

Finance and Resources Committee

10,00am, Thursday, 26 January 2023

Homelessness Services – Contract Extensions Agreed under Urgency Provisions for Visiting Housing Support Services, Housing First and Street-based Outreach and Support Hub Service for Rough Sleepers

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Routine All
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Finance and Resources Committee notes:
- 1.1.1 That the following contract extensions were awarded as an urgent decision in accordance with section 4.1 of the Council's Committee Terms of Reference and Delegated Functions by the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Convenor, for the extension of contract provisions for:
- 1.1.1.1 General visiting housing support, young person's visiting housing support services, complex needs visiting housing support, housing first services; and
- 1.1.1.2 Services for street-based outreach including the support hub for rough sleepers.
- 1.1.2 That this arrangement covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, to the value of £5,042,295.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report notes the approval given under urgency provisions (through four separate waivers of the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSOs)) under urgency, to extend the current contracts for the provision of visiting housing support services, housing first and the street-based outreach service including the support hub for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, up to a value of £5,042,295.
- 2.2 These waivers were approved under urgency provision to ensure Council that contract termination notices were not issued which would have resulted in staff employed by the services being placed on notice of redundancy.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan was approved by the Policy and Strategy Committee on [6 September 2011](#). This Commissioning Plan set out the need to prevent homelessness wherever possible and where people do become homeless, for services to help people to resolve their homelessness as quickly and effectively as possible.
- 3.2 The Commissioning Plan also set out the requirement to provide support that is flexible and effective for people with a range of needs.
- 3.3 In 2018, the Council awarded a range of contracts following a successful procurement exercise to Link Living, Your Home and Four Square to provide visiting housing support services to vulnerable service users at risk of homelessness in order support them to sustain their accommodation and develop independent living skills.
- 3.4 The contract term, including extensions, for each service, is 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2023.
- 3.5 A contract was also awarded to Simon Community Scotland in 2018 following a competitive tender. The contract includes a "complex needs" visiting housing

support service, a support hub, and a street-based outreach service. The contract term, including extensions, is also for 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2023.

- 3.6 In addition, since the 1 October 2021, Simon Community Scotland have been delivering the Council's housing first service. The current contract term is to 31 March 2023.
- 3.7 A delay in proceeding with a timely re-tender of all four contracts has been due to the adverse impact of COVID-19 on co-production schedules and to allow for a review of the support hub and outreach services.
- 3.8 It is envisaged that the complex and multiple needs visiting housing support and housing first elements of the original contract for the support hub and street-based outreach service will transfer into a wider visiting housing support service with one point of access as set out in the [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan](#) (RRTP). The proposed waiver period will allow sufficient time to further develop this one-point of access model.
- 3.9 Furthermore, a review of the support hub for rough sleepers and street-based outreach service is underway to determine the level and type of service required in the coming years. By extending the contracts for an additional year, the Council can monitor the impact of the transition out of COVID-19 and determine whether this will have an impact on the number of rough sleepers in Edinburgh.

4. Main report

- 4.1 This report notes the approval to continue the existing contracts for locality visiting housing support services including the young person's visiting housing support service, complex needs visiting housing support service, housing first and the contract for street-based outreach and support hub for rough sleepers' service for an additional year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024).

- 4.2 This will allow sufficient time to develop service models set out in the RRTP and facilitate a future procurement exercise based on need. It will also ensure that a comprehensive coproduction exercise with potential suppliers can be undertaken.

Visiting Housing Support

- 4.3 The locality visiting housing support services provides early intervention and prevention services working with anyone aged 16 years or over in Edinburgh who has been assessed as homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless.
- 4.4 Services provide support with regards to advice on housing options, providing welfare advice as well as assistance with applying for welfare benefits, mediation, help to open personal bank accounts, help to complete relevant online forms (including GP registration) and assistance with referrals to specific services including those that provide harm reduction support.
- 4.5 The locality services are currently delivered by Four Square, which is a partnership between Four Square and CHAI and works with service users in the South West

locality of the city. The value of this contract for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 is £542,244.

- 4.6 Your Home supports service users in the North East, North West and South West localities. The value of this contract for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 is £1,599,266.

Young People's Visiting Housing Support

- 4.7 Link Living provides specialist visiting housing support across all localities specifically to young people (16-25) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 4.8 The service seeks to provide support at the earliest opportunity and offer mediation services to help the young person to return to the family home where it is safe and possible to do so. If this is not possible they support the young person to:
- 4.8.1 Find, set up, and maintain appropriate accommodation;
 - 4.8.2 Develop independent living skills to maintain a home successfully;
 - 4.8.3 Provide training to enable the young person to further their educational attainment and improve their employability prospects; and
 - 4.8.4 Offer befriending support, mentoring, and volunteering opportunities that are provided by their partner Move on.
- 4.9 The value of this contract for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 is £511,561.

Complex Needs Visiting Housing Support, Housing First and Street-based Outreach and Support Hub for Rough Sleepers

- 4.10 Simon Community Scotland deliver this service providing a visiting housing support service to people with complex needs. This is defined as two or more support needs such as mental health and addiction issues. The service was commissioned in one lot with the support hub and street-based outreach and support hub for rough sleepers. The annual value of this contract is £1,564,059.
- 4.11 They also deliver Housing First Services. Housing First provides mainstream, settled housing with wrap around support for people with the most complex needs, who are predominantly people with a history of rough sleeping.
- 4.12 The Council took over funding responsibilities for Housing First on 1 October 2021 and the service has been delivered by Streetwork Simon Community by way of a contract variation to their existing contract (delivering visiting housing support to people with complex needs and services for rough sleepers).
- 4.13 The costs for 2022/23 are £825,154 and this is the value requested to maintain existing services for 2023/24.
- 4.14 The service is currently supporting approximately 185 clients and has scope to scale up to 250 clients at an annual cost of £1,258,195. The financial implications of increasing capacity to this level will be considered through the 2023/24 budget process.
- 4.15 The current Housing First service achieves 75% (excluding deaths) tenancy sustainment (maximum support cases of 185). This is a noteworthy success given

that Housing First service users tend not to engage with mainstream services. Specialist support services which are designed for very vulnerable people with complex and multiple needs tend to maintain contact and deliver more effective support than mainstream stream services.

- 4.16 They also deliver the street-based outreach service and the support hub for rough sleepers. The support hub provides access to various drop in clinics, laundry facilities, access to showers and to support workers on site.
- 4.17 The support hub and street-based outreach service ensure that some of the most vulnerable people in the city can access support on the same the day, including access to Rapid Access Accommodation.
- 4.18 From April 2022 to July 2022, the street-based outreach team completed an average of 151 engagements a week. Over the same period, the hub has supported an average of 139 unique individuals per week, with an average of 300 presentations recorded per week.
- 4.19 During the pandemic the number of rough sleepers on any given night has fallen from between 80-120 to between 11-17. A review is underway to ascertain the required service provision going forward.
- 4.20 The value of these contracts for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 is £2,389,214.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Officers will continue to liaise with partners to monitor demand for services and plan future service provisions via co-production.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The annual value requested is £5,042,295 as set out in the table below:

Provider	2023/2024 contract value
Foursquare	£542,244
YourHome	£1,599,276
Visiting Housing Support (Link living)	£511,561
Simon Community	£2,389,214
Total	£5,042,295

- 6.2 This cost remains unchanged from the 2022/23 contract values and the financial implications were reflected in the 2023/24 financial planning assumptions reported to Finance and Resources Committee on [10 November 2022](#).

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 These services support the actions outlined in the Edinburgh Poverty Commission report – [A Just Capital Actions to End Poverty in Edinburgh](#) by making day-to-day experiences, connections, and relationships for people and make the experience of seeking help less painful, less complex, more humane and more compassionate.
- 7.2 They support the Council's priorities to End Poverty by 2030 and Wellbeing and Equalities. The services play a key part in delivering the RRTP.
- 7.3 All services are engaged in delivering community benefits.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Award of Contract for Homelessness Prevention: Street Outreach, Support Hub and Complex Needs Visiting Housing Support Services](#)
- 8.2 [Award of Contract for Homelessness Prevention: Visiting Support for Young People Contract Ref: CT2196](#)
- 8.3 [Homelessness Prevention – Locality Support Services – Contract Ref: CT 0266](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.