

## **Delegated Officer Report**

**Decision Maker:** Helen Lockwood

**Date of Decision:** 14 Sept 2021

**Subject:** Provision of Reflective Supervision for School Staff

**Report Author:** Chrissy Orson

**Ward (s):** N/A

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**Reason for the decision:**

A decision is sought to request approval for an exemption under Rule 21.3 (j) of the Contract Procedure Rules and to agree for a new contract to be awarded to Intraquest CIC for delivery of the Reflective Supervision for School Staff service. This is a project with between 45-50 education settings involved from across primary, secondary and specialist provision.

This is a one-year contract for a maximum of £45,000 due to the final extension of the Opportunity Area funding, up to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. There is no financial commitment from Council funds as the project would be funded by the Opportunity Area in its entirety. With this in mind, it is proposed that the current supervision provider is granted a new contract for academic year 2021-22 to maintain service at the current level, whilst a review of the project and options for sustainability are explored for the academic year 2022-23. This work would have taken place this year, but the process was impacted by the covid-19 pandemic, and the resource of the provider was directed to be responsive to the needs of education staff.

There cannot be an extension to the current call-off contract as this does not provide for any further extension nor can a new call-off contract be executed under the framework utilised during the ITT process (AGMA) as this framework has

expired and there is no framework to directly replace it. For this reason, legal advised that the only option appears to be a new contract under Oldham Council's standard terms and conditions..

## **Summary:**

Within the Opportunity Area Priority 3 we are committed to enable all children and young people to be ready for life, learning and work. The self-assessments completed by education settings for the Greater Manchester Standards for Mental Health in Education, continued to identify staff health and wellbeing as a key area for development across the borough. Poor staff wellbeing can impact on staff ability and capacity to work effectively with children who have complex and challenging needs, a group which have been disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Throughout Covid, school staff have been experiencing higher levels of pressure, and for the schools involved in this project staff have been provided with a safe and confidential outlet to offload and reflect upon their practice, preventing this pressure from impacting on their ability to work effectively. By providing this protected space, we are also aiming to reduce the chance of burnout in leadership, safeguarding and pastoral roles.

Following continued consultation with schools and key partners both within and outside the council, non-managerial, reflective supervision was felt to be an area from which education staff would benefit. Encouraging an increase in reflective practice has been seen in other professions to both increase staff wellbeing (by providing an outlet for staff to explore the challenges of working with complex pupils and families) and increase individual's capacity to support children and their families.

The supervision experienced by school staff for the past two years has been getting excellent feedback (currently being evaluated by OA Team). IntraQuest has worked hard to build relationships between individuals and their allocated supervisor, to promote trust and security in the process, so that leaders gained the confidence to discuss very sensitive issues around their own mental health and wellbeing,

including the impacts of the pandemic on them personally. For this reason, it would be detrimental to switch providers at this stage, as the impact of the project is reliant upon these relationships which have been formed through consistent support in a challenging time. With only a year of OA funding remaining, it could be very difficult to promote buy in and build trust with a new provider in a time-limited period without impacting on service provision and outcomes.

Whilst the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive for the one-to-one supervision, other aspects of the project have been impacted by covid-19; in particular the training of staff and supporting them to embed supervision back into their own settings which would in turn enable more staff to benefit from the process and skills. Continuing with the current provider would allow us to build on the early successes here, and continue to use their specialist training package, enabling the project to become fully embedded into the education settings involved without having to start again with a new training package.

Our approach for the project this year is proposed to be in three parts:

**One:** to provide schools with external supervision for up to two key members of staff, for example, Head teacher, SENCo, DSL.

**Two:** The provision of training which will allow staff to run reflective supervision as a peer group within their settings, enabling reflective practice to become part of the working practice of more staff within the setting such as, SEN TAs, Safeguarding officers etc.

**Three:** Focus on sustainability by working more in-depth with a targeted group of schools to support them in embedding supervision skills into their own practice.

In addition, there will be exploration into project legacy, including the creation of sustainable capacity within the system which can be utilised to support settings beyond OA funding, alongside the possibility of working with Oldham Learning moving forwards, or going over to ITT for a new provider once this phase of work is

completed.

**What are the alternative option(s) to be considered? Please give the reason(s) for recommendation(s):**

**Option 1:** *Approve an exemption under clause 21.3 (j) of the Contract Procedure Rules and contract award Intraquest CIC to continue delivery of the Reflective Supervision for School Staff service.*

This is the recommended option as it enables leaders to continue accessing support from the supervisors who they have built relationships with. A level of consistency is vital for this process as leaders continue to be vulnerable to burnout and potential absence with the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on mental health.

This report requests an exemption under Rule 21.3 (j) of the Contract Procedure Rules and recommends that a new 12-month contract is awarded to Intraquest CIC, allowing time for sustainability options to be explored by the OA team.

This will ensure that we continue to provide leaders with support and enable the provider to complete the work which was impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, ensuring legacy of the OA funding.

**Option 2:** *Proceed to market to procure the provision of reflective supervision and training for education staff, for a new service to be contracted until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 with an ASAP start.*

This is not a recommended option due to the time-limited nature of the Opportunity Area funding. All activity must be completed and paid for by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 and it is unlikely that a new provider would be able to fulfil all aspects of the contract by this date.

For the training of education staff in supervision skills, there are also intellectual property implications. The training is specialist and has been specifically designed by Intraquest CIC, meaning that any new provider would need to be given time to create new course content and materials which would likely impact on speed of service delivery, in an already time-limited contract.

**Option 3:** *To not proceed with the commission and award of contract, putting the funding back into the DfE Opportunity Area (OA) programme*

This is not a recommended option as it would mean a reduction in staff wellbeing support for education staff, which has been identified as a key area of need by settings through their self-assessments for the GM Standards for Mental Health in Education, and also by the Opportunity Area Board. This option may increase the risk of burnout and staff absence within educational leadership.

***Consultation: including any conflict of interest declared by relevant Cabinet Member consulted.***

Consultation has taken place with Cllr Mushtaq via the OA Partnership Board, The OA year 5 cabinet paper and through direct briefings.

## Implications:

*What are the **financial** implications?*

This report seeks to approve an exemption under clause 21.3 (j) of the contract procedure rule document, and contract award Intraquest CIC to continue delivery of the Reflective Supervision for School Staff service.

The total value of this contract for a period of 1 year is **£45,000**, this will be wholly funded from the Council's Opportunity Area Year 5 Grant.

The contract will run across the academic year 2021-22.

	Financial Year		Total
	2021-22	2022-23	
Contract (Sep21 - Aug22)	26,250	18,750	<b>45,000</b>

The balance remaining of £18,750 will be carried forward in an earmarked reserve into the financial year 2022-23.

Oldham's Year 5 Grant allocation is **£1.639m**.

*Vicki Hayes – Senior Accountant*

*What are the **legal** implications?*

Given the requirement for continuity, the adverse impact of Covid in this area and that the existing contract has expired, Option 1 seems to be the most appropriate course of action and is supported by Legal Services. As the previous contract documentation cannot be utilised, given the expiry of the framework, it will be necessary to respecify the requirement and process as a

What are the **procurement** implications?

direct award, subject to Oldham Council's standard terms and conditions, in accordance with Oldham Council's procurement and contracting processes for a "standard" direct award. *(Mark Hope)*

Commercial Procurement Unit supports the recommendation in this report. There is provision in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to grant an exemption from the Rules Where an extension for a particular period can be justified, for example where a service review includes the intention to co-terminate relevant Contracts within a reasonable period; (Rule 21.3 j). this will ensure that the Intraquest CIC to deliver a reflective Supervision for School Staff service. This is a project with between 45-50 education settings involved from across primary, secondary and specialist provision unique and bespoke programme on this basis, Commercial Procurement Unit acknowledges the requirement. *(Mohammad Sharif) 14/09/2021*

What are the **Human Resources** implications?

None

What are the **Children and Young People** Implications?

Young people will be working with staff who feel well-supported to manage the impact of their work, which will in turn allow them to better support young people with their mental health needs.

Schools involved in the programme will be utilising supervision skills and reflective practice as part of their offer to support staff wellbeing which will build staff capacity to work with young people's emotional health and mental wellbeing needs.

**Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment** attached or not required because (please give reason)

These services were made available for all schools who wished to take part in the project. With any additional capacity this year we will be focussing on specialist provisions due to their high levels of need.

What are the **property** implications  
**Risks:**

None

To mitigate against delivery risk there will be monthly service calls, half termly reports and other regular updates from the provider. Agreed governance arrangements for performance and contract monitoring will be through the Opportunity Area Team. The project has also run as a pilot project to ensure that it is meeting the needs of Oldham education settings.

## Co-operative agenda

All Opportunity Area projects fully support and adopt the Council's cooperative values as they promote the active engagement of Oldham residents in the life of the community. This contract particularly promotes fairness and openness in terms of the services that it provides.

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Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? Yes

Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? Yes

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? No

## List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Opportunity Area Year 5 Cabinet Paper

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<b>Report Author Sign-off:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

Please list and attach any appendices:-

<b>Appendix number or letter</b>	<b>Description</b>

In consultation with Deputy Chief Executive

Signed : 

Date: 15 September 2021