
Report To:	Policy & Resource Committee	Date:	21 November 2023
Report By:	Chief Officer Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	Report No:	PR/26/23/JH
Contact Officer:	Jonathan Hinds	Contact No:	01475 715282
Subject:	Tender for the Provision of a Children's Advocacy Service		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to change the tender weightings for the forthcoming tender process for a Children's Advocacy Service in Inverclyde as noted in Contract Standing Order 16.3.
- 1.3 The tender for the provision of a Children's Advocacy Service in Inverclyde is being prepared for advertising. As in all cases with Social Care Service provision, the quality of the care service is of paramount importance. In light of this, it is recommended that the Children's Advocacy Service contract is awarded on an 80% Quality and 20% Cost of Service weighting split to help ensure the required quality of service and best value cost of service can be procured. This is a change to the weighting split in Contract Standing Order 16.2.
- 1.4 Recent Inverclyde HSCP tenders have been conducted successfully using a higher Quality weighting. Children's Advocacy Services are already provided in Inverclyde with the overall cost being approximately £80,000 per annum.
- 1.5 The current contract is due to end on 31st March 2024. The new Contract will commence on 1st April 2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resource Committee agree to:
- Approve the use of an 80% Quality and 20% Cost of Service weighting in the forthcoming tender for the Inverclyde HSCP Children's Advocacy Service and therefore suspends Contract Standing Order 16.2.

Kate Rocks
Chief Officer
Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Access to Independent Children's Advocacy Services is recognised as contributing to health and social care policy goals such as health improvement, equality and involving individuals as partners in care. The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide access to independent advocacy for children and young people under 18, which also includes children and young people looked after at home or a child or young person subject to child protection procedures.
- 3.2 In addition to the legislative requirement to provide access to Independent Children's Advocacy, the 2013 Guidance issued by the Scottish Government and the Principles and Standards issued by the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA) recognises that Independent Advocacy ensures equality of access to services particularly for those groups which may otherwise be excluded.
- 3.3 The provision of advocacy seeks to ensure the ability of an individual to have an equal voice in consideration of response to their needs. Accordingly, the provision of Independent Children's Advocacy is wider than the Council's statutory duty as children and young people should be able to get involved in discussions and decisions that may affect their lives; this may be directly or with the help from a friend or adult. Where support is needed, advocacy is one way that a child or young person's voice can be heard. At the core of the Promise 21-25 Plan is listening to and crucially making sense of what is heard from children and young people and embedding into practices and processes to ensure their voices are heard.
- 3.4 A tender process is about to commence to ensure the required service contract is in place when the current arrangement expires on 31st March 2024. This will facilitate the continuation of a quality service provision in a cost-effective manner.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The tender for the provision of the Children's Advocacy Service will be advertised in December 2023. As in all cases with social care services, the quality of the care service is of paramount importance.
- 4.2 The aim of the tender is to accurately describe the high quality and cost-effective service required in the Inverclyde area and identify the quality service provider required to deliver the service which will ensure that all children and young people have access to Advocacy Services. An essential factor in achieving this aim is to weigh the quality aspects of the service more than the cost. Where the price weighting is high, it leaves less scope to reward good quality providers.
- 4.3 It is recommended that the Children's Advocacy Service contract is awarded on an 80% Quality and 20% Cost of Service weighting split. This will help to ensure the required quality of service and best value cost of service can be procured.
- 4.4 The tender strategy and subsequent contract will be focussed on ensuring that providers are sustainable and that services remain within budget.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial	X	
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

The tender will be structured and managed in a way which ensure that the costs included in and the overall value of any contract award resulting from the tender will be met within the overall HSCP budget.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
		1.04.24	£80,000	N/A – within existing resources	

5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no specific legal implications arising from the report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no specific Human Resource implications arising from this report.

5.5 Strategic

This report supports the delivery of HSCP Strategic Plan Big Action 2 “A nurturing Inverclyde will give our children and young people the best start in life and delivering on The I Promise Plan 21-24”. This links to the Council Plan 2023 – 2028 Theme 1 – People - Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The report has been prepared by the Chief Officer of Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) after due consideration with relevant senior officers in the HSCP.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A.