

# Finance and Resources Committee

10:00am, Thursday, 27 August 2020

## Contract Extensions for Domestic Abuse Contracts

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee:
  - 1.1.1 Approves the request to extend current domestic abuse contracts due to the impact of Covid19, from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

#### **Alistair Gaw**

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## Contract Extensions for Domestic Abuse Contracts

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report seeks approval to extend the Council's current domestic abuse contracts for 12 months from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. These contracts have an annual value of £1,076,806.24 and are provided by three Service Providers – Edinburgh Women's Aid, Four Square Scotland and Shakti Women's Aid.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The Homelessness Prevention Commissioning Plan (the Plan), approved by the Policy and Strategy Committee on 6 September 2011, 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 Plan also set out the requirement to provide a range of services which are flexible and effective for people with a range of needs.
- 3.3 Therefore, the City of Edinburgh Council (the Council) requires services to assist women and children, who have experienced domestic abuse, to access accommodation and support services to overcome the trauma they have experienced and lead safe independent lives, free from abuse.
- 3.4 In January 2016, the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee agreed the Domestic Abuse Re-design Project – to develop a co-ordinated community response to domestic abuse in Edinburgh, including a city-wide review of all statutory agencies, grant provision and commissioned services.
- 3.5 Coproduction from this project resulted in Edinburgh's Domestic Abuse Strategy and Improvement Plan, which was noted by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in February 2017.
- 3.6 This identified key themes from service user and staff feedback in relation to Edinburgh's response to domestic abuse and reflected national and international research and best practice.

- 3.7 As part of this project, in September 2017, the Finance and Resources Committee agreed the award of contracts from November 2017 for two years plus a 12 month extension. A subsequent extension was granted in March 2020 to extend until 31 March 2021 to bring contracts in line with financial years.
- 3.8 The Covid19 global pandemic has placed significant pressures on these services – initially to provide support remotely, but laterally how to safely return to face to face services in line with Scottish Government guidelines. Lockdown restrictions have also exacerbated abusive situations for women and children and the number of cases is expected to increase significantly once women have more freedom to access services more readily.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 In June 2020, a Prior Information Notice (PIN) was published on Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) to invite Service Providers with an interest in providing domestic abuse accommodation and/or support, to express their interest. Fifteen companies have responded, to date.
- 4.2 Due to Covid19 lockdown restrictions, co-production events have not been possible. In July 2020, two surveys were distributed;
- 4.2.1 To all current service users - via the service provider engaging with them,
- 4.2.2 To over 200 stakeholders - who directly or indirectly work with women and children who have experienced domestic abuse.
- 4.3 The purpose of these surveys was to receive feedback on current service provision and suggestions for future improvement. Initial feedback suggested that co-production surveys at this time might be completed hastily and may not merit meaningful results due to;
- 4.3.1 Service users experiencing heightened anxiety - due to Covid19, and a reduction in the accessibility of services,
- 4.3.2 Stakeholders being under significant pressure - due to determining the logistics of returning to 'normal' service provision,
- 4.3.3 This time of year, being holiday season and therefore less people being available to contribute. The deadline for completion has therefore been extended.
- 4.4 Current service providers expect an increase in cases after lockdown restrictions are eased due to the realisation of abuse suffered during these conditions, plus women having more freedom to access services again.
- 4.5 Granting a 12-month extension to all three current service providers would ensure;
- 4.5.1 Stability for service users currently being supported, and those expected imminently,

4.5.2 Ample time to meaningfully coproduce new documentation for future contracts,

4.6 Additional time for interested parties to submit worthwhile tenders.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Subject to approval, waivers will be granted, and contract extension documentation will be prepared and issued to all three current service providers to cover 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- 5.2 In line with the Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016, the Council will procure new contracts starting from 1 April 2022.
- 5.3 Current monitoring of all domestic abuse contracts will continue and be managed by a Commissioning Officer from Homelessness & Housing Support: Partnership & Planning Service, to ensure best value and accountability of public funds, including Community Benefits and achievement of key performance indicators.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The value of extending these contracts (as detailed in Appendix 1) is £1,076,806.24 over 12 months. This will be allocated from the Partnership & Planning Service block contracts budget.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 Consultation and engagement is being undertaken by way of two questionnaires to both Service Users of the existing contracts, and Stakeholders who directly or indirectly work with women and/or children who have experienced domestic abuse.
- 7.2 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and all recommendations have been, and will continue to be, addressed throughout the process.
- 7.3 The outcome of awarding these contract extensions would be to ensure future contracts will be coproduced and procured during a timeframe that merits meaningful engagement.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 [Domestic Abuse Re-design Project - Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, January 2016](#)
- 8.2 [Edinburgh's Domestic Abuse Strategy and Improvement Plan - Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, February 2017](#)

- 8.3 [Award of original contracts – Finance & Resources Committee, September 2017 – Contract for the Provision of Domestic Abuse Services](#)

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1: Financial Breakdown of Current Domestic Abuse Services

Appendix 1: Financial Breakdown of Current Domestic Abuse Services

Service Provider	Services include;	Annual Value
Edinburgh Womens Aid	Accommodation, Childrens and Support	£480,667.46
Four Square Scotland	Accommodation and Community Support	£285,038.90
Shakti Womens Aid	Accommodation, Childrens and Support	£311,099.88
Total		£1,076,806.24