

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Council Officer



REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL OFFICER

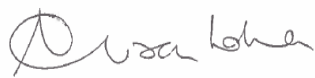
Executive Decision Reference Number – COD02 21/22

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Urgent Decision: Direct Award for Managed Social Work Service in Children's Social Work, CYPFS for 6 months
2	Decision maker (Council Officer name and job title): Alison Botham, Director of Children's Services
3	Report author and contact details: Jane Anstis, Head of Service Children's Social Work
4a	Decision to be taken: To direct award a contract for services to Innovate, to the value of £491,000.
4b	Reference number of original executive decision or date of original committee meeting where delegation was made: N/A
5	<p>Reasons for decision:</p> <p>Children's Social Work has experienced an unprecedented and significant rise in demand for children's social work services during the pandemic. It is now 25% higher (on 30th June 201) than at the beginning of the first lockdown on 23rd March 2020.</p> <p>This demand exceeds our capacity to respond and requires additional social work resource.</p> <p>All efforts to recruit experienced social workers on a permanent or locum basis has not been able to keep up with this demand. There is a paucity of experienced social workers regionally and we now need a bespoke approach to provide a team of social workers to respond to this demand alongside our usual recruitment processes.</p> <p>This has become an urgent issue and we need an urgent solution to this in order to be able to allocate children's cases to social workers at a level that they can safely respond to. An ordinary procurement process would take too long.</p> <p>A direct award would allow us to progress this arrangement as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>Innovate have a track record in providing social work teams for local authorities. They are currently working with 17 local authorities in England (with 26 teams in these authorities). We have undertaken due diligence and have spoken directly to DCS's who are currently using this service.</p> <p>The current impact on operational and safe service delivery of safeguarding services to children and families due to increasing staffing and caseload pressures requires an urgent solution.</p> <p>It is therefore intended that a contract is awarded by direct award to Innovate via a negotiated</p>

	procedure without prior publication relying on 32(2)(c) Public Contracts Regulations 2015 to provide extremely urgent deliverables.			
6	<p>Alternative options considered and rejected:</p> <p>Internal options were explored but have been exhausted including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent recruitment – this is taking too long to resolve the issue. This is ongoing alongside the solution sought but cannot respond in the agile way we need currently. • Locum social workers via Pertemps suppliers. This has not yielded the experienced social workers we need in the numbers we need currently. The Service Director has been in regular discussions with senior leaders in Pertemps and individual suppliers to accelerate a response but this has not been successful to date. We must consider alternative to ensure safe practice and to reduce the risk of losing existing staff who are struggling to manage existing workloads without this solution. • Work attempted with one of the Pertemps suppliers to identify a team of social workers. Work on this progressed but did not materialise when the identified social workers existing contract was extended by another local authority in the region. • Increased family support worker provision in the absence of successful qualified social work recruitment • Rigorous scrutiny of all possible case closures, thresholds and alternative safe support options for families within the EHATS service • Increase of agency social worker rates and accommodation allowances and persistent direct partnership working with agencies to recruit interim workers • Temporary mobilisation of all qualified social workers in the service, regardless of current position • Exploration of ‘whole team’ interim solutions. <p>None of the above options have yielded the staff resources necessary to resolve the (increasing) capacity pressures and in the latter case there is low confidence, following due diligence conversations with other Local authorities that the quality of interim staff would be guaranteed through this route.</p>			
7	Financial implications: £491k from revenue funding for a period of 6 months. This will be funded through the The Covid Outbreak Management Fund			
8	<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)</p>	Yes	No	Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:
			X	in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total
			X	in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1million
			X	is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.
8b	If yes, date of publication of the	N/A		

	notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions			
9	Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:	This decision aligns with the Corporate Plan priority of Caring for People and Communities in keeping children, young people and adults protected.		
10	Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)	There are no environmental impacts of the decision.		
Urgent decisions				
11	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?	Yes	X	(If yes, please contact Democratic Support for advice)
		No		(If no, go to section 13a)
12a	Reason for urgency: As above, the operational and safeguarding implications of continued increases in caseload pressures is serious for children and families in Plymouth. Difficulties with recruitment and retention coupled with increased staff sickness and self-isolation due to Covid -19 and the increase (25%) of children in the service over the past 12 months is creating an unsafe pressure that now needs an urgent response. The award of the contract to Innovate is intended to mitigate some of this pressure.			
12b	Scrutiny Chair signature:	Councillor Laing (agreed via email)	Date	14 July 2021
	Scrutiny Committee name:	Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
	Print Name:	Councillor Jemima Laing		
Consultation				
13a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?	Yes	X	
		No		(If no go to section 14)
13b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?	Cllr Dave Downie, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills, Children and Young People		
13c	Date Cabinet member consulted	9 July 2021		
14	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision?			If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer
		No	X	
15	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Alison Botham	
		Job title	Director of Children's Services	

		Date consulted	9 July 2021					
Sign-off								
16	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	DS20 21/22					
		Finance (mandatory)	djn.21.22.53					
		Legal (mandatory)	MS/36955					
		Human Resources (if applicable)	I20721KAB					
		Corporate property (if applicable)	N/A					
		Procurement (if applicable)	PB/CYP/006/ED/0721					
Appendices								
17	Ref.	Title of appendix						
	A	EXECUTIVE decision - Business Case. Direct Award for Managed Social Work Team for 6 months						
	B.	EIA						
Confidential/exempt information								
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information?	Yes	If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below.					
		No						
		Exemption Paragraph Number						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title:							
Background Papers								
19	Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.							
Title of background paper(s)		Exemption Paragraph Number						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Council Officer Signature							
20	I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.						
Signature			Date of decision		14 July 2021		
Print Name	Alison Botham, Director of Children's Services						