

Specification for Goods or Services

Creative health intervention for children aged 5-10 years old with experience of domestic abuse

LBC_P-001072

April 2025

CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. BACKGROUND**
- 3. CONTRACT SCOPE**
- 4. DETAILED REQUIREMENTS**
- 5. SERVICE LEVELS & KPIs**
- 6. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT**
- 7. SOCIAL VALUE & SUSTAINABILITY**
- 8. GDPR & DIA**
- 9. CONTRACT PERIOD**

1. Introduction

In September 2024, Croydon Council appointed a Creative Health team to identify and develop opportunities for creative health interventions supporting the health and wellbeing of Croydon residents. Following a period of consultation that engaged with more than 180 people from the council, arts, community and health sectors, the team identified priority groups requiring additional support where creative health interventions could be beneficial. Children aged 5-10 years old with experience of domestic abuse were a recurring priority, and the Creative Health and Public Health teams agreed to apportion funding to developing and testing a creative intervention to support this group.

2. Background

National statistics estimate 1 In 5 children in England experience domestic abuse¹, and Croydon has one of the highest rates of incidences of domestic abuse per 1,000 people compared to the other London local authorities². Whether children witness or experience harm themselves, victims commonly experience fear, powerlessness and sadness³ as a result. Even after abuse has been resolved, 60% of children display behavioural problems (e.g., aggressiveness) that can lead to challenges within education and family contexts while 52% experience social development challenges⁴ with impacts on social interactions and healthy relationships with peers and family. Survivors are at greater risk of teenage substance abuse, pregnancy and criminal behaviours as compared to non-experienced peers, and are almost 3x more likely to experience abuse in adult relationships⁵.

In Croydon, as in many parts of the country, support for children victims of domestic abuse (DA) does not begin until age 11, when Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and talking therapies are recommended. As a result, children with experience of DA may live more than a decade without support to manage their experiences and related behaviours and adverse outcomes.

A review of relevant domestic abuse and creative health literature demonstrated that creative health methodologies could have significant benefits for the needs of this group, including improving wellbeing, self-regulation, emotional literacy, peer and familial relationships, and educational engagement and attainment.

A strategic steering group was convened in February 2025, including representatives from relevant stakeholders (Family Justice Service; the Council's Children Young People and Education Safeguarding team; Public Health; voluntary sector Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) providers; educational psychologists, individuals with lived experience) to determine the most effective model of creative health support for children ages 5-10 with experience of DA. Further consultation with VAWG/DA organisations in the borough and a focus group workshop with parents in the target population are further developing the design of this model.

-
1. Woman's Trust (N.D.) [The impact of domestic abuse - facts and figures - Woman's Trust](#)
 2. Croydon Borough Profile December 2024. [Microsoft Word - BOROUGH PROFILE Dec2024 WORD](#)
 3. Noble-Carr D, Moore T, McArthur M. Children's experiences and needs in relation to domestic and family violence: Findings from a meta-synthesis. *Child & Family Social Work*. 2020; 25: 182–191. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12645>
 4. SafeLives, [Children's insights national dataset, England and Wales](#), 2015 to 2018, Specialist children's abuse services. [↵](#)
 5. SafeLives, [Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse](#). [↵](#)

3. Scope of the Contract

This contract aims to identify an experienced supplier(s) to provide a responsive intervention that engages children in creative arts-led participatory group work with intrinsic opportunities to develop personal, social and emotional outcomes relevant for children ages 5-10 with experience of domestic abuse. The intervention will aim to reach families from marginalised backgrounds who may not regularly access mainstream support.

The intervention should be developed and delivered by artists with high expertise in socially engaged participatory work with the target age range, in partnership with clinicians with expertise in child development and domestic abuse. Sessions should maintain an arts-based approach relevant to children of the target age range, while ensuring safety for children to express and explore emotions in response to their experiences as relevant.

The intervention should build in a parallel strand of light-touch support for parents of children participants, with opportunities for facilitated peer networking, conversations and signposting.

Successful bids will include opportunities for Croydon artists with relevant practice but limited experience to participate in a supporting capacity, in order to develop the skills of the local sector.

Bids must include appropriate pastoral supervision for all delivery staff.

The intervention will be developed and delivered in partnership with Croydon Council's Creative Health team, with ongoing dialogue and feedback between the team and supplier. The supplier will be responsible for providing an appropriate delivery team and developing and delivering the agreed content of the intervention. The Creative Health team will project manage the intervention, including sourcing appropriate venues; purchasing (in agreement with the supplier) necessary resources; managing participant recruitment and attendance logistics including transport and refreshments; and supporting the supplier delivery team on delivery days. The intervention is expected to work closely with schools, families and other relevant Croydon Council teams to ensure children's needs are recognised and supported across contexts; these relationships will be facilitated by the Creative Health team.

This tender and contract is scheduled to run until end of March 2026, in line with secured funding. Should the Council secure further funding related to the project, an extension of up to a further 18 months of delivery may be considered, subject to agreement by both parties. The Council will aim to inform supplier(s) of the success of securing further funding by February 2026 wherever possible.

4. Detailed Requirements

This new intervention will provide much needed support to children victims of domestic abuse at an earlier stage than is currently available, potentially preventing the development of, or harm caused by, challenges occurring as a result of this experience. A delivery model best fit to meet these aims and the needs of this group has been designed by members of the stakeholder strategic steering group. Ongoing discussions with the strategic steering group, focus groups with people with lived experience and review of best practice evidence may continue to refine this model throughout the lifetime of this contract and the successful bidder will need to engage with and respond to this process. The intervention will further aim to reach families from traditionally marginalised communities who may not regularly engage with mainstream support.

Delivery model

- The programme will run as a series of intensive interventions with cohorts of identified children. Each cohort's intervention will consist of weekly after school sessions, lasting between 8-12 weeks (final number to be determined during programme development).
- Cohorts will include c25 total participants, split into two groups by age (5-7 year olds and 8-10 year olds), with each group receiving a high-quality participatory creative arts experience each week (likely one after the other, on the same evening).
- Sessions will take place in neutral, safe spaces identified by Croydon Council in consultation with partners and supplier(s). Children from schools within short transport distances of selected location(s) will be invited to participate based on referrals from schools, safeguarding teams and local VAWG organisations. The Council's Creative Health team will manage recruitment, referrals and registration, with necessary relevant information passed to supplier(s).
- Individual session content should be creative and participant-led, within an overarching scheme of work developed by artists and clinician experts to ensure relevant skills and behaviours will be elicited and taught, modelled and/or corrected across each cohort's intervention. Content should be structured enough to ensure outcomes are met, while remaining flexible to respond to individual group needs, as well as family and school feedback received following each session.
- Parents of participants will be invited to stay on during sessions to participate in a parallel informal, facilitated network with advice, support and opportunities to engage with others in similar circumstances. This session will also provide information on what children are doing/experiencing in each session in order to prepare parents for any conversations that might arise at home as a result. A skilled facilitator provided by the supplier(s) will ensure this space remains safe, collegial and supported.
- It is anticipated that at the end of each session, parents will re-join their children for a 'sharing' session to see and celebrate the work of participants.
- The ongoing design, delivery and refinement of the intervention will be a partnership between supplier(s) and Croydon Council's Creative Health team. Regular planning and evaluation meetings and information sharing will be expected throughout the process. Following each session, facilitators will be expected to stay on for a de-briefing session with the Creative Health team to share any feedback, concerns or areas of development before the next session.

Timeline

It is anticipated that, at a minimum, the following delivery will take place during the lifetime of this contract:

- May/June 2025: development of programme content
- June/July 2025: short 'tester' delivery with a small cohort of children in location A; evaluation and refinements as required
- September-December 2025: 8-12 week intervention with one cohort of children in location A; evaluation and refinements as required
- January-March 2026: 8-12 week intervention with one cohort of children in location A, with a parallel intervention running with one cohort of children in location B; evaluation and recommendations for future

Outcomes

Following participation in 1x 8-12 week intervention, children should demonstrate:

- Improved wellbeing, self-esteem and self-efficacy
- Improved emotional literacy

- Improved self-regulation skills and techniques
- Improved inter-personal and communication skills
- Improved understanding and experience of healthy relationships
- Reduction in distressed, aggressive and/or coercive behaviours
- Reduction in unhealthy attachment behaviours
- Further outcomes as identified by parents and children during the development of the programme and initial sessions with each cohort

Interventions should further be designed to support children to achieve the following medium-term outcomes:

- Improved familial relationships, especially between child and parent
- Development of friendships and peer support among group members and parents
- Improved academic engagement and attainment
- Signposting to other community-based creative or leisure activities to encourage continued engagement following completion of the intervention

Outcomes will be measured via feedback gathered by the Creative Health team from participants, parents and schools throughout the process, as well as through baseline and end-of-intervention standardised measure (Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire) completed by either parent or teacher proxy and facilitated by the Creative Health team. Please see Section 5 for further information.

Supplier mandatory specification:

- Suppliers must demonstrate the relevant skills and experiences of its delivery team. The team involved in developing and delivering sessions should include:
 - Artists with high-quality, socially-engaged participatory creative group practice, specifically with 5-10 year olds with experience of adverse childhood events
 - Clinicians or counsellors with expertise in child development and domestic abuse
 - Trained facilitator(s) to manage the parallel light-touch parental support group
- Suppliers must include practical supporting opportunities for other Croydon-based artist(s) with relevant practice to gain experience of this work, in order to upskill the local workforce.
- All members of the workforce must have trauma informed training and practice.
- All members of the workforce must have Enhanced DBS checks and agree to conform to all prescribed Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Suppliers should be representative of Croydon's communities.
- Suppliers should have expertise allowing for inclusion of multi-art form delivery and collaborative ways of working.
- In line with the Mayor of Croydon's Business Plan and to support future sustainability of the intervention, preference will be given to Croydon-based suppliers.
- Suppliers must demonstrate what supervision is in place for the delivery team, including professional and pastoral support.

The total budget available for suppliers to deliver the above is c£60,000. This budget is for supplier (including Croydon-based artists gaining experience) costs only, and does not need to include venue or participant costs (transport, refreshments, etc.) outlined as responsibilities of the Creative Health team.

Where a single supplier is not judged suitable to deliver against all elements of the specification, the Council reserves the right to invite suppliers with complementary skills to work collaboratively with the Creative Health team to deliver relevant elements of the contract. Suppliers with a strong track record in one or more

areas of the specification are therefore encouraged to submit a response clearly outlining the elements you feel you can strongly deliver against and associated costs, for consideration in case a single supplier is not found.

5. Service Levels and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Supplier's performance will be monitored by outputs delivered, feedback from participants and proxies, and participant scores on validated measures related to the stated objectives.

Suppliers will be expected to deliver the agreed (following final programme development in May/June 2025) number of sessions by the specified skilled facilitator team.

Participant, family and school (attendance, behaviour, engagement, attainment) feedback will be sought and shared by Council representatives at and between each session. Observations on these metrics are expected to improve throughout interventions, with suppliers expected to take on board feedback and adapt content or session structures where lack of improvement or negative outcomes deems adaptations appropriate. Assessment of performance and recommendations for larger structural changes or adaptations can be discussed and agreed in between cohorts at regular planning meetings between suppliers and the Creative Health team. Lack of improvement by more than 20% of participants in one cohort will be considered cause for concern and potential early termination of contract.

Participants' outcomes will be monitored via pre- and post-intervention validated measures (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire), as facilitated by the Creative Health team. Scores are expected to improve for each child as a result of taking part in the intervention. Lack of improvement or negative outcomes will be assessed and discussed after each cohort, and recommendations made for subsequent interventions. Lack of improvement by more than 20% of participants in one cohort will be considered cause for concern and potential termination of contract unless significant extenuating circumstances or plans for improvement can be agreed.

Monitoring of performance will take place during debrief sessions after each event, with formal monitoring taking place quarterly, or as required by the Council.

6. Contract Management and Review

This intervention will be designed and delivered with Croydon Council's Creative Health team. Suppliers are expected to engage with the team on a partnership basis, fully engaging in all aspects of planning, delivery, feedback and evaluation as required. Regular meetings and de-briefings following each session will be required and any costs should be included within the supplier's pricing schedule.

7. Social Value and Sustainability

Suppliers must demonstrate how they will provide social value by including practical opportunities for local artist(s) with relevant practice but less experience than suppliers to engage with the programme and develop relevant skills and experience. Suppliers should demonstrate how these artist(s) will be identified, supported and included in the delivery plan.

8. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA)

The Creative Health team will maintain all data in relation to participants, with only information necessary to deliver a safe service shared with suppliers.

9. Contract Period

The contract will begin at the earliest opportunity following the bidding process and run until end of March 2026, unless early termination due to lack of delivery or poor performance outcomes as stipulated above.

10. Health and Safety

The Provider is expected to fully comply with ALL health and safety legislation. All new operatives shall be formally trained in the safe use of all materials and the Provider shall ensure that their operatives have the correct equipment including personal protective equipment if required. Full training and assessment records of all operatives must be kept in an acceptable manner and submitted to the Council on an annual basis.

The provider and all persons (including sub-providers) employed by him on the work shall comply fully with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all appropriate enactment's which are relevant statutory provisions under that Act and with all other relevant safety requirements and with appropriate codes of practice and Health and Safety Executives Good Practice Guidance Notes.

The Provider shall provide all necessary equipment and safe provision for power to execute the works as required to deliver the contract.

11. Reporting & Liaison

The Council's lead officer for this contract is the Council's Creative Health Development Officer. Day to day operational matters will be managed by the Council's Creative Health Development Officer who will be the appointed Supplier's primary contact for reporting, providing direction and managing risks and issues.

Contract meetings will take place at least every other week (or at a frequency to be determined by the Council during interventions).

Progress reports will be issued to the Council's internal project manager regularly. The content of this report will include, but not be limited to the following:

- The status of each task
- Action taken to date
- Expected outcome
- Expected completion date
- Any risks and risk management actions

The Council will have the option to terminate the contract at any time by serving 3 months' notice in writing.

12.Payment

The price submitted (excluding VAT) by the Provider must be a fixed fee to meet the specification. This fee must be inclusive of all listed expenses, consultation materials, etc. The preferred Provider will be selected as having submitted the most economically advantageous tender in relation to quality of service delivered.

Under no circumstances will the Council pay invoices in advance of work being undertaken. The invoices will be submitted in whatever format the Council may require, setting out full details of the services provided and including any supporting documents as required by the Council.

Any adjustments for deductions or additions over and above the work set out in the specification, will not be paid unless previously agreed in writing by the Council in advance of the additional work taking place. Any additional work or expenses over and above those identified within the specification must be clearly set out and justified in writing, and requests for its inclusion cannot be guaranteed.

13. SAFEGUARDING

The Provider will ensure that all aspects of the course provision will be delivered in line with Croydon Safeguarding Children procedures (Appendix 1)

The provider should ensure that all staff refer to guidance and procedure from the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused', in particular safe recruitment of staff, and supporting families if there are any concerns.

Staff should be aware of possible disclosures from children and should liaise with Creative Health team for protocol if this happens.