified