



Supporting Families Service

Commissioning Plan

November 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This plan outlines the commissioning model for a future family support service. It is part of a wider move towards greater integration around support to children, young people and families across the city. Bristol City Council is moving towards a much more integrated way of working with children, young people and families of all ages and we see these services as a key part of this.
- 1.2. The service outlined in this plan represents a small part of what's on offer for children, young people and families across Bristol. Much of the work in Bristol is undertaken by voluntary organisations and community groups. Against this diverse backdrop we want this new contract to help foster an environment where organisations are able to work together to provide the things that children, young people and their families need.
- 1.3. This commissioning process sits with the Bristol Children and Families Partnership Board and the priorities are drawn from the recently published strategy. [The Bristol Strategy for Children, Young People and Families 2016 – 2020](#) sets out the priorities that the Children and Families Partnership has agreed as the focus of our joint work for the next four years. As such Bristol will:
 - Work to a clear model of support, from universal to specific, from self-help to continuing support to promote prevention and early intervention.
 - Think Family and work proactively with them to find lasting solutions, particularly where there are multiple co-existing problems.
 - Promote a culture of evidence based practice across the Children and Families Partnership and strengthen cost effective prevention and early intervention programmes.
- 1.4. Cost benefit of early intervention – Research in Practice's leaders' briefing "How do you know if your Early Help services are working?" 2016 states:

As local authority resources reduce, abandoning early help to focus only on providing statutory services is not a rational option. Late intervention is much more costly than effective early help; the Early Intervention Foundation (Chowdry and Oppenheim, 2015) estimated the fiscal cost of late intervention in the UK as £16.6 billion a year.

- 1.5. Throughout the duration of the current contract, Bristol City Council commissioners have worked with internal Early Help service managers and Supporting Families Service providers to monitor performance and help shape a successful Think Family model based on 'one worker, one family, one plan.' The key lessons learnt have informed what the Council wants to achieve with this contract.
- 1.6. The key purpose is to adopt a whole family worker approach to empower families with complex needs to achieve positive, measureable and sustainable outcomes through high challenge and intensive support as part of tailored, coordinated and integrated multi-agency whole family partnership activity. (Early Intervention Foundation, 2017)

2. Think Family Model

- 2.1. Think Family is a whole family worker model of support that aims to meet the full range of needs within each family by working with families and help strengthen their ability to care and support one another. The model aims to identify families at risk of poor outcomes to provide support at the earliest opportunity and to prevent problems escalating.

2.2. Three ways of working

- ❖ Using Signs of Safety methodology to build on the strengths of people and communities.

Building on strengths or using 'asset based' approaches provides a different way of thinking about the role of individuals, communities and organisations in creating vibrant, prosperous and inclusive communities. It is about creating the right conditions where communities can do things for themselves, where people can get help when they need it and where they need help to live their lives from outside agencies, they are empowered to shape and influence how that works.

- ❖ Relationship-based approach with families including restorative practice to decrease crime and antisocial behaviour, repair harm and restore relationships.

We want the Supporting Families Service provider to tell us about their underpinning values and principles and how they help build relationships within the service, with external organisations, families and communities to have better understanding and awareness of each other.

- ❖ Helping people to help themselves and each other to achieve significant and sustainable outcomes with employment as an ambition for all.

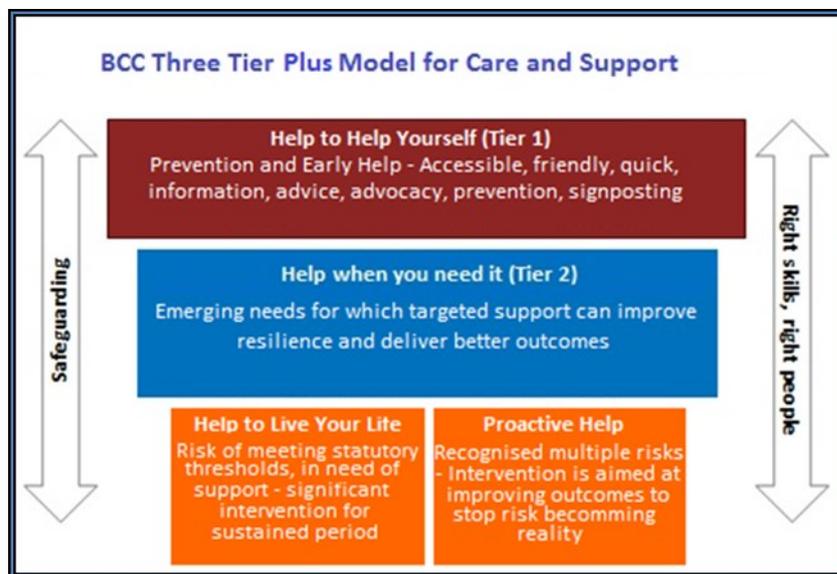
Our aim is to build resilience for individual, families and communities. By this we mean that we want people to be helped or empowered to build their skills, confidence, networks and optimism so that they are more able to manage the pressures, changes and stresses and weather difficult times together.

2.3. **In addition, the new service provider will be expected to use evidenced informed practice with children and families, drawing on three sources of evidence:**

1. Professional judgement from experience
2. Relevant evidence from policy and research
3. Service-user views (Broome, 2014)

2.4. Bristol City Council has adopted a 3 tier model for care and support which we are applying across our work. This service is considered to be Help to Live Your Life (Tier 3).

2.5. We aim to build resilience in all our citizens in all the services we provide. We believe a resilient city is one where people are able to help themselves and help one another. However we also recognise that people need significant intervention to prevent risks escalating and this is where we see this targeted family support service. In the model shown you will also see Proactive Help; this reflects our commitment to using our knowledge and evidence to reach out to people early. With this in mind we are looking for proactive engagement from our family support services.



2.6. The Bristol Think Family Programme has embraced service transformation both in front line work and in developing IT systems to enable families to be supported more effectively. The Insight Bristol team is the name given to our multi-agency analytical hub. This is primarily a partnership between Bristol City Council and Avon and Somerset Constabulary; however we also have staff from the Youth Offending Team and Department for Work and Pensions. One of our key assets is our Think Family Database. This data warehouse draws together information from 30 data sources, covering

54,000 families in the local authority area. Data is matched together to give us the best understanding of the issues facing families in the city that we have ever had. This database is updated weekly to ensure data is relevant and up to date. The data informs our work with families, targeting support at those in most need and enables our predictive modelling capabilities.

2.7. In particular our targeted family support service will need to work with priority groups, which includes families with children:

- On the edge of care
- Missing from education
- At risk of entering the criminal justice system
- At risk of youth homelessness
- Considered to be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation

And families

- With adults with poor mental health
- Experiencing domestic violence and abuse or family conflict
- Who are homeless, with poor housing or at risk of being homeless

2.8. The new service would allow us to develop a more targeted approach; including evaluating the effectiveness of our predictive analytics work as an early intervention strategy. It also provides significant opportunity going forward to bid for government and external funding to develop the approach of using predictive analytics. Referrals may also come via Early Help, Safe Choices or the Youth Offending Team and will be agreed when contract awarded.

3. Overview of Currently Commissioned Supporting Families Services

3.1. At present our externally commissioned Supporting Families Services are provided under three contracts by Action for Children in North and East Central (two contracts) and Barnardo's in South (one contract). All three contracts commenced on 1 July 2013 and will expire on 31 March 2018 with no extension clauses available. The combined annual contract value across the three services is £681k per annum.

3.2. The Supporting Families Service (SFS) has skilled, experienced engagement workers who have the ability to actively engage families who might be resistant to support and helps them reduce identified risks and overcome specific barriers. Staff are able to support an ethnically diverse population, including those with English as an Additional Language.

3.3. The service provides targeted whole family support for around 200 families a year. They receive their referrals from Bristol City Council's Early Help teams to support families to meet specific identified needs. A lead practitioner will carry out a thorough assessment of the issues a family is facing, and works with families to identify shared goals and formulate a plan with reference to [Bristol's Family Outcome Plan](#). The lead practitioner coordinates integrated service delivery using evidence-based or evidence informed techniques and practices.

3.4. **Early Help performance**

Early Help services across the piece have demonstrated good value for money and have been effective in delivering change for families. In 2016/17, 1272 families were worked with and 190 of them demonstrated that they had no reoccurrence of any of the social issues that caused them to be worked with in the first instance, this includes no youth crime, improved school attendance, improved health, reduced antisocial behaviour and violence in the home, positive outcomes towards work and gaining employment. In addition 297 further families demonstrated significant improvement held over a sustained period of time. 80% of the families once completing their support package did not access the service again within 12 months or any higher level service. The performance of the Supporting Families Service has been quality assured and monitored by Commissioners.

3.5. **Improvements to the current SFS model**

We have added some improvements to the original specification; in particular to:

- **Strengthen the importance of appropriate skills, values and experience of staff**; we want high levels of skill and a commitment to shared principles and values.
- **Have a clearer understanding of thresholds and the provider's responsibility to work with families who meet the criteria for a service**. We have worked with providers to support them to accept more complex referrals to suit a changing requirement from the Local Authority as the needs of families get more complex and challenging, and the council reduce staff and services (the previous specification talks about 'emerging needs' of families as opposed to those at the edge of care or who have had statutory involvement which has often been the case with the majority of cases referred).¹
- **Work with partners in Bristol to develop and communicate consistent and clear messages, including managing people's expectations about what services are available**. Parents have told us that when they asked for help their referrer couldn't always tell them what was on offer and what to expect.
- **Work more proactively to identify and support families**. There have been a lower number of referrals in the East Central area of Bristol than anticipated and there can be delays with referrals from our in-house

¹ [Thresholds Guidance 2014](#)

teams. As the referral route for a service has been referral only, the service provider has not been able to achieve their targets for this area. A new specification would include proactive referrals who meet the specification criteria to mitigate this problem and put the onus on the service provider to engage families not asking for a service but whom we would consider could benefit from the help.

- **Adopt a city wide approach;** Bristol is experiencing a rising population at a time when our budgets are decreasing. There also needs to be more flexibility to respond quickly to emerging needs. A city wide service should increase consistency, lower overheads but also create a much more flexible service that can respond to needs so that workers can go anywhere.

3.6. To make these improvements we will be procuring as one contract rather than three. Therefore we are not consulting on the decision to procure as one contract, but would be asking people for their views on how to manage this process and mitigate any potential risks.

4. **Consultation**

4.1. The consultation period for this draft commissioning plan was eight weeks which is shorter than the advised twelve week period set out in the Bristol Compact. This was due to the fact that the market analysis suggested that there was unlikely to be a huge amount of interest in a contract which will be commissioned for a short time period of one year. Voscur was consulted and supported our decision which also leaves longer for a tender period. We consulted on the key issues that affect the new contract's specification.

4.2. **Feedback from consultation**

Early discussions with providers and internal early help provision to help develop this commissioning plan have been:

- Work closely with partners; especially schools, children's centres and social care
- Don't duplicate work
- Importance of training and development for the workforce²
- Involve children and young people and their families
- Focus on early intervention and prevention
- Commitment to equality and diversity in services

Feedback from the 8 week consultation has been incorporated in this plan. A consultation report can be found with this report.

4.3. **Service user feedback**

Quarterly reports from the providers highlight service user feedback which is almost unanimously positive, but regretting the end of the service! During the consultation period we talked to two groups of parents receiving an Early Help service in Southmead and Hartcliffe to gather their views and consider their opinions related to early help services.

² JSNA action plan linked to recommendations found in Bristol JSNA Chapter 2016-17 [Young People and Substance Misuse](#)

5. The Future of Targeted Family Services in Bristol

5.1. We have a clear ambition to develop our partnership working to improve efficiency and value for money and look at ways public services are delivered. In order to identify areas of strength and areas to develop we are using a self-assessment tool³ to identify areas we can improve to maximise the reward.

- ▶ Public sector reform is about new ways of working that can unlock and unleash the potential and capacity of families
- ▶ It is about being **person led** rather than **process** or **system led**
- ▶ Practice that focuses on single service solutions has to change to be more integrated in true partnership working
- ▶ A behavioural approach that encourages engagement and resourcefulness, resilience and independence within families

5.2. The commissioning plan aims to achieve services that:

- Align with other support for children, young people and families across the city, championing early intervention and whole family working.
- Are inclusive, promoting equalities work and ensuring provision is accessible to all children and young people
- Are engaging but that also build resilience and promote self help
- Collaborate to provide a diverse offer and make the best use of resources
- Specifically target support
- Show best practice and place emphasis on securing provision that continually seeks to improve itself
- Deliver evidence based or informed interventions and support
- Offer the opportunity for learning and skills development
- Deliver value for money (economic, efficient and effective services)
- Are flexible to meet changing needs in areas or emerging issues
- Have a clear commitment to include the voice of children and young people and their families in service design, delivery and increased involvement in the democratic process
- Provide information, advice and guidance and opportunities for personal challenge and growth

6. Outcomes

6.1. The service will combine an assessment of needs completed by a whole family support worker who will engage all family members in identifying goals, assessing options, making decisions and reviewing outcomes. They will use evidenced informed approaches and data driven planning with the help of the Think Family database to achieve outcomes from the Family

³ [Model and toolkit \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Outcomes Plan, and we will determine some more specific outputs and deliverables for the contracts to measure their success.

7. Measuring Success for Different Services

7.1. In order to measure the success of the contracts, in addition to individual outcomes of individual's and family achievements, we will seek:

- Evidence of whole family engagement in assessment and action plan
- Evidence of outcomes achieved during or within 6 months of case closure (where these can be monitored remotely)
- No re-referral to Children's Services
- Feedback from service users (via satisfaction surveys) which leads to service development
- Evidence of quality assurance by provider
- Regular evaluation through quarterly monitoring (including learning from case studies)

We will also seek a number of output measures:

- Number of proactive referrals per year.
- Number of referrals received from Early Help per year.
- Number of families engaged and assessments completed per year.
- % of SAFs completed within 30 working days of case allocation.
- Number of families closed and action plan completed.
- Number of families who are stepped up to social care.
- Report on reasons for non-engagement of families.
- Numbers of children, young people and adults who are provided with a family based approach to improve family functioning, or individual therapeutic interventions.

8. Expected Numbers and Demand

8.1. We want to apply a preventative approach across a range of needs where our local data indicates early intervention could prevent further risk or an escalation of problems.⁴ The provider will need to focus on priority families that are considered to be at risk of poor outcomes and attract families who don't normally engage well with services.

⁴ [Joint Strategic Needs Analysis for Bristol](#)

- 8.2. The provider will be expected to engage and work with approximately 70 families a year for 4 – 6 months who are considered most at risk or who have been referred from Early Help.
- 8.3. Some areas of the city need more help than others. The largest numbers of families with two or more headline problems live in South Bristol which correlates to the areas of deprivation that exist in the city.

9. Contract Options for Consultation

- 9.1. Any future Supporting Families service providers will work within a new 'Strengthening Families' model. The plans are in development and will be shared and implemented in 2018. The new provider will need to work within this new model.
- 9.2. An office base for this new service will be negotiated with the successful provider; the service may be co-located with area-based Early Help services or located within the provider's own premises. This is to be negotiated, for the purposes of the budget submission we would request Provider(s) give an assumed cost, however we will have discussions around opportunities for co-location with successful Providers. If based in separate premises there would need to be frequent contact with the Early Help team.

10. Expected standards and qualifications

- 10.1. The key purpose of the service is to use a 'key worker' approach based on empowering families with complex needs to achieve positive, measurable and sustainable outcomes through high challenge and intensive support as part of a tailored, coordinated and integrated multi-agency and whole family partnership activity.
- 10.2. In order to create a service that has an appropriate mix of skills and professionals to meet the targeted support needs of children and young people and their families, we suggest that providers will need to recruit family support workers or key workers with case-holding experience and skills and values in line with the principles and values outlined in the [Troubled Families Practitioner Functional Map](#) and with the skills and abilities outlined in each strand. Practitioners will need to be able to analyse and record at level 4 and supervisors lead and manage at level 5.

11. Procurement method

- 11.1. The council will conduct an open tender process to appoint one provider or consortia to deliver the contract. As the estimated contract value falls below the Light Touch Regime threshold the rules of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 are not applicable thus we are not required to advertise

opportunity in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) which advertises the opportunity across the EU.

11.2. The tender process will assess a bidder's ability to deliver the contract and questions will be proportionate to the contract value. The opportunity will be advertised on the Councils e-tendering system ProContract. In order to view and complete tender submission all bidders first need to register on the portal: - <https://procontract.due-north.com>

11.3. Following consultation further detail on the contract and the bidding process will be available for prospective bidders.

12. Funding

12.1. The funds for this work are for one year with an option to extend for a further year at an annual value of £244,000.

Year One	£244,000
Year Two	£244,000
Total	£488,000

The current contract amounts to £2,960 per family. The new contract amounts to £3,485 per family.

13. Purchasing

13.1. The Council intends to commission a one year with an option to extend a further year service. A one stage tender process will be conducted, i.e. any organisation can respond to the advert and submit a tender. The providers' will be screened for minimum suitability to deliver the contract and evaluated on the basis of Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT), which will be based on a quality and price ratio.

14. Social Value and Added Value

14.1. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 places a duty on authorities to consider in their procurement and commissioning processes how public contracts can create wider social, environmental and economic value for the community they serve. In line with our Social Value Policy we are committed to working with stakeholders to explore how the opportunities described in this document could best be designed to maximise social value, deliver better outcomes and to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way and in the best interests of the City's residents.

14.2. In the current climate with pressure on budgets, providers may need to consider how they could get best value from the Council's investment, requiring enterprising and innovative thinking.

14.3. We will be looking for additional social benefits within our tender; in particular peer support or volunteering opportunities.

15. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) and Implementation

15.1. Due to the re-commissioning of like for like services, TUPE will apply. Therefore basic TUPE information will be obtained prior to the tender process to assist potential bidders in determining if this is applicable. Sufficient time will be given as part of the implementation period to ensure a smooth transfer of staff. Consequently a 4 week implementation period is factored into the project plan to allow sufficient time for staff transfers.

15.2. As highlighted above TUPE is likely to apply thus a 4 week implementation period will be factored in following contract award to allow sufficient time for staff transfers. This period will also ensure sufficient time is allocated for service user transfer and that the transition can be appropriately managed.

16. Planned Payment Methods

16.1. The Provider shall invoice the Authority for payment of the Charges at the end of each quarter. The Authority shall pay the Provider any sums due under such an invoice no later than a period of 30 days from the date on which the Authority has determined that the invoice is valid and undisputed.

17. Estimated Timeline for Tender Process

This is an estimated timeline and may be subject to change.

Activity	Date
Advertise tender - 6 weeks	7th December 2017 – 18 th January 2018
Evaluate tenders	Completed evaluations 26 th January 2018
Award contract	12 th February 2018
Implement contract	March 2018

18. Future Documentation

The consultation report and final commissioning plan are here. The following documents will now be produced:

- Service Specification
- Tender

19. Other related plans which have informed the development of this plan are:

19.1. Targeted Youth Services <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/tenders-contracts/recommissioning-bristol-youth-links>

19.2. Homelessness prevention services <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/housing/commissioning-homelessness-prevention-services>

19.3. [Bristol's Corporate Strategy 2017-2022](#) (page 53) states that in order to support our early intervention strategy we need “families to access a range of support (With) Partners work(ing) together with the council to provide the help and support needed. A well-resourced, voluntary sector supports this. “Together we will work across the life course with the citizens of Bristol and our partners to make the best use of resources to deliver the greatest impact by:

- Getting involved early to reduce risks later –early intervention reduces the impact of problems later on.
- Promoting independence – supporting people to live as independently as possible in their community.
- Safeguarding the most vulnerable – fulfilling the statutory responsibility of the city to protect vulnerable children and safeguard adults.
- Leading and championing learning and skills – keeping Bristol working and learning.”