

Report of the Strategic Director Health and Wellbeing to the meeting of Bradford West Area Committee to be held on 27th June 2018

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Subject:

Welfare Advice Services across Bradford West Area

Summary statement:

The following report seeks to update members of the Bradford West Area committee on the delivery of welfare advice services across the constituency; including details of where services are offered, by whom and how they are used

1. SUMMARY

1.1A report on the delivery of welfare advice services in the Bradford West area was made to the Area committee on the 26th April 2017. This outlines the new approach to service delivery expected of contractors awarded commissions as a result of public procurement undertaken in 2016/17 and introduced the providers of services for the area; Airedale and Bradford Citizen's Advice Bureau and Law Centre (CAB) and Equality Together.

1.12 As a result the committee requested that a further report be presented in 12 months time specifying that this include details of where and how services are being delivered and the usage made by people from both within Bradford West area post codes and outside. Additionally the provider/s were encouraged to work with Bradford West ward members and ensure that access data was made freely available for stakeholders and referrers.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Bradford Council funded welfare advice services were evaluated; reviewed and formally commissioned using a public procurement exercise in 2016/17. Four providers were successful in award stage and the new contracts commenced in January 2017.

2.1.2 The 'lots' commissioned included four area based in the five constituencies of the district (including an amalgamation of Shipley and Keighley into one 'area') and one for people with long term and/or complex health needs delivered district wide.

2.1.3 The contracts issued were 'transformational' in nature, requiring the providers of services to improve services standards; operate flexibly and implement new management systems in recognition of the need to streamline and manage demand more efficiently.

2.1.4 As part of the transformation of services agencies were required to submit their formal transformation plans as part of their tender submission; including their review of outreach and permanent bases; staff qualifications and development planning. These form part of the performance management requirements of the contracts now and are reviewed and monitored quarterly by council contact staff.

2.1.5 In Bradford West the lead commissioned agency for the delivery of outreach and fixed base welfare advice services is Airedale and Bradford Citizens Advice Bureau and the Law Centre. Equality Together delivers the specialist services for people with long term and/or complex health needs.

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2.1.6 CAB's sub-contractors in Bradford West are; Girlington Centre; Foundation Housing and the Manningham Project

2.1.7 When CAB merged with the Law Centre they took on specialist legal advice relating to employment law and level 3 immigration advice. This is an important part of their service delivery and offers much needed support for no charge which is generally only available otherwise via chargeable legal services.

2.1.8 CAB represents the four providers in several strategic partnerships considering the implementation of Universal Credit and in relation to the Anti-poverty Group.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The review and evaluation of services conducted in 2015/16/17 and the accompanying needs analysis fed into the service specifications. This laid out the need for fundamental change in terms of service delivery (service transformation) and the need for both outreach and fixed base service access.

3.1.2 The Bradford West and the Airedale Area service specifications (combination of Keighley; Bingley and Shipley) require that fixed bases are maintained in the town centres as well as outreach sessions offered in key community locations (community centres; doctor's surgeries; children's centres etc). This applies to Bradford City centre; Keighley and Shipley. (See Appendix 1 for full details)

3.1.3 Bradford West welfare advice

In Bradford West CAB has fulfilled this by having an accessible office located in Argos Chambers which is in the centre of the city. Please see Appendix 2 for the last three quarters outturns.

3.1.4 In addition to the office base there are 41 different outreach sessions offered across the Bradford West wards by CAB and their sub-contractors

3.1.5 In the first three quarters of the CAB contract they have seen 4,739 clients at a mixture of bases. (see Appendix 3 for more detail)

3.1.6 Of the above 2580 clients listed their post codes as within the Bradford West catchment area.

3.1.7 The greatest number of enquires received are received at the 'drop in sessions' in Argus Chambers. These are managed via a triage system (as per the transformation plans submitted by CAB as part of their tender documents) which means that although upwards of 80 people can be attending the sessions their waiting times are less than in previous years.

3.1.8 The largest number of clients accessing services overall are drawn from the following three wards;

Manningham

City

Toller

(See Appendix 2)

3.1.9 In common with other welfare advice provider's monitoring returns the most requested enquires relate to welfare advice & benefits; debt; housing and immigration.

3.2.0 The average age profile of service users is 36-45, the predominant gender is female and the largest ethnicity self selected by clients is Asian or Asian British Pakistani

3.2.1 CAB as the provider of the drop in services based in Bradford City Centre continues to see a proportion of clients from outside of the Bradford West post codes. Their current monitoring data (Appendix 2) shows that people from 24 different wards access advice via their services; the highest being from Great Horton; Little Horton; Bradford Moor and Barkerend.

3.2.2 These wards have quite high populations from Central and Eastern Europe and therefore it is likely that a proportion of these services users are from those communities. Both CAB and their sub-contractor-Girlington Centre have appropriately trained Eastern European advice workers with languages skills so it follows that people will access services where they feel they're understood the most.

3.2.3 To improve the wider welfare advice 'offer' and increase skills in both community languages and formal immigration advice, a sum of £55,000 has been granted through the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) through Bradford Council This programme led by CAB on behalf of the other agencies is offering to train individuals in formal translation and interpretation qualifications and increase immigration expertise across all welfare advice providers. This programme has now started and is expected to complete by end of March 2019, however it is hoped the legacy of well trained and supported staff and volunteers will be sustainable into the future.

3.2.4 *Long term; complex and continuing Health conditions*

Equality Together delivers advice services targeted at people with complex; long term and/or continuing health conditions. They have a fixed base in the Manningham Mill complex and offer home visits and session services from third party venues. Their outturns for the last three quarters are attached as Appendix 4.

3.2.5 You can see by this that their referral rates are steadily rising and that the largest group of residents they are working with are drawn from Bradford West wards;

- Tollar
- Bowling and Barkerend
- Bolton and Undercliffe
- Manningham

3.2.6 Due to the nature of their clients' needs Equality Together delivers their services in outreach venues and through home visits. Examples of outreach sessions are listed in Appendix 4 and include Lynfield Mount Hospital; Cancer Support services (located on Duckworth lane opposite Bradford Royal Infirmary) Morley Street Resource centre and the Girlington Centre in Bradford West.

3.2.7 The highest number of enquires made to Equality Together are relating to Welfare

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benefits and then Community Care/Health matters which is to be expected.

3.2.8 Equality Together have recently helped the Local Authority's Revenues and Benefits department in respect of changes to Council Tax relief for their clients which has been successful.

3.2.9 Equality Together has four partners for the delivery of their services;

- Cancer Support service who specialise in supporting families and/or individuals affected by cancer;
- CAB who manage a specialist service delivering support for people with mental health problems;
- Age UK who support older people
- Girlington Centre who offer specialist community language services and immigration advice

3.3.1 Equality Together have facility to work with some of the most vulnerable residents in the district however they share their workloads via referral to their partners and the other three providers in accordance with the wishes of the service user.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1.1 The budget for advice across the district is approximately £2.7 million; this represents a reduction of £1 million pounds made prior to the contracts award in 2016/17

4.1.2 The transformational nature of the contracts issued and the fundamental changes expected in working practices require support and guidance from the Council. Officer input from Health and Well-being continues to direct and manage performance in this area

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 The partnership group with representatives from all four of the welfare advice providers continues to meet monthly to develop and manage joint working. In addition formal contract management arrangements are in place. Providers are accountable for their implementation; transformation and change plans as part of the contract conditions.

5.1.2 The provision and development of welfare advice services is a key aspect of the poverty review and features in the group's future key actions process.

5.1.3 The welfare advice providers are represented on several key planning groups including those working to support the implementation of Universal Credit across the district from mid June 2018 onwards.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 It is a legal requirement for Local Authorities to support access to welfare & debt advice and other advice based services. This is particularly pertinent in relation to the Health and Social Care Act and Housing/Homelessness acts. In both cases there is a need to ensure fair access to services and demonstrate that advice and care is accessible

to those not eligible for direct support.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Welfare advice is accessed by a wide range of disadvantaged groups of people; those in poverty, people from black and minority ethnic groups; women and/or lone parents etc. The new commissions include a separate contract for services aimed at people with continuing and complex health conditions which includes those with disabilities and/or mental health problems.

In addition to the above it is a stipulation of service specifications that service are delivered within an equalities framework; with appropriate language speakers and staff who can appreciate and acknowledge the cultural needs of the populations they serve.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The contracts have been issued on a 4 plus one year basis.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

It is stipulated that services must be easily accessed via public transport; acknowledging that those on low incomes quite often rely on public transport.

During the service review it was found that not all existing office bases have the most appropriate facilities for advice clients. The contract specification outlined what is expected in the future which includes adequate heating; warm welcoming atmosphere; access to private interview rooms; better use of internet based services etc.

Where necessary this may result in fixed office and/or sessional based service closures, reducing overall the number of buildings this contract supports.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Housing and welfare advice helps to stabilise householders; families and single people alike. Evidence from programmes aimed at reducing repeat offending show that early intervention for those released from prison; access to the right benefits and housing can dramatically change the likelihood of re-offending in the future. This is a similar experience for those tackling drugs and/or alcohol misuse and people faced with partner violence and abuse.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Advice services assist families and/or individuals to access a range of 'entitlements' under legislation; this includes housing; welfare benefits; support services and social care; immigration status etc. All of these underpin rights enshrined within the Human Rights act.

7.6 TRADE UNION

At the award and initial implementation of new contracts there was the possibility of staff changes which could have resulted in loss of employment and TUPE. These change processes are complete now and there have been no involuntary job losses made

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

As above, services are divided on a ward and area basis.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

7.8.1 CAB and Equality Together are located in Bradford West in terms of their main offices and participate in ward planning when required

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

7.9.1 As a Corporate Parent the Council has a legal and moral duty to safeguard and promote the outcomes for looked after children. Households in need of welfare advice/ debt counselling and/or specific advice regarding immigration and asylum may well contain children and young adults for whom the Council retains responsibility as a Corporate Parent. In these circumstances the providers of welfare advice are important as a source of professional help and support for these families and individuals

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.10.1 All four providers of welfare advice are required to maintain full and comprehensive records in order to manage the individual cases which are brought to them. Each individual is asked for a formal written consent to maintain these records and they are not shared with others except with express permission and in order to facilitate a case outcome.

7.10.2 Anonymised data is shared with the Council on the use of the welfare advice services in order to make sure that the communities of Bradford are being served effectively and receiving the help they require. This includes the details of the use made by customers of these services; trend data and people's protected characteristics such as age, gender; sexual orientation; ethnicity; religion etc

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

8.1 Bradford West report-2017-04-26

9. OPTIONS

1. To welcome the breadth and complexity of the welfare advice services as they are offered in the Bradford West area.

2. To acknowledge and understand that under existing service specifications they have been required to manage service transformation and overall budget reductions whilst improving access and the quality of services at the same time

3. To welcome these providers and continue to work with them to support vulnerable householders in the area

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To accept this report and its contents;
2. To encourage services to continue to work in tandem ward members and to ensure service access data is up to date for a wide range of stakeholders and referrers

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – CAB monitoring outcomes

Appendix 2 –CAB Bradford West outreach locations

Appendix 3 – CAB booklet re locations and access

Appendix 4 –Equality Together monitoring outcomes & sessional locations

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Background documents are documents relating to the subject matter of the report which disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based, and have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report. Published works are not included.
- All documents referred to in the report must be listed, including exempt documents.
- All documents used in the compilation of the report but not specifically referred to, must be listed.