

## Executive Decision Making by an Officer with Delegated Powers

Decision to be taken by: Ann James, Director of Children's Services

Pursuant to an Authorisation from: the Council's Scheme of Delegation: GEN 1 (To enter into any contract for works and the supply of goods and services)

Report title: The recommissioning of Children and Family Centres as the starting point for the development of Family Hubs across Gloucestershire for children aged 0-19 years (up to 25 years where children have special educational needs or disabilities).

Contract award – Recommissioning Children & Family Centres: Lot 1 (Gloucester & Forest of Dean districts ONLY).

<b>The decision</b>	<p>Following the conclusion of a competitive procurement process for the supply of Children &amp; Family Centres that will begin the new Family Hubs model across Gloucestershire, and following consultation with Councillor Stephen Davies, Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years in accordance with the Cabinet decision on 23 February 2022:</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> To award a contract for the supply of Children &amp; Family Centre services in the Gloucester and Forest of Dean locality (Lot 1) to Gloucestershire Gateway Trust. This will allow the delivery of these key services and for Gloucestershire County Council to focus on developing an agreed multi-agency vision and principles for Family Hubs, that is aligned with the wider transformation within children's services and partner agencies.</p> <p>Following the completion of the re tender the proposed contract for Lot 1 shall be for an initial period of 6.2 years and include an option to extend their terms for a further period of not more than 2 years. The contract will start on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025 following a 6 months' notice period on the current extension contract held by Barnardo's.</p>
<b>Background documents</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cabinet Decision January 2024 <a href="#">Decision - The recommissioning of Children and Family Centres as the starting point for the development of Family Hubs: Contract award - Lots 2 &amp; 3 Abandonment, re tender and contract modification - Lot 1</a></li><li>2. Cabinet Decision February 2022 <a href="#">Decision - The recommissioning of Children and Family Centres as the starting point for the development of Family Hubs across Gloucestershire for children aged 0-19 years (up to 25 years where children have special educational needs or disabilities)</a></li><li>3. Cabinet paper July 2021 <a href="#">Decision - Variation of existing contracts for an extension to the existing services to Children and Family Centres</a></li></ol>

	<p>4. Cabinet paper June 2016  <a href="#">Reshaping Services for Families with Young Children</a></p> <p>5. The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days  <a href="#">The best start for life a vision for the 1 001 critical days.pdf</a>  <a href="#">(publishing.service.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>6. Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18  <a href="https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/strategies-planspolicies/children-and-families/">https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/strategies-planspolicies/children-and-families/</a></p> <p>7. Home@theHeart – Sufficiency Strategy  <a href="#">Decision - Sufficiency Strategy for Children and Young People 2022-26</a> (gloucestershire.gov.uk)</p> <p>8. Children and Family Centres information and local offer  <a href="#">Local Offer - Search Results   Glosfamilies Directory</a></p> <p>7. Summary, executive summary, booklets and data dashboards for Children and Family Centres can be viewed upon request to the report author.</p> <p>8. Pre engagement undertaken with children and families (Nicholas Day Associates), with partners and key stakeholders and with youth support (DNA Youth Consultancy) have all been listed below and can all be viewed upon request to the report author:</p> <p>‘GCC – Report of Engagement on the Future of Children &amp; Family Centres</p> <p>‘Locality finding, provision and gaps’</p> <p>‘DNA Gloucestershire Summer 2021’</p> <p>‘Children &amp; Families pre-engagement survey November 2021’</p>
<p><b>Reasons for the decision</b></p>	<p>This decision fulfils the commitment in the <a href="#">Cabinet paper for new contracts for Children and Family Centres (2022)</a> to invite and award such contracts to the preferred tenderers. Through a formal procurement process according with procurement rules Gloucestershire Gateway Trust have been deemed the preferred tenderer for this contract after demonstrating that they have the capability to deliver the service required.</p> <p>This decision provides an opportunity to recommission Children and Family Centres, within a longer-term vision for Family Hubs. Serving notice on the current contract extension allows Gloucestershire County Council (the Council) to enact the new service specification as soon as possible, introduce the new incoming provider (Gloucestershire Gateway Trust) into the development of the “whole Family Hub” model, and have a proportionate handover period between the outgoing and incoming providers.</p> <p>An incremental approach will enable alignment with GCC transformation programmes and multi-agency working. A contract with a longer lifetime</p>

	<p>is in line with national practice describing a longer-term commitment to funding is needed to evidence outcomes, impact and efficiencies within Early Help.</p> <p>Cabinet approval was given on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 to proceed with the competitive procurement process in respect of one or more contracts for the supply of Children and Family Centres that will begin the new Family Hubs model across Gloucestershire. To align with the social care locality model the configuration of Lots will be as follows:</p> <p>Lot 1: Gloucester City and Forest of Dean District – provided by Gloucestershire Gateway Trust</p> <p>Lot 2: Stroud District and Cotswolds – provided by Family Action</p> <p>Lot 3: Cheltenham Borough and Tewkesbury District - provided by Aspire Foundation Trust.</p>
<p><b>Resource implications</b></p>	<p>The total budget figure for the Children and Family Centres contracts is £3,931,877 per annum. This is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant, £1,048,758 and £2,883,119 Public Health grant.</p> <p>The monies from DSG were approved by the Early Years Forum on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023. This decision was approved at Schools Forum in March 2023.</p> <p>The Public Health contribution has been confirmed for 24/25 and is expected to continue into future years.</p> <p>The total maximum value over the potential maximum term of the 9-year contracts is £35,386,893.</p> <p>A facilities management package is already in place under the current contracts through Asset Management and Property Services. This is funded through an existing Gloucestershire County Council budget and will remain in place under the new contracts.</p>
<p><b>Who has been consulted?</b></p>	<p>Cllr Stephen Davies, Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Early Years</p> <p>Internal Support Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Legal Services</li> <li>○ Strategic Procurement</li> <li>○ Finance</li> <li>○ Communications</li> <li>○ Information Management Service</li> <li>○ HR</li> <li>○ ICT</li> <li>○ Project Management Office</li> <li>○ AMPS</li> </ul>
<p><b>What were their comments?</b></p> <p>Cllr Stephen Davies, Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Early Years confirmed that he is supportive of this decision.</p>	

Relevant support services were involved in the procurement process. Their feedback has informed the proposed award decision.

## **Background/Context**

Family Hubs are centres which, as part of integrated family services ensure families with children and young people aged 0-19 (up to 25 years for children with special needs or disabilities) receive early help to overcome a range of difficulties and build stronger relationships.

Research shows that effective early intervention can improve children's wellbeing, educational attainment, and life chances, reduce family poverty, improve mental health and lead to lower crime, lower unemployment and can reduce other negative outcomes which carry significant cost to the public purse. The Family Hub model has emerged nationally as an effective integrated model.

Family Hubs enhance integrated working by enabling easier access to support, better outcomes for families, more effective service delivery and smarter use of budgets. A Family Hub is not a prescribed range of services – it is an approach that seeks to offer a more coherent and effective support offer across the services they need e.g., health services (antenatal, maternity, health visitor, school nurses); early years and childcare and education, youth services, parenting support, safety, relationship support; employment, finance and other support that reflects local circumstances.

Family Hubs are built on the following key principles, which are both nationally recognised and also came through strongly from the pre-engagement work done during August 2021.

- Integration
- Shared Outcomes
- Working with the voluntary sector, embedded in local communities
- Focus on early intervention and prevention
- Whole family approach
- Accessibility
- Listening to child and family voices

The agenda is driven further by the early years review undertaken by Andrea Leadsom resulting in the Children's Commissioner for England Paper: Best Start for Life: A vision for the 1001 critical days (March 2021).

The 2022 Cabinet report refers to an original anticipated start date for contracts being 1 April 2023, contracts will now be awarded from 1 April 2024. This meant that sufficient time was gained to allow us to carefully develop our specifications for the Family Hubs model.

- [Decision - Variation of existing contracts for Children and Family Centres \(goucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/decision-variation-existing-contracts-children-family-centres)
- [Decision - Extension of existing contract for Children and Family Centres \(goucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/decision-extension-existing-contract-children-family-centres)

## **Performance management/follow-up:**

Robust monitoring frameworks are still in place, for the core delivery of the service.

The Children and Family Centre contracts will continue to be monitored quarterly.

**Option 1: Award Lot 1 based on evaluated bids.**

The Council's view is that this bid is sufficiently strong in all areas to merit contract award.

**Risk Analysis****Option 1: Award Lot 1 based on evaluated bids.**

The Council's view is that this bid is sufficiently strong in all areas to merit contract award. Further delay in contract award would have a detrimental effect on service provision and support for our children and families.

**Financial and employment implications**

There will be no change in overall budget for Children and Family Centres with the annual budget remaining at £3,931,877 – but the funding will be used differently to increase universal provision to enable a reduction in spend on targeted support over the contract period. As other services join the Family Hubs model, they will bring with them an influx of budget spend with their services aligning allowing for the pooling of budgets.

This level of service transformation requires a longer-term financial commitment. An initial period of 7 years, made up of a 2-year incremental commissioning will be needed to ensure alignment of the key services needed to support children and their families 0-19/25. Following this initial period, a further 4 years delivery of a Family Hub model will be needed to evaluate effectiveness and measure outcomes and impact. The option to extend for a further 2 years is in line with National practice that shows, within Early Help in particular, a longer-term funding is necessary to measure impact, outcomes and efficiencies to the Local Authority. Without this long-term commitment commissioning cannot guarantee and evidence the success of the Family Hub model. Like all contracts this one will be reviewed throughout its lifetime and any risk or contractual amendment will be actioned by the council's due process.

Any TUPE of staff from current providers to potential new providers will be managed by the outgoing and incoming providers where the service is already commissioned externally.

## Equalities considerations

The service actively reaches out to children from underrepresented communities, which is reflected in the higher proportion of families from diverse backgrounds accessing children centres compared with the Gloucestershire population. The new service will continue to collect and analyse data relating to race and ethnicity to ensure that services are accessed and effective for all families.

The service will continue to work inclusively with pre-birth parents, teenage mothers and fathers and pregnant young women, including those in care. Working more closely with midwives will support engagement from all parents/parents to be.

Gender reassignment, religion and or beliefs and sexual orientation data is currently not collected. We will work with the Information Management Service and providers on how we can collect this data in the future to address consent/Privacy Notice issues. As part of the co-production with young people and parents, we will identify and understand barriers and effective approaches which will enable us to continually understand and address barriers to the engagement of services.

**Please read EqIA which includes a broad range of equalities considerations.**

### Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed? Yes

*If 'Yes', please see attached the signed Equality Impact Assessment.*

[15 12 21 EIA CFC Cabinet Jan 22](#)

*EqIA approved by both Cllr S Davies and Assistant Director of Integrated Commissioning*

**Has any conflict of interest been declared by any Cabinet Member consulted on the decision?**

*The council's Monitoring Officer should be consulted, in the first instance, if any conflict of interest is declared by a Cabinet Member.*

**If any conflict of interest declared, was a dispensation granted by the Audit and Governance Committee of the Council?**

No

N/A

**Does this decision report form or any supporting papers provided contain confidential or exempt information?**

No

**Does this decision need to be published on the GCC website?**

Yes

In coming to this decision I have given due and full regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") by reference to the law itself and also the relevant Equality Impact Assessment, which was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Having fully considered all available information, I have decided to reject any alternative options and take the recommended decision(s), for the reasons set out in this report.

Signed



Name **Ann James**

Title **Director of Children's Services**

Date 24.07.24

Contact details for further information:

Lead Officer: Wendy Gray, Head of Service - Early Help and Prevention Commissioning,  
Children and Families Commissioning Hub

Tel: 01452 324219

Email: [wendy.gray2@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.gray2@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

