

**Crisis Pregnancy Agency/National Disability Authority
Request for Tender**

**INVITATION TO TENDER FOR LITERATURE REVIEW & EVALUATION OF
INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CRISIS PREGNANCY COUNSELLORS AND
GPs, ON PROVIDING APPROPRIATE AND ACCESSIBLE SUPPORT TO CLIENTS
WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY WHO ARE EXPERIENCING CRISIS
PREGNANCY**

The Crisis Pregnancy Agency (CPA) and the National Disability Authority (NDA) have formed a partnership (the partners) to co-commission the development of evidence-based practice guidelines for crisis pregnancy counsellors and general practitioners (GPs) on working with and supporting women with an intellectual disability experiencing a crisis pregnancy. The partners invite tenders from 3rd level institutions/research organisations and individuals to conduct the first two aspects of the project, namely a literature review and comparison of best practice models internationally.

1.0 Background to this Research

Research into the areas of sexuality, pregnancy, parenting and sexual health for women with an intellectual disability is limited, both in an Irish context and internationally (NDA, 2007) with information on women with an intellectual disability experiencing a crisis pregnancy notably absent from the literature. Existing Irish data on access to health services for women with disabilities suggests that disabled women are receiving less than adequate preventative health and social work services in comparison to other European countries (National Women's Council Ireland, 2005; D'Eath et al. 2005).

The needs of women with disabilities are often invisible to health and social work professionals, particularly where women with an intellectual disability are concerned. Existing societal attitudes that women with disabilities are 'dependants' and an acute lack of awareness among many health and social work professionals often gives rise to the belief that pregnancy and parenthood were not of concern for women with disabilities (Kallianes & Rubinfeld, 1997). This can often result in less than adequate communication with service users and access to and provision of quality care. Women with intellectual disabilities constitute a multiple-risk group for adverse pregnancy and birth outcomes and are among those least likely to receive quality prenatal care, prompting an urgent need for policy and service interventions to address their vulnerable status (Llewellyn et al. 2003).

Through commissioning this research, the partners now wish to begin the process of addressing this gap in service provision.

1.1 About the Crisis Pregnancy Agency

The Crisis Pregnancy Agency was established in 2001 with the purpose of bringing strategic focus to bear on the issue of crisis pregnancy and so add further value to the

work of existing service providers. The Agency has three mandates, which are set out in the Statutory Instrument:¹

Mandate A: a reduction in the number of crisis pregnancies by the provision of education, advice and contraceptive services;

Mandate B: a reduction in the number of women who opt for abortion by offering services and supports which make other options more attractive;

Mandate C: the provision of counselling services, medical services and such other health services for the purpose of providing support after crisis pregnancy as may be deemed appropriate by the Agency.

The Agency's 2007-2011 Strategy outlines how the Agency will continue to extend crisis pregnancy counselling services as well as improving standards of service provision. This includes extending service provision to at risk groups such as young people with special needs and women with an intellectual disability.

1.2 About the National Disability Authority

The National Disability Authority (NDA) was established in 2000 under the National Disability Act 1999. It is an independent statutory agency, the principal function of which is to advise the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform on disability issues. The NDA's vision is of an inclusive Irish society in which people with disabilities enjoy equal rights and opportunities to participate in the economic, social and cultural life of the nation. It has the following functions:

1. act as a national body to assist in the coordination and development of disability policy;
2. undertake research and develop statistical information for the planning, delivery and monitoring of programmes and services for people with disabilities;
3. advise the Minister on standards for programmes and services and prepare codes of practice;
4. monitor the implementation of standards and codes of practice;
5. take the lead in both encouraging and recognising the promotion of equality of people with disabilities.

2.0 Research Aims

The aims of this research are to:

- Critically review published and peer reviewed research relating to intellectual disability, counselling, pregnancy and crisis pregnancy and to produce a report describing the results of such a review. The review should include a section identifying the key challenges facing women with intellectual disabilities experiencing a crisis pregnancy in accessing health and social work services during crisis pregnancy.

¹ Crisis Pregnancy Agency (Establishment) Order 2001; S. I. No. 446 of 2001, amended by the CPA (Establishment) Order 2001 (Amendment) Order 2007, S. I. No. 175 of 2007.

- Identify international models of good practice regarding crisis pregnancy counselling and support and intellectual disability.

3.0 Research Objectives

3.1 *In relation to the Literature Review:*

1. Identify all relevant peer reviewed published literature both in Ireland and internationally which explores the impact of a crisis pregnancy on women with an intellectual disability and responses to it.
2. Highlight the main issues addressed in international literature in relation to this topic and to place this information within an Irish context for comparison purposes.
3. Generate a better understanding of the factors that contribute to an unplanned pregnancy for women with an intellectual disability.
4. Explore the level and range of risk factors such as age, relationship status, socio-economic factors etc related to adverse outcomes.
5. Identify international models of good practice regarding crisis pregnancy counselling and support and intellectual disability.
6. Explore any existing guidelines in other jurisdictions that cover this area and report on their relevance/suitability to an Irish context.
7. Explore legislation, structures and support mechanisms for people with intellectual disabilities experiencing pregnancy in other countries, as well as guidelines for counselling. (Note: Legislative differences in other jurisdictions may not result in such pregnancies being defined as 'crisis pregnancies').
8. Identify what supports might be in place in other jurisdictions for people with intellectual disabilities as parents and to what extent the family of the individual is involved through programmes or services aimed at them.
9. Fully address methodological issues arising, including limitations with respect to the reliability, validity and generalisability of research findings.
10. To critique the literature found on the subject matter and to examine the feasibility of developing recommendations from research that would feed into the future development of guidelines for GPs and Crisis Pregnancy Counsellors supporting women with an intellectual disability who are experiencing a crisis pregnancy.

3.3 Outputs of the Research

Expected outputs from this literature review include:

1. A systematic review of the literature relating to the effect of crisis pregnancy on women with an intellectual disability and responses to it. This may include direct

effects of the pregnancy and/or indirect effects e.g. reactions of others or family support.

2. A systematic literature review of guidelines for the provision of crisis pregnancy counselling to women with an intellectual disability in other jurisdictions, outlining legislation, structures and support mechanisms for people with intellectual disabilities experiencing pregnancy in other countries, as well as guidelines for counselling.
3. Identification of supports in place in other jurisdictions for people with intellectual disabilities as parents and to what extent the family of the individual is involved through programmes or services aimed at them.
4. An interim report at a point in the project to be determined by the Steering Group (likely to be midway).
5. An understanding of what methodological approaches have been used to increase knowledge within this area.
6. An understanding of the limitations involved in carrying out this kind of research.
7. A clear understanding of the reliability and validity of research data and implications for developing understanding in the research area.
8. A clear overview and analysis of the topic in an international context and an understanding of the complexities of the field.
9. A series of reliable and valid conclusions with respect to the future development of a set of guidelines for GPs and Crisis Pregnancy Counsellors supporting women with an intellectual disability who are experiencing a crisis pregnancy.

4.0 Tender requirements

The Agency intends to award the tender in November, 2008.

Tenderers are required to describe in detail their project plan that clearly outlines how they propose to design, conduct, manage and formulate the outcomes in order to meet the aims and objectives of the project within the specified budget. It is envisaged that the process will involve undertaking a number of steps that include, but are not limited to, those set out below. Tenderers are asked to elaborate on the following:

- i. The skills and experience of the researcher(s) proposing to conduct the analysis and how the skills and experience meet the challenges outlined.
- ii. Outline how they intend to manage the project on a day to day basis, including resource allocation.
- iii. How they intend to conduct a systematic review of the relevant international literature relating to crisis pregnancy and women with an intellectual disability with a particular focus on literature that reflects recommendations for guidelines, examples of good practice and further research. Details of inclusion and exclusion criteria should be provided.

- iv. To outline their approach to liaison with the project Steering Group.
- v. To describe how they will conduct risk assessment of potential elements that may impact on the project (outlining probability and impact and strategies to overcome risks associated with this project).
- vi. To describe how they will include any ethical guidelines or considerations that should be made when working in this area.

5.0 Evaluation of Tenders and Award Criteria

The contract will be awarded from the qualifying tenders on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender **applying the following award criteria, listed in order of priority (weights in brackets):**

- (a) Comprehensiveness and quality of the approach to the assignment (50%)
- (b) Expertise, experience and resources allocated to the research (30%)
- (c) Value for money (20%)

6.0 Timetable for reporting process

The deadline for the final report will be Friday 27th February, 2009.

7.0 Budget guidance

The budget allocated for this piece of research should not exceed €20,000 inclusive of VAT. Staged payments will be made at project milestones. In relation to costs, the partners require a full breakdown of costs. VAT amounts at the appropriate rate(s) should be shown separately. The VAT rate applicable for each type of service should be indicated.

Expenses, if appropriate, should also be indicated.

The price stated must be the total all-inclusive price for the duration of the tender. Price increases during the term of the tender will not be accepted. All costs must be stated in Euro. The cost of the tender must be the tenderer's best and final offer.

8.0 Submitting Tenders

Proposals should be emailed to smurphy@crisispregnancy.ie with 'Research Tender' marked in the subject line or placed in a sealed envelope, marked 'Research Tender' and addressed to:

Ms. Sarah Murphy
Crisis Pregnancy Agency
4th Floor
89 – 94 Capel Street
Dublin 1.

Tel: (01) 8146292 Fax: (01) 8146282 Email: smurphy@crisispregnancy.ie

The deadline for receipt of tenders is Monday October 20th, 2008 at 12 noon *sharp*.

Proposals will be opened at 2pm by two representatives from the partners.

Tenders received after the deadline will be returned unopened to the tenderer.

Disclaimer

The Request for Tender contains no contractual offer of any kind. Any submission will be regarded as an offer by the tenderer and not as an acceptance by the tenderer of an offer made by the partners. No contractual relationship will exist except pursuant to a written contract signed by the partners and any successful service provider(s) for specific services. The partners are under no obligation to appoint any service provider as a result of this competition. Tenderers should note that receipt of an offer does not guarantee appointment as a service provider even if that offer contains what appears to be an acceptable proposal.

Notes

Tenders will be awarded in accordance with Article 45, EU Directive 2004/18/EC of 31 March 2004 (co-ordinating procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts).