

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	26 July 2023
Executive Member:	Councillor Bill Fairfoull, Deputy Executive Leader
Reporting Officer:	Paula Sumner, Assistant Director, Early Help and Partnerships
Subject:	REVIEW OF SUPPORTING FAMILIES GRANT DELIVERY
Report Summary:	This report sets out the business case to terminate the contract between Tameside Council and Active Tameside for The Supporting Families Services' funded through the GMCA and to bring the service back into the Local Authority to meet the grant conditions. This proposition has been in consideration for some time before the recent announcement regarding closure of facilities and is not a reflection on the Trust but a continuation of our children's improvement journey
Recommendations:	That Executive Cabinet be recommended to AGREE to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Local Authority serving Active Tameside with three months' notice on 1 August 2023, as per the terms and conditions of the contract, to terminate the contract for 'The Supporting Families Services'. • TUPE transfer those staff, where applicable, from Active Tameside to Tameside MBC.
Corporate Plan:	<p>Priority 1: Very Best Start in Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve school readiness - Take up nursery at 2 years - Promote good parent and infant mental health <p>Priority 2: Aspiration and hope through learning and moving with confidence from childhood to adulthood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a whole system approach and improve wellbeing and resilience - Number of 16-19 year olds in employment or educated - Increase the proportion of children with good reading skills <p>Priority 3: Resilient Families and Supportive Networks to protect and grow our young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System - Improve the quality of social care practice - Reduce the impact of adverse childhood experiences <p>Priority 6: Nurturing our communities and having pride in our people, our place and our shared heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour - Reduce victims of domestic abuse - Reduce the number of rough sleepers/homelessness - Increase participation in cultural events - Increase access, choice and control in emotional and mental self-care and wellbeing

Priority 7: Longer and healthier lives

- Improve the wellbeing of our population
- Reduce drug and alcohol related harm

Policy Implications:

Through a review of other Greater Manchester Local Authority's arrangements with regards to the provision of case work, it was identified that no other area commissions this type of work to external providers. This is because this kind of child and family casework requires internal management oversight with regards to the quality and safety of any work carried out.

Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)

The current grant received from Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for Supporting Families in 23-24 is £1.194m

The current value of the Active Tameside contract is £0.216m

The termination of the contract with Active Tameside will bring financial resources back into the local authority allowing for further investment into the new Targeted Family Help Service (TFH) which is in line with the terms and conditions of grant.

Terminating the contract will mean 3 job roles TUPE to the council based on their current terms. This will be not impact on the council's general fund as the cost of the TUPE will be offset by the reduction in the contract value.

The TFH service is carrying 3 grade F vacancies as at period 3 within its establishment structure to enable the TUPE transfer to take place as part of the recent service redesign.

The savings from the bringing the staff members in-house will contribute towards a saving in the 2023/24 budget for a review of commissioned activities in Supported Families. The saving built into the budget is for £0.068m and the actual saving realised will depend upon the current terms of the members of staff.

Should Cabinet agree to serve notice on this contract on 1 August 2023, the financial resources would transfer back into the local authority on 1 December 2023.

Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

As set out in the report there is a business case to support bringing the Supporting Families Service back into the Local Authority, which can be actioned by way of serving notice under the current contract.

The proposal is likely to result in the TUPE transfer of staff to the Council which is a cost that the council will have to bear, including the pension provision the costs of which will have to be absorbed by the service.

Risk Management:

There is a potential reputational risk in serving notice on this contract as well as potential impact on the financial viability of the organisation. However, a strong communication plan will be developed with Children's Services to ensure any negative messages are mitigated by clearly setting out the benefits to children, families and communities of bringing the service back in to the Local Authority. The provider will also be given sufficient notice to support staff to transfer their employment, with the support of the Local Authority's Human Resources Team. Those staff affected will be supported through clear and regular communication and consultation setting out the benefits of transferring the service.

These benefits include, regular, quality and reflective supervision, access to a broader training and development offer and an infrastructure that allows them to draw on a variety of services and interventions to better support the families they are working with. Staff will also be working in a system with clear career progression opportunities.

The termination of the contract will not present any risk to the work undertaken with families as staff will TUPE transfer into the Local Authority, and as far as is possible, will continue to manage the cases they currently hold.

Access to Information: Not Confidential

Background Information: The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Paula Sumner, Assistant Director Early Help & Partnerships



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1. INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 The Supporting Families Services' contract with Active Tameside is funded by the Supporting Families Grant, provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC). DLUHC clearly set out service delivery requirements and terms and conditions associated with the use of The Supporting Families Grant. The Supporting Families Grant has been available to Local Authorities since 2011 (previously named The Troubled Families Supporting Families Grant).
- 1.2 The Supporting Families Programme has two key ambitions:
 - To see vulnerable families thrive, building their resilience by providing effective, whole family support to help prevent escalation into statutory services.
 - To drive system change locally and nationally, working with local authorities and their partners to create joined up local services, able to identify families in need, provide the right support at the right time, and track their outcomes in the long term.
- 1.3 The programme aims to have a positive impact for individual families, across public services and for the rest of society:
 - Families will be empowered to become resilient over time and build connections to their local community. Avoiding poor outcomes such as homelessness, family breakdown and children entering care, or involvement in crime, families will thrive.
 - Local services will be joined-up, flexible, responsive to new challenges and sustainable for the long term. Strong multi-agency partnerships will work together to understand local trends, predict emerging need in their local area, identify and respond to those needing extra help.
 - The benefits of this approach will be felt across society. The pressure on expensive reactive statutory services will reduce as the system begins to rebalance away from intervening at crisis point. This will help services to become more sustainable and allow them to intervene much earlier in the cycle, delivering better outcomes for families.
- 1.4 The Supporting Families Service was originally commissioned in July 2015 with Inspire Jigsaw homes being awarded the contract. The contract was due to expire in 31 March 2022 and so a full tender exercise commenced in 29 April 2022. A tender document was submitted via the chest on 31 May 2022 and following a preferred bidder process, Active Tameside was awarded with the tender following an evaluation process against the criteria published in the invitation to tender document. Active Tameside's contract commenced on 1 October 2022 and runs until 31 March 2025. An extension to Inspire's contract was made until Active Tameside could start the new contract and thus this contract extension with Inspire ran from 1 April 2022 until 30 September 2022 and this is when their contract ended.
- 1.5 During this time, the criteria set out by the Department for Housing, Levelling Up and Communities (DHLUC) for the use of The Supporting Families Grant was changed so this was considered in the service specification that was produced for the tender exercise.
- 1.6 Contract termination including TUPE transfer is 120 calendar days from date of written notification received by the provider – it is therefore anticipated that the provision will transfer in house no earlier than 1 November 2023.
- 1.7 During the notice period all identified equipment and assets will be returned to the Council. Additionally all data and intellectual property will also be transferred back to the council in accordance with audit and information governance regulations.
- 1.8 The specifics of the contract were that funding was to be used to provide 'The Supporting Families Services' where complex early help needs arise. The contract sets out an annual target that required the provider to work with 65 families in the first year, 130 in the second year and 130 in third year of the contract.

2. RATIONALE FOR SERVING NOTICE ON THE FAMILY INTERVENTION

- 2.1 Whilst the performance of the provider has been consistently good, there is a need to bring about a more joined up service that is in line with our overall improvement journey in Children's Services. A critical part of the improvement journey is the Early Help Transformation programme that has seen a new Thresholds Framework developed across the partnership; a refreshed Early Help Partnership and Strategy, and further investment in case work using the Supporting Families Grant, which has provided the opportunity to review the efficacy of the provided service particularly around management oversight of case work and value for money. Bringing the management of this service back into the local authority will provide the regular, operational oversight required to make further improvements in whole family support in Tameside.
- 2.2 The new Family Help Service is very much focussed on supporting the whole family network for as long as is needed to prevent their needs escalating with long term ambition for families to access universal services. The focus has shifted considerably from providing time-limited interventions to more longer-term support to prevent needs escalating leading to families requiring statutory services.
- 2.3 The new ways of working are already embedding and performance is improving steadily. It has also led to the planned co-location of Family Help Teams with Children's Social Care locality teams to enable the smooth transition of children and families between levels of threshold. This is done in real time by Team Managers from the respective teams on a weekly basis. This practice would require the staff employed by Active to be more integrated in these teams so that their cases can be regularly reviewed by Team Managers to ensure the families are getting the right support from the right place. This renewed focus on strengthened management oversight and the transition of cases between Family Help and Children's Social Care means all staff who are working directly with children and families need to be working together under single management arrangements. The transfer of this service back into Local Authority control will provide this robust oversight.

3. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 Within the Supporting families team at Active Tameside there are six members of staff:
1 x Practice Manager (seconded to 31/10/2023 from Local Authority)
5 x Family intervention workers.
- 3.2 From the TUPE transfers the Family Intervention workers would slot into Targeted Family Help teams within localities. The locality teams have a structured management team in place that would provide the appropriate management for these posts. On this basis, it is proposed that the secondment to the Practice Manager post is ceased in accordance with the contract end date, with due notice being provided to the employee as per clause 17 in the secondment agreement. The employee would return to their substantive post in TMBC's Children's Services.
- 3.3 The potential TUPE transfer would affect one Practice Manager and five Family Interventions Workers. The situation at present, is that one of the family intervention workers has secured a job outside of TMBC and is due to leave in August 2023, and another has secured a job within TMBC with an imminent start date. This would therefore reduce the number of Family Intervention Workers affected by the TUPE to three full time employees.
- 3.4 In accordance with TUPE requirements a full consultation process will be undertaken with the affected employees in scope of the transfer. TMBC would need to undertake a due diligence exercise to ascertain the T&C's of employment for those in scope of the transfer, assess any liability and/or risk and propose any appropriate measures upon transfer. For

example, proposed measures may include that transferring employees are enrolled into the Greater Manchester Pension Scheme, TMBC policies and procedures apply in the absence of any contractual policies/procedures, future NJC cost of living pay awards are applied and the pay day following transfer is the 15th of the month etc.,

- 3.5. TMBC will need to work closely with Active Tameside to ensure a smooth TUPE process for the affected employees and Children's Services will need to ensure the affected employees are supported in the service upon transfer to understand the organisation's culture, practices and procedures.

4. WHAT OUTCOMES ARE WE EXPECTING TO ACHIEVE:

- 4.1 By bringing this service back into Local Authority control, support for children and families will be more effectively monitored and the quality of provision routinely checked through existing management arrangements within the Family Help Service.
- 4.2 Performance improvements and challenges will be highlighted early so that plans to address any worries can be quickly implemented through existing structures without the need to wait for formal contract monitoring arrangements. Staff will also be able to access broader support from across Children's Services.
- 4.3 Children and families will receive a better quality of service that is in place for as long as is needed and should families require more intensive services, this can be accessed seamlessly and without the need for a lengthy transition to other services.
- 4.4 This transition will also result in more effective and efficient use of The Supporting Families Grant that is already monitored by the Assistant Director for Early Help and Partnerships without the need for additional management time to monitor the effectiveness and quality of an external contract.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 6.1 As set out on the front of the report.