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Gloucestershire County Council

Soft Market Engagement

Gloucestershire Suicide Bereavement Support (Postvention) Service

February 2021

Project Brief and Questionnaire

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Instructions to Participate in this Soft Marketing Engagement

Please read this document carefully, and if you feel that your organisation is able to contribute to this Soft Market Engagement, please complete the questionnaire which is attached at the end of this document.

Respondents may enclose supporting information with their response but this is not necessary.

Depending on the range and number of responses, Gloucestershire County Council (the Council) may select a sample of interested parties for follow up discussions. Selection is at the discretion of the Council and respondents are under no obligation to participate.

If you have any queries regarding the soft market questionnaire, please email:

Sheema.Rahman@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Please return your questionnaire to Sheema.Rahman@gloucestershire.gov.uk, by close of business 15th March 2021.

Freedom of Information

Please be aware that we are subject to the disclosure requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA) and that potentially any information we hold is liable to disclosure under the Act. Soft Market Engagements and their returns are routinely published by the Council. For this reason, we would strongly advise that any information you consider to be confidential is labelled as such. Please note, labelling the information as confidential does not guarantee it will remain confidential or that it cannot be published under FoIA. The Council reserves sole discretion in interpretation of the legislation. In the event that a request is subsequently made for disclosure of information under the FoIA that request will be dealt with in accordance with the legislation.

Please do not include personal data in your return, i.e. accounts of individuals you have provided services to.

For the avoidance of doubt, please note that this has been issued by the Council purely for information seeking purposes of a soft market engagement, and will not formally begin any procurement or constitute any commitment by the Council to undertake any procurement exercise.

Interested parties should note that a response to this notice does not guarantee an invitation to tender for any services which the Council may advertise, nor that the Council will procure any such services or accept any proposals offered. Conversely, not participating

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in the soft market testing exercise will not exclude any party from any involvement in any procurement process.

Project brief

1. Purpose of Soft Market Engagement

The Council wishes to engage with potential providers to ascertain market interest in providing a new service to support those bereaved through suicide in the county. Feedback is also invited on the proposed service model/requirements.

2. Background

Providing better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide is identified as a priority action in the government's national suicide prevention strategy. Evidence shows that people bereaved by suicide are at an increased risk of psychiatric admission, depression and suicide themselves; and may struggle to cope with everyday activities such as work and relationships. Close family members, particularly parents and partners, are thought to be the most vulnerable groups following a suicide, but there are also risks for wider family, friends and colleagues.

The Council (on behalf of the Gloucestershire Integrated Care System) is looking to commission a county-wide Suicide Bereavement Service to provide postvention support to people bereaved by suicide. Postvention seeks to provide proactive and timely support to people in the aftermath of a suicide.

The service is being funded through the NHS England/Improvement national suicide bereavement transformation programme.

3. Context

The new service will form part of the county's existing suicide prevention and bereavement support processes and pathways; and will be expected to become a 'networked service' linked in with existing statutory and non-statutory services; and the VCS sector.

Gloucestershire has an established Suicide Prevention Partnership Steering Group with representation from Public Health, the Coroner's Office, mental health services, the hospital trust, general practice, the Clinical Commissioning Group and the police. The group carry out real time surveillance of suspected suicides to help inform local suicide prevention work; and oversee delivery of the county's Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan.

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Gloucestershire has a 'Suicide Bereavement Protocol' in place, whereby when the police deliver the notification of death to the next of kin in the case of suspected suicides, they will provide a pack containing information on appropriate sources of support (both locally and nationally).

Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (who provide mental health services in the county) also provide suicide liaison support which includes pastoral care and signposting to the next of kin of their service users who are suspected of dying by suicide.

Gloucestershire also commissions free suicide awareness and prevention training and this is made available to those working in the public, voluntary and community sectors. The training has included safeTALK (suicide alertness), ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and PABBS (Postvention: Assisting those Bereaved By Suicide).

The Council is currently carrying out a survey for people with lived experience of bereavement through suicide about the support they received, regardless of when their bereavement occurred.

4. Aims of the new Service

- To provide appropriate, sensitive and timely information and support (in line with best practice) for those bereaved/affected following a confirmed or suspected suicide;
- To provide a 'liaison service' primarily for close family (including spouses and partners) ('next of kin') in the aftermath of the death and through the coronial and legal processes;
- To support service users to access appropriate sources of emotional and practical support.

5. Service requirements

The successful provider will be required to provide dedicated staff resource (at least 1WTE or 37 hours per week) to support individuals bereaved through suicide.

It is expected that the nature and type of support provided will be guided by an individual's or families' needs.

The provider's responsibilities are expected to include:

- making initial contact with potential service users (upon prior consent and referral from approved referrer) within an agreed timeframe;
- assessing service users' emotional and practical needs;
- assigning a named liaison officer to the individual and/or family (where appropriate to need);
- supporting service users to access appropriate sources of local and/or national support to meet their needs (*note: depending on the provider's in-house capabilities/infrastructure*)

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and the service user's needs, the support required by service users may be offered by the provider in-house; or the service user may be signposted/referred to third parties).

- holding the relationship with clients through the legal and coronial process (if required); and supporting liaison with key services, such as the police and Coroner's Officer.

The service will accept referrals from relevant agencies, such as GPs, Police, Coroner's office, VCS partner organisations, mental health trust, and will also actively enable self-referrals.

The service pathway will be agreed with commissioners and based upon the preferred provider's bid and service model.

The service must be available countywide; and support should be accessible via a range of channels: face to face; and remotely (phone or video), ensuring the safety and security of the clients, particularly during the use of any remote systems.

Service users

It is expected that clients will mainly include immediate/close family and relatives, including spouses or partners ('the next of kin'); but support may also be required by friends or other individuals affected by the death.

The provider will need to tailor the support offered to the needs/circumstances of service users. It is envisaged that the 'liaison offer' (i.e. the provision of tailored support with suicide bereavement and support through the coronial and legal process) would be predominantly offered to immediate/close family (including the spouse or partner of the deceased). Other individuals contacting the service for support might be offered less intensive signposting support or information. However, it is important that the service exercises some discretion in the nature and type of support provided to meet need; recognising that people's experience of suicide bereavement will be complex and personal to the individual and their circumstances.

At a minimum, the service should be open to adults over the age of 18, ***but we are interested in the market's views on their capacity and capability to provide an all age service.***

We are also interested in the market's views on the scope of the service (bearing in mind the budget), with respect to whether the service is reserved for the immediate family (including the spouse or partner of the deceased) ('next of kin') or whether the service also provides some level of support / information to other individuals affected by a death from suicide?

Provider credentials

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The provider must be able to demonstrate experience and credentials in a relevant field, such as bereavement support, suicide awareness and/or mental health support. Staff working on the service must have knowledge and understanding of complicated grief and the potential impact of the traumatic response that may be experienced by suicide bereavement.

The provider will also be required to:

- develop an up-to-date knowledge of other sources of support available, within the county (and nationally)
- signpost accordingly to meet the emotional and practical needs of service users and those contacting the service
- develop and maintain collaborative relationships and referral pathways with relevant local (and national) stakeholders, including the police, coroners office and mental health trust, GPs and organisations, providing statutory and non-statutory support for bereavement, mental health, social care and general wellbeing
- promote the service to relevant stakeholders, including all referrers.
- regularly engage with the commissioners to ensure that the pathway adapts to meet the needs of service users
- engage with the Gloucestershire Suicide Prevention Partnership.
- support the provision of postvention support training to partners/stakeholders to enable provision of better support to those bereaved by suicide.
- evaluate the effectiveness of the service and report against agreed outcome measures
- ensure the service is accessible, inclusive and delivered in line with the Equalities Act 2010.

6. Budget

The total available budget is £50, 000 per annum. The contract will be for a maximum of three years in the first instance.

7. Service uptake

There were 170 deaths from suicide in Gloucestershire across the three year period 2017-19 (ONS) c.57 deaths a year. Based on national data it is anticipated that in c.40% of deaths from suicide, those affected by the death will take up the offer of support with 65% preferring support to start within the week after the death¹.

Demand is likely to be variable, and we will monitor service uptake and capacity over year one as part of the service evaluation.

¹ McDonnell et al (2020) From Grief to Hope, SBUK

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8. Timings

It is anticipated that the service will launch in the summer of 2021.

9. Next Steps

The Council has developed a short questionnaire (attached at the end of this document) which interested parties are invited to complete.

Following an analysis of feedback we might invite further discussion.

10. Indicative Timelines.

These are intended as a general guide only and may be subject to change.

Market Engagement	February
Tender Stage	April/May
Evaluation	June/July
Award Contract	July
Implementation	August
Contract Start	August 2021

11. Contract length

It is provisionally proposed to commission the service on a three year contract.

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Soft Market Questionnaire

Organisation's Name	
Contact's Name	
Contact's position	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Web address	

Based on the information provided above:

1. Would your organisation have the necessary skills, experience and knowledge to meet the service requirements?

- Yes/No (optional additional information to support your response- max 500 words)

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2. Would your organisation be likely to submit a tender to any future procurement exercise?

- Yes/No (optional additional information to support your response- max 500 words)

(If no, are you able to provide any further information to explain your response?)

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3. In your experience, is the specification achievable? If not, why not? (max 500 words)

4. Do you have any further feedback or comments on the proposal and service requirements to help inform our commissioning model?

We are particularly interested in feedback on the scope of the service, proposed client group, and the feasibility of providing an all age service. (max 350 words)

Is there anything that you feel is missing which should be included in the specification? (max 350 words)

5. In your experience, what is the support that those bereaved by suicide are most in need of or value most? (max 350 words)

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6. Do you think this type of service would add value to the support currently provided to those bereaved through suicide? (max 350 words)

Please return your questionnaire to the team, by close of business 15th March 2021.

Sheema.Rahman@gloucestershire.gov.uk