

Divisions Affected – N/A

**DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN,
EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES**

10 April 2024

**COMMISSION AND PROCURE
THE FAMILY SOLUTIONS PLUS MODEL
DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE - ADULT FACING PRACTITIONERS**

AND

**EXTEND THE EXISTING CONTRACT
THE FAMILY SOLUTIONS PLUS MODEL
SUBSTANCE USE SERVICE - ADULT FACING PRACTITIONERS**

Report by Corporate Director of Childrens Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Agree the commissioning and procurement of the Family Solution Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse Adult Facing Practitioner service and to Award Contract.**
- b) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Procurement and Contract Management, to award a Contract with a value of up to £805,568 per annum for the Domestic Abuse Adult Facing Practitioner service for a term of 3 years and 5 months following a successful procurement process.**
- c) Agree the extension to Contract for the Family Solution Plus Model for the Substance Use Adult Facing Practitioner service, via the Public Health Community Alcohol and Drug Service Core Contract with Turning Point for a term of 3 years and 8 months with a value of £517,344.**
- d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Head of Procurement and Contract Management, to finalise the required Contract documentation for the extension of the Family Solution Plus Model for the Substance Use Adult Facing Practitioner service.**

Executive Summary

2. The Family Safeguarding Plus Model is designed to provide rapid, proactive support and intervention to children and their families impacted by domestic abuse, substance use and mental health. It is delivered by small multiagency teams who are trained in a range of highly effective interventions to address the complexity of the impact of the three vulnerabilities.

3. Deployment of the Family Safeguarding Plus Model, with its multi-disciplinary joint children's and adult team specialists, is required to enhance the support to adults and children for statutory children's social care work. The model operates to reduce the number of children subject to statutory intervention and offers an Adult Facing Practitioner service that provides specialist advocates responsible for supporting parents/carers with maximum impact and reach and aims to increase the pace and sustainability of parental change.

4. This report sets out the recommendation to re-procure the Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service and to extend the Contractual arrangements for the Family Solutions Plus Model for the Substance Use service to align each of these services with the core Public Health commissioned Oxfordshire Community Alcohol and Drug Service Contract.

Background

The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service:

5. Following the Directors Leadership Team (DLT) meeting 11th January 2024 Oxfordshire County Council agreed to re-commission the existing Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service. It was agreed to re-commission the service with a similar service specification and with an increased Contract value to take into account inflation and to increase the Adult Facing Practitioner capacity for both victim and perpetrator support.

6. The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service will offer an Adult Facing Practitioner service to provide a treatment intervention programme for low to medium level risk perpetrators and focused support to victims-survivors of domestic abuse, to protect and support children from the harmful impact of abuse.

7. The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service will replicate the leading Hertfordshire County Council Family Safeguarding Model and support service demand within Oxfordshire. This is with the clear definition that the model focuses on low to medium level risk perpetrators and with high level risk perpetrators being supported by statutory services: Police and Crime Commissioner through the DRIVE program (Thames Valley Police) and Probation.

8. The new Contract for the Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service will fall within the existing pro-rata Childrens Social Care budget of £805,568, which is inclusive of the pre-determined inflation and service on-costs. The Contract value will support the current capacity issues to achieve 8.5 FTE Adult Facing

Practitioner for Victims-Survivors support and 8.5 FTE Adult Facing Practitioner for Low-Medium Risk Level Perpetrators support.

The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Substance Use service:

9. Following the Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) meeting 11th January 2024 Oxfordshire County Council agreed to extend the existing Contractual arrangements for the Family Solutions Plus Model for the Substance Use service with the incumbent Service Provider: Turning Point.

10. The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Substance Use service will continue to provide a vast range of intervention and support options tailored to meet the holistic needs of individuals who are a parent or have parental responsibility. The model will provide a service with enhanced and specific parent and carer support, that links into the Family Solutions Plus services. Each quarter the Substance Use FSP service completes over 500 home visits, more than 800 1-2-1 sessions with parents, 750+ drug tests and attends over 200 core groups.

11. The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Substance Use service is part of the core Public Health commissioned Oxfordshire Adult Community Alcohol and Drug Service Contract. The core service contract includes delivery of the FSP service under an 'Optional Additional Services' clause that enables Oxfordshire County Council to require the delivery of the service according to the financial schedule in place.

12. The Contract extension for the Substance Use service will be inclusive of the pre-determined inflation and service on-costs. The Contract value of £517,334 will support the current capacity issues to achieve 8.5 Adult Facing Practitioners support together with a team leader and 0.2 Manager, and in turn will replicate the Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding Model. This contract value also includes the provision of consumable costs associated with service delivery, including items such as drug testing costs.

13. The proposal is for each of the two Contracts to align with the core Public Health Service:

- The new Contract for the Family Safeguarding Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service for a term of 3 years and 5 months to commence 1st November 2024.
- The Contract extension for the Family Safeguarding Plus Model for the Substance Use service for a term of 3 years and 8 months to commence 1st August 2024.

The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Mental Health service:

14. Following the Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) meeting 11th January 2024 Oxfordshire County Council agreed to decommission the existing Contractual arrangements for the Family Solutions Plus Model for the Mental Health Service service with the incumbent Service Provider: Oxfordshire MIND when the contract expires on the 31st July 2024. Subject to due process and any necessary approvals the service will be bought in-house and run by the OCC Clinical Psychology Team as

there was clear evidence the parents of families who's children either were on a Child Protection or Child in Need plan required clinical interventions to address their mental health needs. The contract with Oxfordshire MIND does not provide clinical interventions and Oxfordshire County Council already have Clinical Psychologists supporting families within the FSP service. Therefore the decision was made to increase the capacity of the in-house clinical team which also replicates the leading FSP model commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council.

Key Issues

15. Oxfordshire County Council did not fully implement the Hertfordshire County Council Family Safeguarding Model when it was first introduced to Oxfordshire County Council. The Council recognise the need to reinvigorate our whole approach and the need for closer fidelity to the model to bring it in line with the national developments of the Family Safeguarding approach and ensure that we deploy best practice, including using clinical interventions when engaging with families.

16. Oxfordshire County Council carried out a strategic review of the Oxfordshire Family Solutions Plus Model. A comparison was made between the Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding Model and the Oxfordshire Family Solution Plus Model.

17. It was concluded that the Family Solution Plus Model for the Substance Use service delivered by Turning Point meets national developments and is performing well.

18. It was concluded that the Family Solution Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service was not performing in line with the Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding Plus Model, due to capacity issues within the contract.

19. The Oxfordshire Family Solution Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service currently operates with fewer Adult Facing Practitioners to support victims-survivors and low to medium level risk perpetrators and risks impacting increased demand on Oxfordshire statutory Childrens Social Care services.

20. The Oxfordshire Family Solution Plus Model for Domestic Abuse has pockets of good practice, however, there are areas that require improvement. For example, the use of the Workbook, the supervision approach and ensuring all staff are trained in Motivational Interviewing (MI) and embedding this approach into their practice. These are fundamental to bring Oxfordshire's model in line with national developments and the Family Solutions approach. In addition, Oxfordshire requires more of a robust and automated way of tracking outcomes of children and their families that have had FSP involvement to clearly demonstrate the interventions undertaken and the outcomes achieved.

Procurement Process

The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service:

21. Procurement will undertake a procurement exercise to re-procure the Family Solution Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse Adult Facing Practitioner Service. Publication of an Invite to Tender will be submitted to the open market for potential new providers to submit their bids.

22. The re-procurement of the Family Solution Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse Adult Facing Practitioner Service will factor in a suitable evaluation and moderation period, retaining the independent Cabinet date of 10 April 2024, DLT/Director approval to Award Contract 28th June 2024 and a mobilisation period (encompassing TUPE) of 87 days.

23. Once bids are received and the mandatory criteria met, qualified (those with the technical capability for the services being procured) evaluators will review and score the bids. The Service Provider that meets the quality and price thresholds and satisfies the Council will be Awarded Contract to deliver the new service from the commencement date 1st November 2024.

The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Substance Use service:

24. Commissioners will undertake work alongside Public Health, Legal and Procurement to extend the current Contractual arrangements with the incumbent Service Provider, Turning Point, ensuring that new Provider Selection Regime requirements are met.

The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Mental Health service:

25. Commissioners have formally notified the current provider: Oxfordshire MIND of the decision to decommission the service on the 31st July 2024. Commissioners are working with the in-house clinical psychology team to implement the new service for 1st August 2024.

Economic and Financial Standing

26. All Domestic Abuse providers will need to complete Dun and Bradstreet credit report checks and an evaluation of Economic and Financial Standing before being awarded a contract.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

27. The re-tender of the Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service and the extension of contractual arrangements for the Family Solutions Plus Model for the Substance Use service incorporates three of the key priorities set out by the Start Well Commissioning Team and aligns with four of the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, as below:

Priorities of the Start Well Commissioning Team

- Early intervention and prevention support to prevent children going into crisis.

- Improve access to services to reduce inequality.
- Support carers and parents to support children to thrive.

Priorities of the Corporate Plan.

- Priority 2 – Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
- Priority 3 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Priority 7 - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
- Priority 9 - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefits.

28. To achieve the priorities set out above and to address the gaps identified in the Sufficiency Strategy, the Start Well HESC team are working with operational colleagues in Health, Social Care and Education on the following:

- OCC will work positively and collaboratively with existing and potential providers to develop a range of appropriate provision to meet the needs of Oxfordshire’s children within County (ensuring access to services, continuity of schooling, maintenance of support networks).
- OCC will share what we are learning about our children’s needs and features through the Valuing Care needs assessment tool, to identify what is needed from the local market to support those needs and that the needs assessment tool needs updating more regularly following the original placement request.

Vision and Strategic Objectives

29. The Oxfordshire Children and Young People’s Plan (2018-2023)¹ outlines a vision to make Oxfordshire a great place for children and young people to grow up in and to have the opportunity to become everything they want to be. To achieve this, our strategic objectives are:

<p>Be Successful To ensure children have the best start in life; ensure they have access to high quality education, employment and motivational training; go to school feeling inspired to stay and learn; and have good self-esteem and faith in themselves.</p>	<p>Be Happy and Healthy Services are available to promote good health and prevent ill health; learn the importance of healthy, secure relationships and having a support network; have access to services to improve overall wellbeing, and easy ways to get active.</p>
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¹ [Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan](#)

Financial Implications

30. Sustainable funding for the Family Solution Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse and Substance Use service is required to achieve service continuity and to provide focused support to families to reduce demand across Childrens Social Care.

31. Restriction to or a reduction to the required funding for Domestic Abuse re-tender and the Substance Use Contract extension would prevent Oxfordshire County Council from deploying a full comparative model that offers close fidelity to the intended Family Safeguarding Plus Model, that we believe Oxfordshire County Council wish to adopt.

32. Limitations to increased resource would result in disproportionate Adult Facing Practitioners vs service demands, and thus Adult Facing Practitioner interventions could not be increased to an adequate level, in turn interventions could not be fully integrated into plans for children and young people.

33. The Supporting Families funding currently supports FSP services and is due to end in 2025. There is no indication from the Government that this funding will be replaced. The contribution from the Public Health reserve is due to end in March 2025 (£0.300m in 2023/24 and £0.200m in 2024/25).

34. DLT approved the new FSP Model including the plan proposed by the Finance Business Partner to cover the additional cost by increasing the Budget by a combination of:

- In 2024/25, fund the £596k total additional cost pressure for all three services by virement from the Contract Uplift provision.
- Potential loss of funding of £400k in 2025/26 (Supported People Grant, £200k and Public Health Funding, £200k). Children's Services plan to explore options to invest in these services with statutory partners such as Public Health, the BOB ICB, Police and Probation. This combined model of funding is evidenced in other LA FSP models such as Hertfordshire, West Berkshire and West Sussex.

Comments checked by: Thomas James, Head of Finance Business Partnering (Thomas.James@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Legal Implications

35. The Council's powers and duties to engage in these activities are set out at Part III of the National Assistance Act 1948, the Care Act 2014, the Children and Families Act 2017 and the Children Act 1989.

36. The Council will conduct a fair and transparent competitive procurement process for the provision of the services, in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended).

37. The Council will ensure that the extension to the Turning Point contractual arrangements meet the Provider Selection Regime requirements that came into force on 1 January 2024.

Comments checked by: Jayne Pringle, Head of Law and LBP Contracts and Conveyance (Jayne.Pringle@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Staff Implications

The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse service:

38. The successful bidder for the Family Solutions Plus Model for the Domestic Abuse Adult Facing Practitioner Service will progress their responsibility for the TUPE management arrangements, through the mobilisation stage of the implementation period.

The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Substance Use service:

39. Approval of the recommendation to extend the Contractual arrangements for the Family Solutions Plus Model for the Substance Use Adult Facing Practitioner Service will provide the incumbent Service Provider, Turning Point, with a longer period of employment security for the remainder of the contract period with Public Health. This would further secure resource expertise. The National Benchmarking exercise completed by Public Health reported that the Substance Use Provider, Turning Point, in Oxfordshire have one of the lowest staff turnover rates in the sector, and the Provider reports that Oxfordshire Turning Point staff have the highest satisfaction score across the organisation.

40. In addition, the alcohol and drug treatment outcomes for the Oxfordshire Turning Point service are the highest in our Local Outcome Comparator group of similar LAs and amongst the best in the country.

The Family Solutions Plus Model for the Mental Health service:

41. The mental health FSP service is working with The Council on their exit strategy. The Lead Clinical Psychologist is beginning the recruitment process for the additional staff required to expand the service.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

42. The approved service Specifications have been diligently prepared for the specific needs of parents/carers impacted by domestic abuse and/or substance use.

43. The expectation of Service Providers is to deliver person centred support which ensures:

- Provision of experienced and skilled Adult Facing Practitioners to work with parent/carers and their families experiencing parental conflict.

- Specialist support for parents/carers experiencing domestic abuse and/or substance use issues.
- Adult Facing Practitioners work within the council's multi-disciplinary Children's Social Care team and are co-located across the 17 Oxfordshire locality teams.
- Provision of high-quality interventions, support, and safety planning, to the person who is at risk of, or a victim-survivor of, domestic abuse and/or to the person who is impacted by substance use issues.
- Inclusive and delivered in a sensitive way which considers individual needs in respect of age, gender, ethnic origin, language, culture, spirituality, religion or faith, sexuality, gender identity or disability.
- The root cause and triggers of children's safeguarding are addressed, and early help and meaningful interventions are provided when required.
- Improved family experience and outcomes from statutory intervention.

44. The approved Provider evaluation process includes the requirement for Service Providers to have an Equalities Policy. In accordance with the requirements of the ITT documentation, all successful Providers must self-certify that their organisation has an active Equality & Diversity Policy in keeping with the Equality Act 2010. All Providers must also self-certify that their organisation has no court, industrial or employment tribunal cases brought against them regarding unlawful discrimination within the last 3 years. In addition, the Quality & Improvement Team will carry out regular monitoring of services and include equality items in their reviews.

45. Public Health officers have completed a climate and equality impact assessment for the core Community and Drug Service contract including FSP since the contract was originally awarded and commenced in April 2020 and no evidence has been identified to suggest that by the Council approving the recommendation to extend the Contract this will lead to a negative impact on the community, environment, or its strategic partners within Oxfordshire.

46. The benefits to the Council in approving the extension to Contract will provide a continuity of support to individuals accessing the service and eliminate any potential service gaps.

Sustainability Implications

47. The Domestic Abuse evaluation process includes mandatory disclosure from providers to answer questions regarding their environmental management as well as that of their sub-contractors. At present a Climate / Environmental Policy is not required by providers. All successful providers self-certified that their organisation had no prior convictions of breaching environmental legislation, or had any notice served upon it within the last 3 years by any environmental regulator or authority.

48. These sustainability checks were also completed for the substance use contract provider Turning Point when the contract was awarded in early 2020.

49. Recruitment for all Adult Facing Practitioners mostly attracts a local workforce,

therefore limiting the amount of extensive travel time.

50. In line with the Council's policy, all Adult Facing Practitioners delivering the service will travel to the parents/carers home for 'home visits' reducing the need for parent/carers having to travel.

Risk Management

51. The Family Solution Plus Model review of the Adult Facing Practitioner service concluded that the Oxfordshire model did not deliver best practice in all areas and there was a requirement to reinvigorate our approach to bring the model in line with the fidelity of the Hertfordshire Family Safeguarding Plus Model.

52. The proposed approach is fundamental to bring Oxfordshire's model in line with national developments and the Family Safeguarding Plus Model. This will secure service continuity and provide support to new parents/carers who are impacted by domestic abuse and/or substance use issues.

53. The extension of contractual arrangements for the Family Solution Plus Model within the Substance Use service will provide stability and continued evidence-based outcomes to parents/carers and their children. This would mitigate against the need to resource a re-tender and offer the potential to secure continued funding for the service. There is a requirement to increase the Contract value to maintain the model and acquire the full 8.5 WTE Adult Facing Practitioners, and to be inclusive of consumable costs.

54. The Oxfordshire Family Solution Plus Model for Domestic Abuse delivers good practice in areas, however, there are areas that require improvement. The service currently operates with fewer Adult Facing Practitioners to support victims-survivors and low to medium level risk perpetrators and risks impacting increased demand on Oxfordshire statutory Childrens Social Care services. The proposed model will provide improved sustainability and provide Oxfordshire the opportunity to clearly demonstrate the interventions undertaken and the outcomes achieved. There is a requirement to increase the Contract value to acquire the full 17 WTE Adult Facing Practitioners, to support victims-survivors and low to medium level risk perpetrators.

55. Benefits

- Reduces the risks associated with care and support purchased in an emergency.
- Ability to negotiate costs prior to accepting the care and support services.
- Ability to be flexible when purchasing care and support to meet the various needs of children and young people, from block provision to bespoke complex needs accommodation and care packages.

56. Critical Success Criteria

1. New Service Provider for the Domestic Abuse FSP Service is accredited and fully compliant prior to working with Oxfordshire County Council.
2. Fidelity of the Family Solutions Plus Model in Oxfordshire
3. Continuity of services to deliver strong interventions and achieve good evidence-based outcomes to parents/carers and children.
4. A reduction in demand across Childrens Social Care (Children We Care For, Child Protection and Children in Need) and our Statutory Partners.

57. The benefits discussed above are very important to the Council and will make a noticeable difference (e.g., especially around accreditation and being fully compliant organisations).

58. Table of risks and mitigations:

	Risk	Impact 0-5	Probability	Mitigation
1	<p>Budget restriction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rise in demand and cost for both children’s social care and system partner statutory services such as the ICB, Police and criminal justice system. - Increased safeguarding concerns for families and could result in an increase in children entering care. - Increased complexity of children who are supported at the statutory end of social care. - Children staying in statutory services longer than is effective and repeat CIN & CP planning. - Rise in caseloads for individual social workers with poor staff retention. - Poor experience of services for children and families. 	5	medium	Fully costed model detailed and to be budgeted for.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure to address the root cause and triggers for children’s safeguarding. - Adults with Substance Use issues do not receive support in a timely way which could escalate their needs and prevent their ability to care for their child/children. - Could be politically sensitive. - Could result in redundancies to the voluntary sector. - Loss of multi-agency team ethos, this would move away from a FSP approach. 			
2	No Contract Award would potentially reduce financial savings	4	medium	Soft Market Testing
3	Sustainable funding not identified and impact to TUPE risk after 6-month contract extension ends	4	medium	Limit risk of no funding
4	Mobilisation not achieved due to workforce issues and delay to contract start date	5	medium	Clear contract mobilisation support

Report by Lisa Lyons

Corporate Director of Childrens Services

Annex: Nil

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Nil

Contact Officer: Caroline Kelly
Lead Commissioner – Start Well
Caroline.kelly@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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