



Report to:	CARE TOGETHER SINGLE COMMISSIONING BOARD
Date:	6 September 2016
Reporting Officer of Single Commissioning Board	Clare Watson, Director of Commissioning
Subject:	CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF INDEPENDENT SERVICES FOR TAMESIDE BIRTH PARENTS AND RELEVANT GRANDPARENTS
Report Summary:	To present a report outlining the statutory requirement for this service and seek authorisation to extend for a period of up to twelve months (effective from 1 September 2016) where there is provision to do so in the contract.
Recommendations:	That approval is given to extend the contract with Adoption Matters for a period of up to twelve month effective from 1 September 2016.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>The value of the proposed extension to the contract for a 12 month period from 1 September 2016) will be £ 0.015m.</p> <p>This will be a cost to the Childrens Service within the aligned budget of the Integrated Commissioning Fund (ICF).</p> <p>Single Commissioning Board members are reminded that the ICF currently has a projected total funding gap of £ 21.119m at 31 March 2017.</p> <p>It is therefore essential that proposals are implemented as a matter of urgency to reduce this projected gap for the 2016/17 financial year and on a recurrent basis thereafter.</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	The proposed extension was provided for within the procurement exercise and the contract. The extension would not constitute a material variation for the purposes of procurement legislation and therefore it is reasonable to extend the contract for a period of up to twelve months if this is expedient to service delivery.
How do proposals align with Health & Wellbeing Strategy?	The proposals align with the Starting Well, Developing Well and Living Well programmes for action
How do proposals align with Locality Plan?	The proposals are consistent with the Healthy Lives (early intervention and prevention) strand of the Locality Plan
How do proposals align with the Commissioning Strategy?	<p>The service contributes to the Commissioning Strategy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering citizens and communities; • Commission for the 'whole person'; • Create a proactive and holistic population health system.
Recommendations / views of the Professional Reference Group:	The Professional Reference Group and Single Commissioning Management Team have recommended this report go to the Single Commissioning Board.
Public and Patient Implications:	None

Quality Implications:	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council is subject to the duty of Best Value under the Local Government Act 1999, which requires it to achieve continuous improvement in the delivery of its functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
How do the proposals help to reduce health inequalities?	This service meets the Council's statutory requirement to provide independent services to Tameside Birth Parents and relevant Grandparents advocacy hence ensuring the Birth Parents voice is heard. The service will Provide a named support worker, supporting birth parents to participate in decisions about their child/ren and allowing birth parents to contribute to the making of plans for their future welfare.
What are the Equality and Diversity implications?	The proposal will not affect protected characteristic group(s) within the Equality Act.
What are the safeguarding implications?	Safeguarding is central to this service
What are the Information Governance implications? Has a privacy impact assessment been conducted?	The necessary protocols for the safe transfer and keeping of confidential information are maintained at all times by both purchaser and provider.
Risk Management:	The Council will work closely with the provider to manage and minimise any risk of provider failure consistent with the providers contingency plan
Access to Information :	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Nick Ellwood, Planning and Commissioning Officer:
	 Telephone: 07976931066
	 e-mail: nick.elwood@tameside.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under Regulation 14 of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005/389 made pursuant to the Adoption and Children Act 2002 an adoption agency is required to provide counselling and information for, and ascertain wishes and feelings of, the parent or guardian of the child and others.
- 1.2 Feedback from birth parents at the time the service was commissioned indicated that they would like a local service, or a service that is prepared to visit them in their own home, ideally independent of the Local Authority.
- 1.3 The current contract provided by Adoption Matters commenced on the 1 September 2014 and ends on 31 August 2016. The contract includes an option to extend for a further period of up to one year.
- 1.4 The purpose of the service is to provide support for birth parents, independent of the child's social worker from the time of adoption when identified as the plan (from the point of a best interest decision).

2. PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDER SEEKING TO WAIVE / AUTHORISATION TO PROCEED

- 2.1 Under Procurement Standing Order F1.3 permission must be sought to extend a contract even when the provision to extend is included within the contract.

3. VALUE OF CONTRACT

- 3.1 The value of the contract extension is £0.015 million. The annual contract price has remained the same for the past two years.

4. GROUNDS UPON WHICH WAIVER / AUTHORISATION TO PROCEED SOUGHT

- 4.1 Under Procurement Standing Order F1.3 permission must be sought to extend a contract even when the provision to extend is included within the contract.
- 4.2 Robust contract monitoring has been undertaken throughout the length of the contract. The report's author is satisfied that the service is being delivered to an excellent standard. Performance data received each quarter provides good evidence the service was meeting Children's Services objectives. For example :
- 4.3 During the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 the supplier has processed 31 Tameside enquiries to the Action line. Of the 31 enquiries:
 - Sixteen were from social workers, ten were self-referred, and four were referred by other professionals.
 - The enquiries/ referrals included those in relation to the following service users
Ten birth parents (current), seven adoptive families, one historical birth family, eight professionals (consultation/advice)
- 4.4 It should be noted that of the 31 enquiries during the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, 19 new cases were allocated to an adoption support worker. In addition to the 19 cases allocated a worker since 1 April 2015, the supplier has continued to support a further 16

individuals/ couples referred prior to that date, giving a total of 35 ongoing cases during the period. Of the service users supported during this financial year, 13 have received long term / intensive involvement. The contract appears approximately the correct size for level of demand in terms of total number of referrals and provides some capacity for flexibility.

4.5 The service is essential to ensure there is; intervention at an earlier stage with Birth Parents. One of the key benefits of the service is that the staff employed via this contract are experienced Social Workers independent of the Council. This has helped to build a more positive relationship with Birth Parents who otherwise might not engage with the Councils Social Workers due to their experience(s) in relation to the Adoption process.

4.6 The current service provider has shown a commitment to continually improving systems and service delivery to meet the needs of its service users:

4.7 The following options have been considered and discounted for the reasons stated below:-

- **End contract and amalgamate the service with other services/contracts.** Due to the specific nature of this service, it would be extremely difficult to undertake any form of amalgamation with other services/contracts as it was felt that the elements of the service could easily be consumed and the success of the service suffer as a result. It would be difficult to purchase the individual elements of the service for the financial commitment that is already provided by each area, as outlined above.
- **End contract and re-tender;** there is no guarantee that we would be able to find a successful tenderer to provide this service at the price that we currently invest. This course of action would not provide any added benefits to the Council, the service provider or the service users and may create a break in service provision for Birth Parents.
- **Extend contract on renegotiated terms;** the current contract price is very low in terms of the significance of this work to Birth Parent and reflects value for money. To reduce the current contract price would seriously jeopardise the service as the supplier would find it difficult to deliver the same levels of support. The purchaser and supplier agree that the current funding levels meet the required demand for Birth Parent support in Tameside.
- **Extend contract on current terms;** based on the positive performance during this contract to date. This is the preferred option.

5. REASON WHY USUAL REQUIREMENTS OF PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS NEED NOT BE COMPLIED WITH BUT BEST VALUE AND PROBITY STILL ACHIEVED :

5.1 The Procurement Standing Orders are being complied with. Under Procurement Standing Order F1.3 permission must be sought to extend a contract even when the provision to extend is included within the contract.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 As stated on the report cover.

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