

Committee	Services Scrutiny Committee
Date	12 February 2015
Item	EFFICIENCY SAVINGS 2015/16 – 2016/17 (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE HOME SERVICES SOUTH GWYNEDD AND BANGOR WOMEN'S AID)
Cabinet Member	Cllr. Mair Rowlands

1. Background

As part of the corporate savings programme the Children and Family Support Department have proposed to do-commission the service agreements currently in place with Women's Aid and Gwasanaethau Trais yn y Cartref De Gwynedd.

The service agreements with Women's Aid and Gwasanaethau Trais yn y Cartref De Gwynedd are worth £22,070 and £33,810 respectively.

The Children and Families Support Department's proposals were discussed by the Scrutiny Committee on the 13 November 2014 and subsequently at the Services Scrutiny Committee on the 11 December 2014 with an expectation that a decision be reached by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 16 December 2014.

The Cabinet made a recommendation at its meeting on the 16 December 2014 that further information was required to make totally clear the impact of any decision on the organisations and those in receipt of their services.

The purpose of this report is to address the Cabinet's recommendation and confirm the Children and Family Support Department's position.

2. Additional Information from both Organisations

Further to the Cabinet's recommendation a request was made to both organisations on the 22 December 2014 for a response to a set of questions asked to determine the impact of the proposed saving.

The same 9 questions were asked to both organisations with a request that they respond in the context of the contribution made by the Council under the service agreements.

Women's Aid's response was received on the 27th January 2015 and Gwasanaeth Trais yn y Cartref De Gwynedd's on the 31 January 2015. The organisations responses can be found in full Appendices 1 & 2.

Further enquiries had to be made to Gwasanaeth Trais yn y Cartref De Gwynedd's response to question 4 which asked for the number of children supported and were on the Child Protection Register. The Children's Services believed the response in the report to be considerably higher than expected. The organisation was asked to confirm the names of children on the Register supported by the Children's Support Worker. The organisation confirmed that the numbers quoted in the report were

incorrect in that they contained those children reaching the organisation's own risk thresholds as well as those on the Child Protection Register. The correct figure for 2014 is 20, and the figures for 2013 and 2012 remain incorrect. The 20 children in 2014 on the Child Protection Register have received support in the community from various officers from within the organisation, but could not specify whether the Children's Support Worker had worked with this group.

3. Impact of the saving on service users and Gwynedd residents

Based on both organisation's response to the questions referred to in section 2 of this report, the impact can be summarised as follows:

- The loss of a Children's Support Worker in south Gwynedd and a part time Children's Worker in the Arfon Area.
- The loss of service to children and young people referred to both organisations
- The loss of additional/wider preventative programmes (e.g. DEWIS)
- Taking into account that a number of children will not have access to the support, both organisations envisage an additional impact on a child or young person's:
 - Emotional welfare
 - Ability to develop healthy relationships
 - Ability to deal with additional life transitions
 - Behaviour and performance in school
 - Behaviour in general

(Please refer the organisation's full response to question 6 in Appendix 1 and 2)

4. Monitoring Service Provision

The Adult, Health and Wellbeing Department's Business Unit conducted contracts monitoring visits to Women's Aid and Gwasaneth Trais yn y Cartref De Gwynedd on the 5 November 2012 and 27 November 2012 respectively.

The Children and Family Support Department have acknowledged that there have been weaknesses in monitoring arrangements in that it hasn't been possible to determine the real impact and/or outcomes. Efforts to address this have been discussed during annual contract review meetings.

The Business Service's Contracts Officer met with Gwasanaeth Trais yn Cartref De Gwynedd on the 16 June 2013 and observed a STAR (Safety Trust and Respect) session on the 23 September 2014.

A meeting took place between the Contracts Officer and Women's Aid on the 24 November 2014. Women's Aid provided further information based on the year's provision further to that meeting.

Contracts Monitoring visits provide an opportunity to monitor provision against expectations as per Service Agreement (e.g. Objectives, Targets, Expectations). No concerns were raised during these monitoring exercises on the quality of the service provided.

'Desktop' monitoring exercises have also been conducted in that organisations are required to provide 6 monthly reports to summarise provision and developments against that noted in the agreements.

Annual contract reviewing meetings have also been held during the agreement period (both of which have been operational for 4 years). These meetings provide and opportunity to confirm that the agreement's contents are current and correct. The contract reviewing meetings for the the period 2014-15 were held with Women's Aid and Gwasanaethau Trais yn y Cartref De Gwynedd on the 26 March 2014 and 3 June 2015 respectively at which the Head of the Children and Family Support Department and Contracts Officer met with the organisation's representatives. The current financial climate and efficiency requirements were shared at both meetings along with the Department's intention that both agreements would be considered as part of efficiency savings.

5. Children and Family Support Department's assessment of provision during contract period

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for the Services Scrutiny Committee (Appendix 3).

The Children and Family Support Department acknowledges that a number of children and young people have been in receipt of both organisation's services. The organisation's responses found in Appendix 1 and 2 reflects the range of services provided and the effect on those services.

Whilst acknowledging the range and scope of services provided, the evidence provided as not been sufficient to persuade the Children and Family Support Department that the saving would have a real and significant impact on those receiving the support.

6. Wider impact of the saving on organisation's financial situation

Based on the organisation's responses (appendix 1 and 2) it is estimated that the saving would represent:

15% of Women's Aid annual turnover

6% of Gwasanaeth Trais yn y Cartref De Gwynedd's annual turnover

7. Conclusions

It is likely that the proposed saving will be seen as a cut in service. However, it should be emphasised that the Children's Services responsibilities and statutory duties towards children and young people living with domestic abuse remains unchanged. The statutory duty to assess needs, investigate safeguarding matters and provide services to families remains with the Children and Family Support Department. The proposed saving will not have any impact on partner's responsibility to identify and refer child protection matters.

