

# **Authorisation to establish a framework for emotional well-being and mental health services for school age children**

## **Recommendation:**

To authorises the commencement of a competitive tender process to establish a framework<sup>1</sup> agreement for early intervention emotional well-being and mental health services for school age children, with mild to moderate needs, by using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) referral process.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Across Warwickshire there is currently a mixed economy of care to meet the spectrum of emotional well-being and mental health difficulties that young people present with. Specialist CAMHS is commissioned through the Arden Cluster arrangements, to provide children with moderate to severe mental health disorders with specialist services.
- 1.2 Warwickshire County Council fund lower level early intervention and preventative mental health services. Through this grant competitive tender operations have secured service provision to complement Specialist CAMHS services; Relate currently provides counselling services, Xenzone provides on-line counselling, Journeys offers mental health services to 'looked after' children and their carers and the Primary Mental Worker Team work to build capacity and offer support to generic professionals. In addition there were a range of interventions being offered in schools through a mixture of voluntary sector providers as part of the TAMHS (Targeted Mental Health in Schools) pilot, however the funding ceased nationally in March 2011.
- 1.3 In September 2011 the Schools Forum raised concerns about unmet emotional well-being and mental health needs within the school setting and requested that a proposal for the use of DSG underspend be brought back to the forum for consideration. The first proposal which suggested that interventions were allocated to schools on the basis of deprivation data was rejected.
- 1.4 In December 2011 the Schools Forum authorised £210,000 (per annum for 2 years) of the Dedicated Schools Grant,(DSG) to fund emotional well-being and mental health services across all schools in Warwickshire using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process to identify the specific needs of children and young people.
- 1.5 The CAF is a process whereby a professional working with a child identifies problems that need addressing through multi agency working and In consequence call a professionals meeting to help resolve these problems.
- 1.6 This project builds on the success of TaMHS which demonstrated the effectiveness of early mental health interventions as a means of reducing more serious and entrenched mental health issues requiring more costly

specialist treatments. An evaluation by the Warwickshire Educational Psychology Services showed that TaMHS:

- Improved the resilience of children and young people at risk of mental health problems
- Prevented emotional wellbeing difficulties from escalating

- 1.7 Mental health and emotional well-being services funded by the Early Intervention Grant, targeted at those young people with mild to moderate mental health issues, currently reach 3,300 children and young people per annum. However, national research (Kurtz 1996) suggests that around 8,000 school age children in Warwickshire have mild to moderate mental health or emotional well-being issues, highlighting that approximately 4,700 children are not receiving appropriate early intervention services. This project will make a significant contribution to this shortfall by reaching an estimated 650 children and young people per annum.
- 1.8 In February 2012, an exemption for £60,000 (a proportion of the overall £210,000 for year one) was approved to pilot the project for five months from May to November 2012 to get the project operational in good time whilst the tender process is being undertaken.

## **2.0 Proposal**

- 2.1 Authorisation is needed for the commencement of a competitive tender process to establish a framework of providers to deliver a range of emotional well-being and mental health interventions required by school age children. The specification will be an outcome based specification which will require potential providers to think creatively about the most effective, evidence based interventions to reduce distress and improve mental health and resilience. It is anticipated that these interventions will comprise, as a minimum, one-to-one counselling, mentoring, evidence based group work, and family interventions and will be provided by a range of skilled and experienced providers.
- 2.2 In addition to meeting the needs of this specific tender this process will help to build the market of provision available with regards to emotional well-being and mental health services, encouraging non statutory agencies to grow, develop and compete thus developing a market of qualified providers in the child and adolescent mental health field.
- 2.3 Providers will be required to provide a submission on their proposals to deliver emotional well-being and mental health services which will be evaluated for value for money and quality purposes.
- 2.4 The framework agreement is a document listing all the providers that have been successful in the tender process. These providers can then be selected and contracted with to deliver specific interventions as required.
- 2.5 Children and young people who are referred onto the CAF process will have their emotional well-being and mental health needs assessed. In cases where the CAF process assesses it is appropriate for a child or young person to

access emotional well-being and mental health services, the lead professional will alert the CAF Officer of the specific need. The identification of needs and debate about the type of intervention required will be guided by the Primary Mental Health service. Where the specific needs cannot be met from existing CAMHS services, the CAF coordinator will then 'call off' the framework, choosing the most appropriate provision with regards to needs and location and a service will be provided to the child/young person/family. This process will provide the mechanism for the fair distribution of mental health interventions to children who are assessed by the CAF as needing them.

- 2.6 The framework agreement will be for two years with the option to extend for a further two years. The provision to extend the contract allows for continuation without an additional tender process should funding be identified. It is anticipated that across the four years this will take the level of investment above £500,000, authorisation is therefore required from Cabinet prior to any tender process taking place.
- 2.7 The framework agreement will not guarantee any provider that they will be called off, or selected, to deliver emotional well-being and mental health services. CAF Officers will be expected to exclusively use providers on the framework to as a condition of funding.
- 2.8 Authorisation is required to commence a competitive tender process to establish a framework agreement for emotional well-being and mental health services. By doing so the Strategic Director will enable the initiation of an approach to the early intervention in a young person's emotional well-being and mental health difficulties that has demonstrated benefits in reducing the onset and severity of ongoing issues.

### 3.0 Timescales associated with the decision / next steps

- 3.1 The competitive tender process is scheduled to start in June 2012 with provision available from November 2012.

### Background Papers (Please list below, with electronic links where applicable)

- *Schools Forum report, December 2011: Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Services for Schools*
- *An evaluation of the Warwickshire Targeted Mental Health in Schools Project (TaMHS)*
- *Exemption*
- *Joint Strategic Needs Analysis: <http://jsna.warwickshire.gov.uk/>*
- *Emotional well-being and mental health services commissioning strategy*

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<sup>i</sup> Framework - “an agreement ....between one or more contracting authorities and one or more economic operators which establishes the terms (in particular the terms as to price and, where appropriate, quantity) under which the economic operator will enter into one or more contracts with a contracting authority in the period during which the framework agreement applies”. OGC Guidance on Framework Agreements in the Procurement Regulations

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