


PROCUREMENT BUSINESS CASE

 ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL	For proposed procurements where the total estimated expenditure exceeds £50,000 (supplies/services) or £250,000 (works)
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Procurement / Contract Title and start date	Link Workers 08 January 2022		
Procurement Ref No.	000-EQVD3642		
Current contract in place?	07 Jan 2022		
Function	Health & Social Care	Cluster	Adult Social Care
Lead Officer	Lorraine McKenna	Date prepared:	10/07/2021

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that a direct award of a contract to SAMH (Scottish Association of Mental Health) until the 31st of March 2023 (1 year and 3 months) is approved.

2. Compliance with Demand Management Gateways

Gateway 1:

Is the spend from a national or regional framework and if not, what is the justification for the spend to be off contract?

The spend will not be from a national framework.

A robust business case was developed for the service previously and SAMH were awarded the contract after a competitive tender process.

There is a contract in place with SAMH following the tender process which commenced on 8th of January 2018 and was extended on 8th January 2020 for a further two years in line with what was included within the contract terms as published.

Approval of a direct award of a contract to SAMH until the 31st of March 2023 (1 year and 3 months) would allow the service to .

- maintain a continuous service to patients without risk of procurement process impacting on service delivery.
- Provide a period of stability before entering a full procurement process which can consider any changes made nationally resulting from work undertaken on the recommendations of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland.
- Responding to the impacts of Covid-19 on patients.
- Prioritise patient contact time and service delivery and not be distracted by ongoing procurement which would have a negative effect on the patient.
- Clarify if any further funding will be made available for increasing in professional roles such as Link Practitioners in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gateway 2:

The current contract is funded through recurring funds to support the Primary Care Improvement Plan. This is part of the Scottish Government

Is this spend connected with an identified budget option/service redesign? If not what is the justification for the contract?

national target to have 250 Community Link Workers working within Primary Care within the current contract period.

The publication on 3 February 2021 of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland (referred to as "The Feeley Report") is likely to have a significant impact upon the current partnership arrangements. Whilst these implications are being more fully understood and work nationally is progressing that there will be changes to procurement processes and structures.

This report recommendations that could have a potential impact on the future of this service include.

- The change of role for the IJB (Integration Joint Board) in the commissioning of services
- Implications of changes to a Fair Living Wage for Social Care Staff

The review recommendations are seeking an end to the emphasis in commissioning and procurement being on price and competition and to seek a more collaborative, participative and ethical commissioning framework for adult social care services and supports, focused on achieving better outcomes for people using these services and improving the experience of the staff delivering them. People with lived experience should also be more involved, not just in the planning of their own care, but in the planning and design of services.

In addition to the Feeley report there is potential for increased resources to support the Link Practitioner Service. The Scottish Government has recognised that the pandemic highlighted the need for early local intervention to tackle the rising levels of mental health problems across all practices as well as the challenges in areas of high health inequalities. They have agreed to work with HSCP's and NHS (National Health Service) boards to consider how best to develop these services at a practice level and establish more clear Additional Professional Roles (e.g. Mental Health Workers, Physiotherapists, Community Link Workers) commitment in the Contract Offer by the end of 2021.

From a collaborative commissioner and operational perspective there is a need to provide stability for the practice-based service that changed to a purely remote working model at the beginning of the pandemic. Limitations for Community Link Practitioners to access practice staff and services for patients remotely presented some challenges for Community Link Practitioners. However, the service continued and adapted to the practices and patients' needs during Covid-19.

Since Spring 2021 75% of Senior Link Practitioners have left to progress into promoted posts within different organisations. In addition to this, see providing a direct award to SAMH for 15 months would allow the Service some time to stabilise and avoid a situation where the potential of a contract transfer process which has the potential to distract staff affected and would be implemented during a period of change and increasing demand for the service. The risk that patients would have delays or disruption to the service received and delays in accessing services that would improve their situation.

<p><u>Gateway 3:</u> Does the spend support outcomes associated with the LOIP and/or the Council's associated commissioning intentions?</p>		Stretch Outcome	How?
	1.	No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026	Link Practitioners work directly with patients in poverty to access services to help improve their lives. The main referral reasons for Link Practitioner support is Mental Health, Finance and Benefits, Social Isolation and Housing. The Link Practitioner works with the individual to access the right support to improve their situation, It has supported referrals to over 260 different services with 60% of these being within the third sector.
	11	Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.	<p>The Link Practitioners provide non-medical support to people presenting at their General Medical Practice connecting individuals and families with services within their communities.</p> <p>The Link Practitioner provides early intervention with patients allowing them to access support which helps their situation or to better manage their health condition. For example, The Link Practitioners provide individuals with Post Diagnostic Support for Dementia.</p> <p>Providing GP Practices with a referral route into over 260 community-based services in Aberdeen.</p>
	12	Rate of harmful levels of alcohol consumption reduced by 4% and drug related deaths lower than Scotland by 2026.	Link Practitioners provide Alcohol Brief Interventions as part of their role within the community.
<p><u>Gateway 4:</u> Have officers concluded all processes to avoid the demand associated with the external spend?</p>	<p>Primary driver for the service is to reduce pressure on Primary Care. This service provides support to general medical practices to link people with community resources.</p> <p>The service has a role in prevention and early intervention by engaging with patients and provide support to access services and develop behaviour change.</p> <p>Not only does the service provide direct support to people in practice but it supports the knowledge on services within the localities by participating in multi-Disciplinary meetings.</p> <p>It is anticipated that there will be an increased demand for Link Practitioner support from citizens impacted by the pandemic who will be accessing GP services.</p>		
<p><u>Gateway 5:</u> Are the performance measures to assess the impact of the associated</p>	<p>In terms of achieving client outcomes there is already an established performance measures to assess the impact of the service on a Monthly basis.</p> <p>Monitoring meetings are also held with SAMH and Lead Officer managers</p>		

external spend robust and appropriate?	of ACHSCP to ensure best value and scrutiny of provision being provided.
<p><u>Gateway 6:</u> Are the managerial and governance reporting arrangements against these performance measures robust and appropriate?</p>	<p>Once the contract is completed, and in line with all other social care contracts, the contract will be monitored using the Monitoring Assessment Framework together with regular reporting meetings.</p> <p>The Monitoring Assessment Framework will collate information on community benefits. These will be developed during the regular reporting meetings and reflect the work being undertaken to support a national network.</p>
3. Risk	
What risks are associated with this procurement?	<p>Risk of proceeding with procurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is risk associated with the direct award to SAMH which may be challenged by organisations keen to tender for the programme. However, it is anticipated that all these organisations would be from the Third Sector, and it is unlikely to challenge given direct award is only a delay to a process which will give the service a level of stability to respond to the patient's needs. <p>Risk of not proceeding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens do not access support services required to help their individual circumstances. • Increased risk of inappropriate referrals and signposting to services which will increase the time spent by services who respond to these referrals. • Failure to deliver on the Primary Care Contract • A full tender process would need to be undertaken and the new contract would not take into the account of major changes to procurement as recommended in the Feeley report. • Additional resources could be allocated from Scottish government to support an increase in Practitioners which would require a change of contract to ensure consistency with the other services. • Increased risk of staff resignation which would have an impact on the patient's level and quality of service provided. This would increase the risk of a patient not accessing the support required and impacting negatively on their current situation. • SAMH and Aberdeen City Council have developed professional and business relationship that shares the commitment to improving outcomes for the Link Practitioner Service. SAMH have proven to be flexible to respond to the demands of this commissioned service.
4. Uired	
Details of consultation undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen City Primary Care teams including GP Practice staff provide positive feedback about the quality of service provided by SAMH. Many responses from Practice staff view the Link Practitioner team as an integral part of the Primary Care team within GP Practices. • Information Governance – Information Sharing Agreement to be updated to show SAMH as a Data Controller.

5. Legal	
Does the proposal comply with all relevant legal provisions?	<p>Yes / No</p> <p>Commentary: It has been assumed that the nature of this contract falls within the definition of a social work contract. Public Procurement Law and Policy acknowledges the unique circumstances surrounding such contracts and sets out some scope for increased flexibility regarding awarding. The value of this contract alone exceeds 'light touch' regime threshold set in the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 and as such the contract award must adhere to certain standards. There is no set procedure but the Council must assess on a case by case basis and choose a route which is proportionate and appropriate to the contract in question.</p> <p>The service have highlighted the potential impact on the service user if there is a disruption to the delivery of this service. They have further highlighted the high likelihood of disruption should the contract be retendered. Given the policy on such contracts and the emphasis on the well being and needs of the service user, it could be argued that the choice of a direct award is proportionate and appropriate.</p> <p>The service have advised that there are other providers who may be able to provide this service and indeed, others did bid in the initial tender process. However, the service has highlighted potential resource issues with these providers and the impact of covid on these parties ability to tender and ultimately deliver the contract so the risk of challenge is arguably low due do market conditions.</p> <p>To further remove any risk of successful challenge the service should ensure that in proceeding with this direct award they adhere with the principals of transparency and equal treatment along with any specified requirements of the 2015 Regulations regarding publication of the contract notice.</p> <p>Name: Pamela Donaldson Date: 14/07/21</p>
6. Finance	
Budget including all revenue and on costs	£985,575
Budget Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Common Good
Budget Code(s)	S57310 65111
Estimated Spend	Annual contract value: Full year 21/22 £7422,97 22/23 £791,789 Total contract value: £985,575
Reviewed by	Name of Finance Officer: James Boulton Date of review: 9/7/21
Is budget sufficient for procurement?	Yes
7. Governance	

Prior to sending your business case for the relevant approvals please also confirm below whether any of the following have been completed as part of your Business Case.

Integrated Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment required / not required Yes
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Required A DPIA (Data Protection Impact Assessment) has been completed for the initial contract but will be required to be amended as per advice from Data Protection Officer
Approved by Director / Chief Officer	Name / date:
Approved by Legal:	Name / date:
Approved by Finance:	Name / date:
Approved by Commercial and Procurement:	Name / date:
Approval by Demand Management Control Board	Date:
Presented to Committee:	Name of Committee: Date: