

REPORT TITLE- Variation of existing contracts for an extension to the existing services to Children and Family Centres

Cabinet Date	21 st July 2021
Cabinet Member	Cllr Stephen Davies - Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Early Years
Key Decision	Yes
Purpose of Report	To seek an approval to vary existing contracts to Barnardo’s, and Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation (GLOW) from 1 st April 2022 to 31 st March 2023 for the provision of targeted family support services with children and family Centres in Gloucestershire. To cover Gloucester City, Forest of Dean, Stroud, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury localities. This will allow us to reshape and consult in order to offer an integrated service to the children and families in Gloucestershire.
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of Children’s Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children’s Safeguarding and Early Years to issue a variation to the following contracts with two existing providers to extend the end date of the contracts by 12 months:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnardo’s: for the provision of targeted family support services with children and families centres in the Gloucester City locality; and the Forest of Dean and Stroud localities. • Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation (GLOW): for the provision of the above services in the localities of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury.

<p>Reasons for recommendations</p>	<p>In June 2016, Cabinet awarded contracts for the provision of targeted family support services for a term of 3+2 years to Barnardo's and GLOW. Further extension was approved by Cabinet on 24th July 2019 to allow consistency in service delivery until March 2022.</p> <p>These contracts significantly supported the payment by results work of the Troubled Families Programme. Children and Family Centres have exceeded their targets set for the last 4 years and in doing so, have supported many more children and families than anticipated. They have made a bigger contribution to the payment by results service of Families First that helps to make up the current Early Help Service.</p> <p>There are a number of reasons for the recommendation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within Gloucestershire, as throughout the county, the current COVID pandemic has shown the real importance of communities and how people have worked together to support each other. This has been phenomenal, so we want to capture this new wave of localism to drive our Family Hub provision. 2. Continuity of providers will ensure stability and continuity of service for the current service users within a fragile economy and challenging context. There is increased latent demand due to the pandemic and we anticipate further demand due to COVID babies. We require further detailed analysis in order to match demand and capacity of the service for the future. 3. There have been changes from Central Government around Family Hubs, to improve cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes in disadvantaged and vulnerable children (conception to age five) across a number of areas to help children to achieve their potential and improve their chances of success in later life. These include labour market participation, earnings, health and wellbeing. Feedback from families will be used during the contract period to offer both earlier intervention and evidence based provision in addition to learning from the Troubled Families (Supporting Families) Programme 4. The remodelled service requires future consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including children and their families in order to develop a new comprehensive service specification to reflect the direction of travel and undertake market management to gauge the appetite for the future reshaped model. 5. The premises are leased to the providers and detailed work is required to address the implications on premises and leases in the redesign of the service. <p>Approval of variation of existing contracts to existing providers without competition until 31st March 2023 will sustain continuity of care to some of our most vulnerable children and families. In the meantime, commissioners will undertake further work to develop our Early Help Strategy, along with a demand and capacity analysis to take account of the impact of the pandemic, which will reshape and reconfigure services so they are integrated, accessible and in line with the overarching Sufficiency Strategy</p>
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Resource Implications	<p>The total budget figure for the Children and Family Contracts is £3,625,482 per annum and is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant and Public Health grant. The funding is allocated between providers as follows :-</p> <p>Barnardo's Gloucester City - £1,264,879 Forest/Stroud - £982,339</p> <p>GLOW Cheltenham and Tewkesbury - £1,378,264.</p>
Background Documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cabinet paper June 2016 https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s30780/Cabinet%20Member%20Questions%20and%20Answers%20-%208%20June%202016.pdf 2. Children and Young People's Plan 2015-18 https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/strategies-plans-policies/children-and-families/ 3. Right Placement First Time – Sufficiency Strategy https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-young-people-and-families/sufficiency-strategy-2018-2021/ 4. Children and Family Centres information and local offer https://www.glofamiliesdirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glofamilies/results.page?familychannel=3_2_1 5. The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days 6. Summary, exec summary, booklets and data dashboards for Children and Family Centres can be viewed through the link below. \\svrshfp01\EDS_Shirehall\$\DevelopmentTeam\ChildrenCentresPM\Performance and Contract Monitoring Data\Performance Reports\2018 - 2021 Performance Summaries and dashboards additional info
Statutory Authority	<p>Gloucestershire County Council</p> <p>The Childcare Act 2006 - Establishment of Children's Centres</p>
Divisional Councillor(s)	<p>ALL</p>
Officer	<p>Wendy Williams Assistant Director for Integrated Children and Families Commissioning Tel: 01452 328526 Email: wendy.williams3@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p>
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23rd July 2021 - Cabinet approval sought for variation

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23rd July 2021 - Cabinet approval sought for extension. • August 2021 - Notify current contract holders of intention to vary contract • August 2021 - Formally write to providers to inform them of the 1 year variation to effect award of current services. • Autumn 2021- Expected to reshape model. • Spring 2022 -Expected to Procurement tender. • April 2023 - New contracts |
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1. Background

- 1.1 Following a full public consultation and a redesign of the Children's Centre offer across Gloucestershire, in June 2016, Cabinet approved a new model of working for Children's Centres to support children pre-birth to 11 years and their families who have a level of need that would require intervention. This targeted family support service is based in 16 Children and Family Centre buildings in the areas of greatest deprivation in Gloucestershire. The other 29 Children's Centre buildings have been de-designated as formal Children's Centres and have been developed as hubs for early education and childcare, universal services delivered by private, voluntary and community groups and as bases for professionals who work with families. These remaining Children and Family centres have been managed by 3 organisations, 2 commissioned externally and one commissioned in house.
- 1.2 The contracts for the 16 Childrens Centres were initially approved by Cabinet in June 2016 for three years from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2020 with an option to extend for an additional two years. Further extension was approved by Cabinet on 24th July 2019 to allow consistency in service delivery until March 2022.
- 1.3 The contracts for the provision of targeted family support services in the Gloucester City locality, Stroud and Forest of Dean localities were awarded to Barnardo's. The contracts were awarded to Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation (GLOW) for the provision of the above services in Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. Gloucestershire County Council (Families First Plus) covers the locality of the Cotswolds.
- 1.4 Since these contracts began, the targeted family support service based around the 16 Children and Family Centres has significantly supported the payment by results for the Troubled Families (Supporting Families) Programme. The monitoring of current Children and Family centre activity and impact is based on a variety of data sources. These include:
- Troubled Families central data team

- Performance and data team
- Gloucestershire County Council's Liquid Logic and EHM systems
- OFSTED data
- Sufficiency Assessments
- Data collected through contract monitoring with Children's Centres
- Headcount data

Key achievements

1.5 The Children's Centres' proportion of the payment by results target was 456 families for Year 1. The service actually supported 1,009 families (equating to over 3,000 individuals) in 17/18 as part of the targeted family support service. This was nearly double the target originally set. Highlights include;

- Over a third of families supported were children on a Child in Need plan.
- The service provides packages of support to children on Child Protection plans where the long term aim is for the child to stay within the family home.
- The Children and Family Centres are being used as a hub for community supervised contacts.
- In addition to the targeted family support service, the centres are facilitating additional targeted and universal services to support children and families.
- These universal and targeted services run by partners are well attended by local families.
- Delivery of the Freedom Programme and You and Me Mum, both provided evidenced based programmes which are well embedded in order to support families experiencing domestic abuse.
- A menu of evidenced based parenting programmes such as Solihull, Webster Stratton and Triple P are delivered through the centres to support families to improve their parenting skills. Pre-birth classes are reaching families at a much earlier stage to embed positive parenting.
- A wide range of universal services are on offer to children and families in all localities showing us universal services are being retained and grown by local communities.

2. Options:

2.1 Option 1: Do Nothing:

Do nothing – Contracts will come to end in March 2022 and providers could withdraw their services, with no other provision in place. This would lead to a vast number of vulnerable families having access to little or no targeted support services. Due to Covid lockdown and hardship resulting in extreme pressure on

families without any support available, this will lead to further escalation of needs therefore impaction on statutory services. This option would only leave services within the Cotswolds area as these are not externally commissioned.

2.2 Option 2: Undertake a compliant competitive tender procurement.

We need to address changes from the Central Government around Family Hubs, the learning from the Troubled Families Programme and the anticipated demand due to pandemic and Covid babies. This will be used to match the demand and capacity of the service for the future. To facilitate and remodel the service, we are also required to consult families and partners to develop a new comprehensive service specification to reflect the direction of travel.

As a consequence, further work is required in order to plan and complete procurement, including a tender process with market management to gauge the appetite for the future reshaped model, mobilisation and implementation plan.

2.3 Option 3: Bring the entire service in house.

When both contracts come to an end in March 2022, these services could be taken in house and managed by Gloucestershire County Council. However, this will require a major infrastructure and workforce. This would lead to a vast number of vulnerable families being restricted to limited targeted support services during the development and implementation of the infrastructure. Due to Covid lockdowns and post pandemic recovery, hardship is a real risk, resulting in extreme pressure on families with only limited support available. This this will lead to a further escalation of needs, impacting on statutory services.

2.4 Option 4: Vary the current contracts to extend the end date of the services until 31st March 2023. This is the preferred option

Barnardo's: for the provision of targeted family support services in children and families centres in the Gloucester City locality; Forest of Dean and Stroud localities.

Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation (GLOW): for provision of the above services in the localities of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury.

Cotswolds service to continue in house but will be incorporated into the remodelling before leading to a more formal procurement process to meet PCR requirements.

2.5 These providers will offer targeted family support services in children and families centres in Gloucester City, Forest of Dean and Stroud and Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and Cotswolds localities. This will allow us to redesign an integrated service for the children and families in Gloucestershire.

- 2.6 Moreover, a market analysis and due diligence exercise carried out by the council has demonstrated that Barnardo's and GLOW are the most appropriate solutions for Gloucestershire County Council at this moment in time and are the preferred providers and a cost effective solution.
- 2.7 Varying these contracts end dates for the two providers who already offer services will allow for longer term planning of services to take place. This would be in line with Gloucestershire children's services proposed new Early Help Strategy and the government decision in relation to the Troubled Families (Supporting Families) Programme. This option would allow continuity of care for vulnerable families during and after the Covid pandemic until March 2023.
- 2.8 Current services are working above agreed capacity; therefore, families who need support are receiving this in a timely and appropriate manner. They are preventing, where appropriate, an escalation of needs and statutory interventions.

Preferred option

- 2.10 Cabinet is asked to approve Option 4 as the preferred option. This preferred option, reduces the risks and possible challenge from potential bidders, as opportunity will arise from the reshaped model and new procurement tender from spring 2022.
- 2.11 This will address the service provision against increasing demands on the Council. This allows for the development and inclusion of children centre services to be incorporated within the new Early Help Strategy and plan a clear vision for Family Hubs, while also ensuring vulnerable families within Gloucestershire County Council have continuity of family support services.
- 2.12 Securing the service until 31st March 2023 to the present providers through varying the current contracts, would allow for the current services to continue while an options appraisal for future services is undertaken. This option would give time for a full tendering process to take place; this timeframe would mean that a service would be designed within a new Early Help Strategy, able to respond to, and implement changes in government direction in relation to the family Hubs and Troubled Families (Supporting Families) Programme and manage the after effect of pandemic.

3. Risk Assessment

3.1 Option 1: Do Nothing

The risk here is in relation to the council's reputation and ability to respond to vulnerable families in a timely and appropriate manner. With little or no targeted support, families will be left with escalating needs and meeting the threshold for specialised services, which would be more costly and for extended periods of time due to lack of "step down" targeted support. Children's services would be at risk of not being able to claim all the potential payment by results funding, or any

potential Covid relief grants. This would also have a wider impact onto Early Help services.

3.2 Option 2: Undertake a compliant competitive tender procurement

This would have a direct effect on the reputational stability in offering Early Help support to children and their families in Gloucestershire during and after the pandemic. This will not allow us to develop the Early Help Strategy or respond and implement changes in government direction in relation to the Family Hubs and Troubled Families (Supporting Families) Programme, or manage the after effect of the pandemic to be integrated with associated redesign provision to meet the growing needs or undertake a formal consultation. There is insufficient time to plan and complete procurement, including a tender process, mobilisation and implementation plan.

3.3 Option 3: Bring the entire service in house

There is a lack of skilled workforce in house to deliver the structured, evidence based programme and outcomes to meet the needs. This would NOT be compliant with the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) ruling. The management and governance required to bring this in-house will require a governance arrangement, consultation and line management that will be far more expensive than the allocated budget.

This option will cost more than the allocated budget with substantial duplication of costs, especially around management. The risk here is in relation to the Council's ability to respond rapidly to vulnerable families in a timely and appropriate manner, especially after the pandemic.

3.4 Option 4; Vary the current contracts to extend the end date of the services until 31st March 2023.

Services officers are in the process of finalising their new Early Help Strategy; this strategy is currently being developed and will be ready for draft approval. This will set out Gloucestershire and its partners vision to support families at the earliest point, with services that are accessible and outcome focused to prevent children, young people and their families escalating to statutory services.

During the contracted period, the future Early Help offer will be developed in line with the overarching Sufficiency Strategy action plan and any changes/extension to the Troubled Families Programme. These action plans will be implemented and managed using a project management approach, with a risk and issues log being actively managed.

Covid has had a major impact on the service and, as such, time needs to be taken to review the service to understand what it needs to deliver into the future. The contract needs to be extended to allow for the time to review and reframe the needs and then retender. Public Contracts Regulations (2015) Regulation 72 (b) allows for the contract to be modified due to the significant inconvenience or

substantial duplication of cost as long as the circumstances could not have been foreseen, the overall nature of the contract hasn't changed and the increase in price does not exceed 50% of the original contract value. The complexity of the contracts means that a short term award to anyone other than the incumbent providers would cause significant inconvenience and a substantial duplication of costs. As the Covid pandemic and its effects could not have been predicted, the nature of the overall contract is not changing and the price increase is under 50% of the original contract value. The tests are met to modify the contract. The time will be used to ensure that the specification and other documents are ready for tender within the allocated timeframe.

The risk of procurement challenge to varying the contracts to extend the end date is mitigated as the Public Contract Regulations (2015) allows under Regulation 72, the modification of contracts under certain conditions, which this service requirement meets.

All transparency requirements in the Public Contracts Regulations (2015) will be met and a Modification Notice will be published in Find a Tender and Contracts Finder

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 There is no additional financial implication for awarding these contracts to present providers and is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant and Public Health grant. The total budget figure for the Children and Family Contracts is £3,625,482 per annum and allocated to:-

Barnardo's

Gloucester City - £1,264,879 Forest/Stroud - £982,339

GLOW Cheltenham /Tewkesbury - £1,378,264

5. Climate change implications

No disproportionate impact identified.

6. Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed?

Yes

- 6.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) indicates that there are no significant impacts identified in respect of protected characteristic. The impact of directing award the contract for Children and Family Centres is positive in terms of age and neutral in all other areas.
- 6.2 Cabinet Members should read and consider the Equalities Impact Assessment in order to satisfy themselves as decision makers that due regard has been given

7. Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) Implications

- 7.1 IMS Procurement risk assessment has been completed and advice from IMS has been sought, they advise that the risk rating is high. DPIA is required but yet to be completed and signed off by the Information Asset Owner.
- 7.2 A privacy notice is being written for existing providers, so that recipients know how their data is being shared.

8. Social value implications

- 8.1 Under a short extension to the contract period, the social value will be unchanged. However, the Council would continue to work with the two providers to look at potential opportunities within the contract.
- 8.2 No disproportionate impact identified.

9. Consultation Feedback

- 9.1 No consultation has taken place with the public, as the service delivered to the current cohort affected will not change by extending the existing contact until March 2023. However a formal consultation will take place as part of redesigning and recommissioning Family Hubs and developing service specification.
- 9.2 There has been a low level of complaints with regards to the provision to date, so there would not be an expectation that service users would want this service to change.
- 9.3 We have consulted with other Local Authorities to learn from their experiences to date and inform recommendations.

10. Contract consultation

- 10.1 In the present contract, consultation with service users takes place every quarter, using different forms of engagement which has been completed as part of the current contact requirements. Consultation has clearly evidenced developing and sustained good practice, with improved outcomes for our vulnerable children and their families.
- 10.2 Feedback informs commissioners that services are accessible to children and their families and that they feel engaged with the programmes of support, they feel listened to and valued. Consultation will continue throughout the new contracts, this will inform both the continued development and design of new services delivery post 2023.

11. Discussion

- 11.1 The present services are growing in success and are with providers who have significantly improved outcomes for children and their families in the last four years.

- 11.2 Extending the existing contracts will offer the opportunity to maintain and build on this performance and also the added value that providers have brought to these contracts
- 11.3 Taking the proposed approach will allow for services to be developed in a planned way, as part of Gloucestershire's Early Help offer and implement changes in government direction to the Family Hubs and Troubled Families Programme. This will allow us to manage the after effect of the pandemic in redesigning Family Hubs to meet the growing needs and undertake formal consultation.

12. Officer Recommendations

- 12.1 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years to issue a variation to the following contracts with two existing providers to extend the end date of the contracts by 12 months:
- Barnardo's: for the provision of targeted family support services with children and families centres in the Gloucester City locality; and the Forest of Dean and Stroud localities.
 - Gardners Lane and Oakwood Federation (GLOW): for the provision of the above services in the localities of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury.

13. Performance Management

- 13.1 Robust monitoring frameworks are still in place, for the core delivery of the service.
- 13.2 The Children and Family Centre contracts will continue to be monitored quarterly.
- 13.3 All performance data will be evaluated as part of reshaping and developing new service.